



Sheffield Hallam University

*Evaluation of Pre-16 Construction Industry
programmes*

CITB Pre-16 Construction Initiative

Final evaluation report

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Introduction

This report is the final document of the Sheffield Hallam University evaluation of the Barnsley CITB Construction Curriculum Centre Initiative. Data was collected between March 2000 and November 2000. The evaluation brief is given below; this report covers in some detail the areas of evaluation that took place.

After this introductory section, which provides a brief discussion of the context of the Barnsley initiative and the evaluation brief, there follows a discussion of the methodology we used. The report then moves on to examine the data gained from pupils in sections 1 to 3 (quantitative survey results in section 1, an analysis of interview questions with the same sample in section 2 and a discussion of a focus group conducted with a Year 9 taster group in section 3). Sections 4,5 and 6 outline the views of other interested parties; college tutors, school teachers and other key players, respectively. Finally, the report draws conclusions and presents key findings, and ends with a presentation of a series of recommendations for the future based on these findings.

Context

Barnsley has been part of the National CITB-sponsored Construction Curriculum Centre Initiative since 1991. In Barnsley, the key participants in this initiative have been the LEA, CITB, training providers including Barnsley College and Barnsley Met Training, schools and the construction industry representatives. The aim of the initiative was to encourage young people from primary and secondary schools to explore construction as a context for learning and to raise awareness of the construction industry as a career route.

The review of the National Curriculum undertaken by Sir Ron Dearing opened up the possibility of schools being able to offer a vocational qualification to young people at 16. CITB nationally, and the Curriculum Centre in Barnsley locally,

recognised that this gave the Curriculum Centre Initiatives the opportunity to pilot the introduction of GNVQ and NVQ courses with young people of statutory school age. However this would be expensive and so additional funding was sought from the Barnsley Regeneration Forum for SRB. The bid was successful and in 1996 the SRB funded pre-16 Construction Training Programme commenced alongside the CITB initiative. The initiative is well placed to allow beneficiaries to take advantage of the predicted increased demand in the South Yorkshire construction industry.¹

Aims of the Evaluation

The aims of the evaluation were set out as follows:

To provide data and independent judgements to the Steering Committee, partners, and funding bodies about the extent to which the project is:

- helping to provide a better skilled workforce with fewer people excluded from the labour market
- increasing pre-16 vocational training
- contributing to the development of a better educated and more aware population
- improving the work readiness of young people
- a model for good partnership arrangements for the introduction and delivery of vocational education

Issues informing the design of the evaluation

The National Foundation for Educational Research has been responsible for the evaluation of the Curriculum Centre Initiative at national level for a number of years. NFER publications consulted by the local evaluators included:

¹ More than 23000 new jobs in construction trades will be created in the next 5 years, according to a recent CITB report - see <http://www.citb.org.uk/factfile/TrainingFull.pdf>

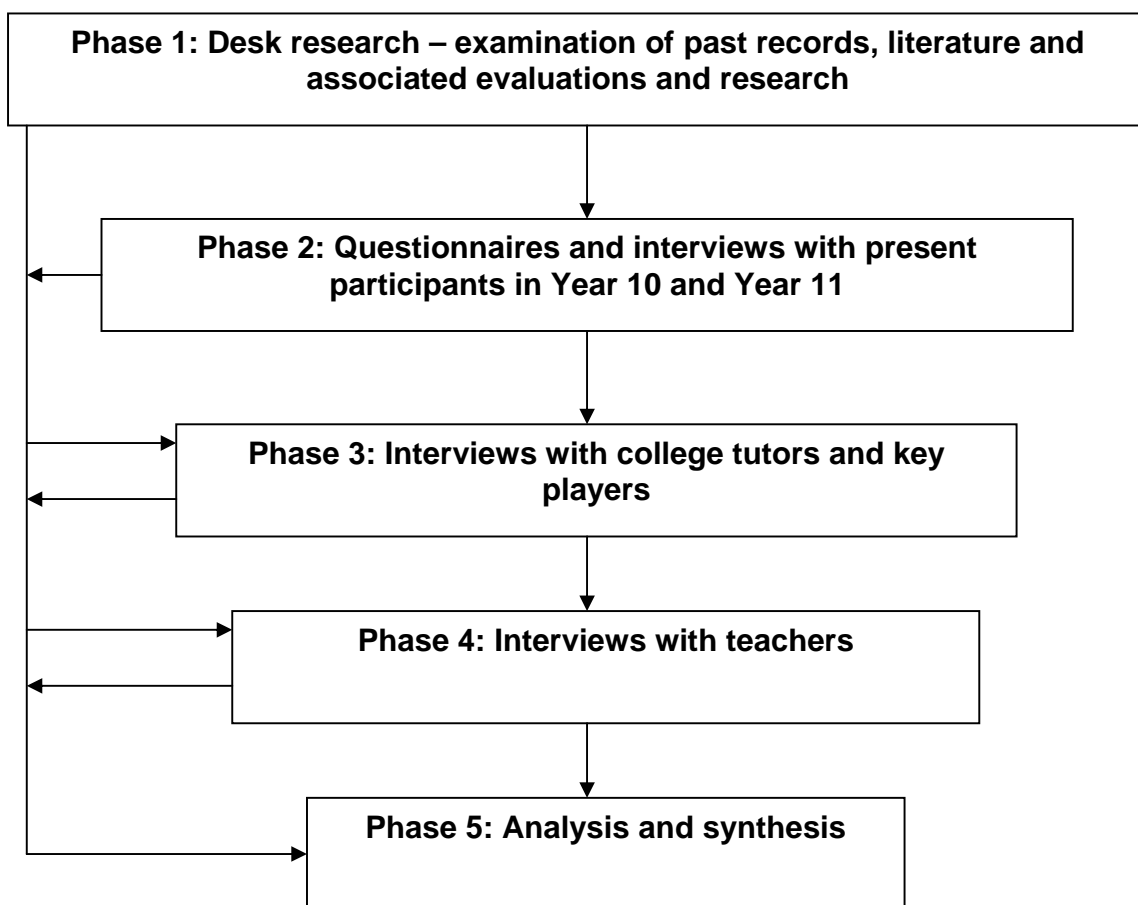
- Evaluation handbook - David Sims and Sheila Stoney, 1992
- GNVQs in construction and the built environment - David Sims, 1994
- Evaluation of the impact and added value of the CITB's curriculum centres - Sarah Golden, Anne Lines and David Sims, 1997
- The impact and added value of the CITB's curriculum centres phase 2, 1998 – Sarah Golden, David Sims, Anne Lines and Ian Schagen
- Longitudinal study of the impact of the curriculum centres initiative, 2000 – Sarah Golden and Gari Lewis

Discussion with Steering Group members alerted the evaluation team to a number of issues that were specific to the Barnsley Centre. A summary of issues that were to be addressed is given in the Appendix together with the intended sources of data. Copies of data instruments used in the evaluation are available from the authors.

Methodology

The approach adopted was a 'cascade model', influenced by the Grounded Theory approach². We conducted fieldwork in several distinct phases, using some findings from previous stages to inform our work in the later ones. The diagram below shows how our model worked, in essence:

Diagram 1: Schematic of the cascade model



We selected questionnaires and short structured interviews as the main methods for collecting data with participants, since we wished to capture a large sample to

² Grounded Theory involves developing research questions and theories in an iterative process as research goes on. For example, interview data is analysed and then initial results from this help shape further interviews. See Glaser, B and Strauss, A, 1967 *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* Chicago: Aldine

enable us to make comments on the group as a whole. In addition, smaller numbers of semi-structured interviews were conducted with other groups since there were far fewer numbers in these other groups, and the more in-depth data required was better collected using this technique.

The short timescale (less than six months between phase 1 and phase 4) meant that we had to plan carefully at the beginning, so we had many of our data instruments in draft form before stage 2 began; although these data instruments developed as time went on.

The final breakdown of the formal involvement of participants is as follows:

100 Year 10 and Year 11 pupils (questionnaire and short structured interviews)

10 Year 9 pupils (focus group)

8 College tutors (semi-structured interviews)

5 other Key Players (semi-structured interviews)

8 teachers (semi-structured interviews)

In addition, a number of more informal discussions took place with other participants, during visits to the construction centre and schools, over the telephone and before and after steering groups. Steering group participation and examination of documentation kept by the work-related team at Longcar Professional Development Centre added to the data collection. Efforts were made to contact employers who had been involved in the steering group, but all those contacted, despite being supportive of the initiative, stated that they had not been to steering group meetings for some, and so felt unable to assist with data collection. Researchers also found it difficult to make contact with young people who had been involved in the initiative in the past, using current structures. Results from one interview with a past participant are integrated into the section on the focus group with Year 9 pupils (since this youngster was female).

Section 1: The Pupil Survey

Introduction

During the Spring and Summer terms 1999/2000, questionnaires were given to 100 pupils taking part in the CITB pre-16 construction initiative at Barnsley College. Pupils from all of the secondary schools taking part were surveyed, although pupils from Rockley Mount were not surveyed (however their teacher was asked some questions about their experiences, and this data is used in the section on the teacher interview).

The breakdown of pupils surveyed by year group and by school is contained in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Pupils surveyed by school and year group

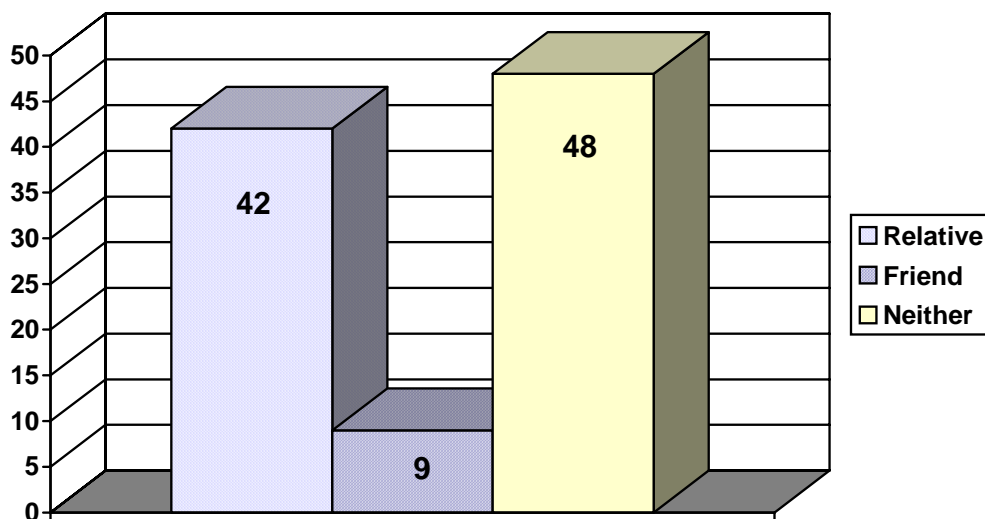
School name	Year group		Total
	Year 10	Year 11	
Darton High	-	6	6
The Dearne High	9	-	9
Edward Sheerien	2	4	6
The Elmhirst	1	-	1
Holgate	6	12	18
Kingstone	11	6	17
Kirk Balk	5	2	7
Royston High	15	17	32
St Michael's RC	1	2	3
Willowgarth High	-	1	1
Total	50	50	100

It is clear that the sample is biased by the large number of pupils from Royston High (nearly a third of the sample) and by the low numbers from Willowgarth, St Michael's and The Elmhirst. However, these figures are broadly in line with the actual numbers taking part in the course. It is important, though, to bear in mind these differences in sample size for each school when interpreting the results of the survey.

Question 1

The pupils were asked first whether they had a friend or relative working in construction. Chart 1, below, shows the results: around half the sample said they did. This is high for an area such as Barnsley with relatively little construction work taking place, and this could indicate that those with an interest in construction through friends or family are more likely to take part in a construction related initiative.

Chart 1: Do you have a friend or relative who works in construction?



There were no real differences between the different year groups with respect to this question.

Question 2

The youngsters were then asked how much they looked forward to coming to college to do the work.

Table 2 shows their responses. although all but one pupil looked forward to college to some extent, those in Year 10 were more likely to state that they looked forward to it a lot. This is likely to be associated with the course being newer and fresher to those in Year 10.

**Table 2: Do you look forward to coming to college?
(percentages in brackets)**

	A lot	Sometimes	No
Year 10	36 (72)	14 (28)	-
Year 11	20 (40)	29 (58)	1 (2)
Total	56 (56)	43 (43)	1 (1)

Question 3

Participants were asked if they had ever visited a construction site. 78% of the pupils said they had; this high number tallies with the responses from question 1: it seems that those who were familiar with the construction industry were more likely to be involved in this initiative. There were no significant differences between the year groups.

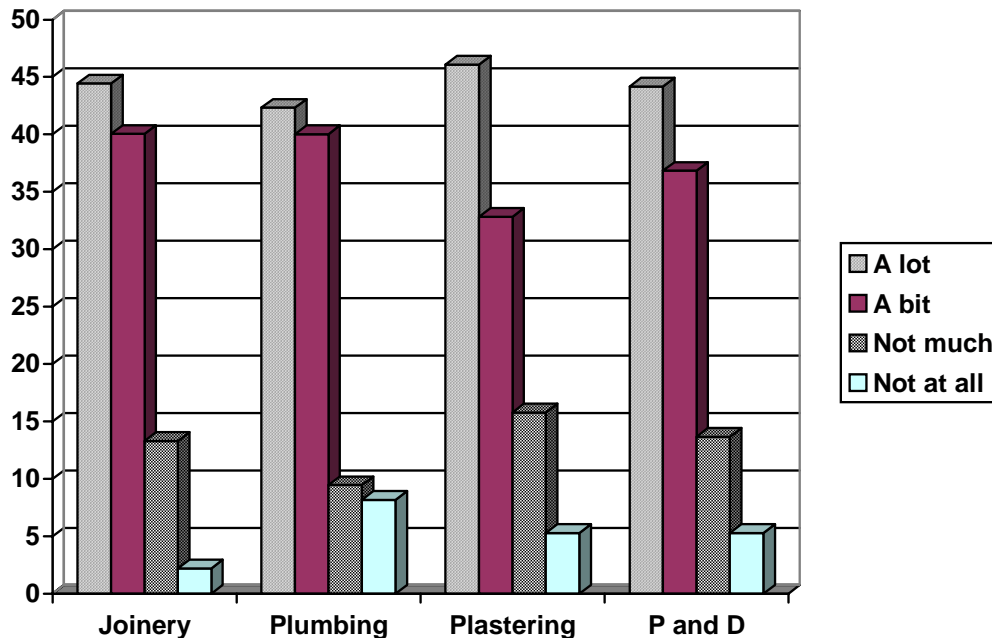
Question 4

When asked if they had ever worked on a construction site part time, a much lower figure, 20 per cent, said they had (again, there were no significant differences by year group). This figure is quite high, given the Health and Safety implications of having under-16s working on a site. It may be worth investigating what kind of work they were actually doing, although this was not asked during the survey.

Question 5

Pupils were asked how much they enjoyed the tasters of different construction activities they had worked on. Chart 2 shows the results (after allowing for those who had not tried these activities):

**Chart 2: How much do you enjoy each of these activities?
(percentages)**



There is clearly a high level of satisfaction with all of the craft areas; the profiles are very similar in each case.

There were very few youngsters who had not tried all of the trades (with the exception of pupils in the GNVQ group from the Dearne in Year 10 who had only tried Painting and Decorating). There was also a group of Year 10 Royston pupils who had not tried plastering.

Question 6

The pupils were asked which qualifications they hoped to gain. Table 3 over the page shows the responses:

**Table 3: Do you hope to gain this qualification at the end of the year?
(percentages within the year group in brackets)**

		Yes	No	Don't know
Year 10	GNVQ Foundation	12 (25)	34 (69)	3 (6)
	GNVQ Intermediate	7 (14)	39 (80)	3 (6)
	NVQ Level 1	33 (67)	13 (27)	3 (6)
	NVQ Level 2	3 (6)	43 (88)	3 (6)
Year 11	GNVQ Foundation	10 (20)	38 (76)	2 (4)
	GNVQ Intermediate	-	48 (96)	2 (4)
	NVQ Level 1	42 (84)	6 (12)	2 (4)
	NVQ Level 2	2 (4)	46 (92)	2 (4)

Although most youngsters appear to be aware of the that could be achieved, some stated that they hoped to gain qualifications that they were not to be entered for. As can be seen, most of these mistakes were made by those in Year 10. For example, although most of those who said they were aiming for GNVQs were in the GNVQ groups from The Dearne or Holgate, 4 pupils were not. The question may have confused one or two youngsters since it ought to have read, "Do you hope to gain this qualification by the end of your course"?

Question 7

The respondents were asked if they were considering working in the construction industry. There were significant³ differences between those who said they looked forward to going to college, and those who were less keen, as Table 4 over the page shows:

³ p<0.05 using the chi square test

Table 4: Considering working in the construction industry against looking forward to coming to college (percentages in brackets)

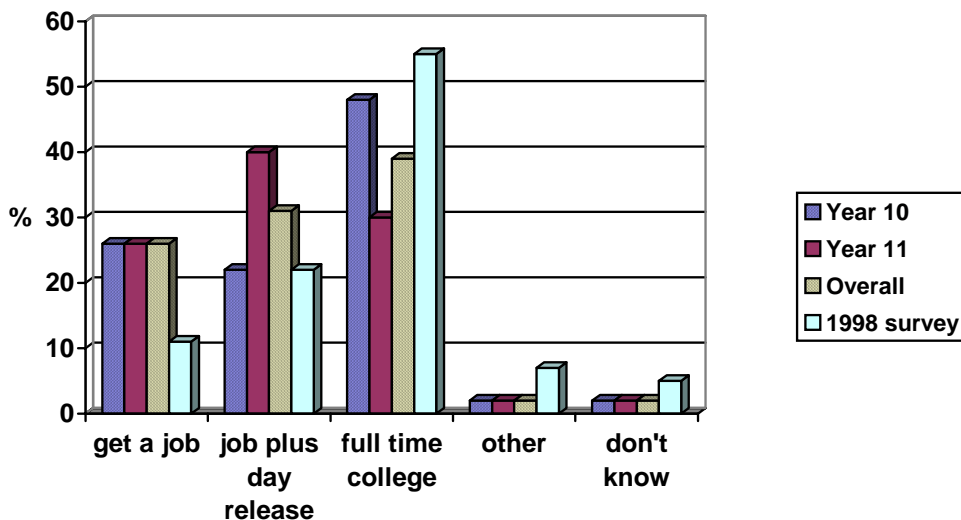
	Do you look forward to coming to college?				Total
		A lot	Sometimes	No	
Are you considering working in the construction industry?	Yes	44 (63)	25 (36)	1 (1)	70
	No	12 (40)	18 (60)	-	30
	Total	56 (56)	43 (43)	1 (1)	100

Those who are considering working in the construction industry are more positive about college. This is likely to be due to their seeing college as being more relevant to their future lives.

Question 8

As can be seen in Chart 3, there were differences between the year groups when they answered the question “What are you hoping to do at the end of Year 11?”:

Chart 3: What pupils hope to do at the end of year 11 by Year group (percentages)



Those in Year 11 are much more likely to want to get a job plus day release than they are to want to go to college full time (the percentages for the other categories are the same). This may be because pupils in Year 11 feel more need to earn money rather than continue in full time education; but more work is needed test this. A comparison with a large survey of Year 11 pupils from 1998⁴ reveals that the CITB pupils are much more likely to want to get a job or a job plus training, and much less likely to want to study full time.

Question 9

85% of pupils stated that they intended to stay in Barnsley in response to this question, and just 13% said they would not stay in the area. There were no significant differences between schools or year groups; this tallies with other work in Barnsley that shows that many of those who live in the area wish to stay there.

Question 10

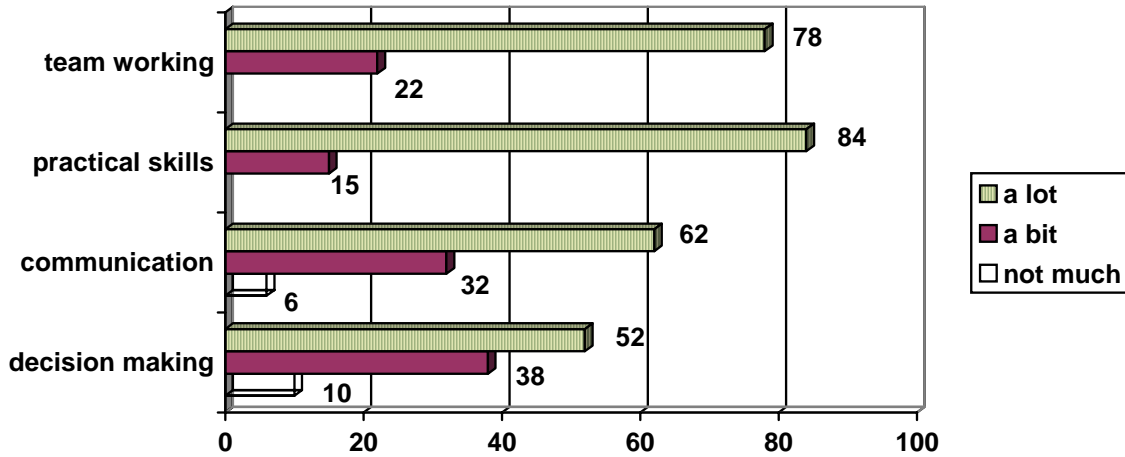
Chart 4 shows the responses to the question, “How much have you developed these key skills?” Pupils were most likely to believe they had developed team working skills and practical skills, as might be expected, but were less likely to say they had developed the skills of decision making and communication.⁵ However, very few youngsters responded, “Not much” to this question, and none responded, “Not at all”. In a large 1998 survey of Year 11 pupils in Barnsley⁶, team working and communication, along with other key skills, were seen to be very important by young people, so the fact that they feel they have developed these skills is significant.

⁴ SRB Highway to Success Year 11 Baseline Report (available from the authors)

⁵ This is in line with findings from the NFER National Evaluation – see report at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/summary/citb.htm>

⁶ SRB Highway to Success Year 11 Baseline Report (available from the authors)

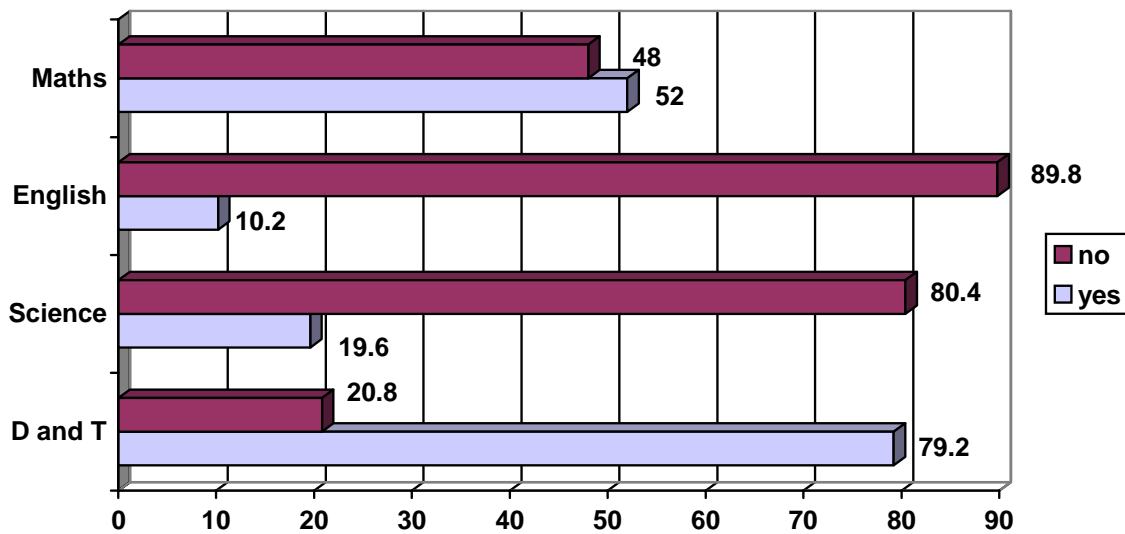
Chart 4: How much youngsters thought they had developed particular key skills (percentages)



Question 11

In this question, youngsters were asked if the college work was helping them with various school subjects. The results are shown in Chart 5, below:

Chart 5: Is coming to college helping you with these school subjects? (percentages)



Design and Technology and, to a much lesser extent, Maths were seen to have been improved by the college work. Perhaps not surprisingly, far fewer respondents thought their English or Science work had been positively affected. The only differences between year groups were that those in Year 11 were more likely to think that their Maths had been improved, compared with those in Year 10 (58% of Year 11, 46% of Year 10), and those in Year 10 were more likely to think their Science had improved (25% of Year 10, 14% of Year 11).

Question 12

Pupils were asked whether attendance at college was helping with four work-related skills. The results were overwhelmingly positive for almost all pupils, as can be seen in Table 5:

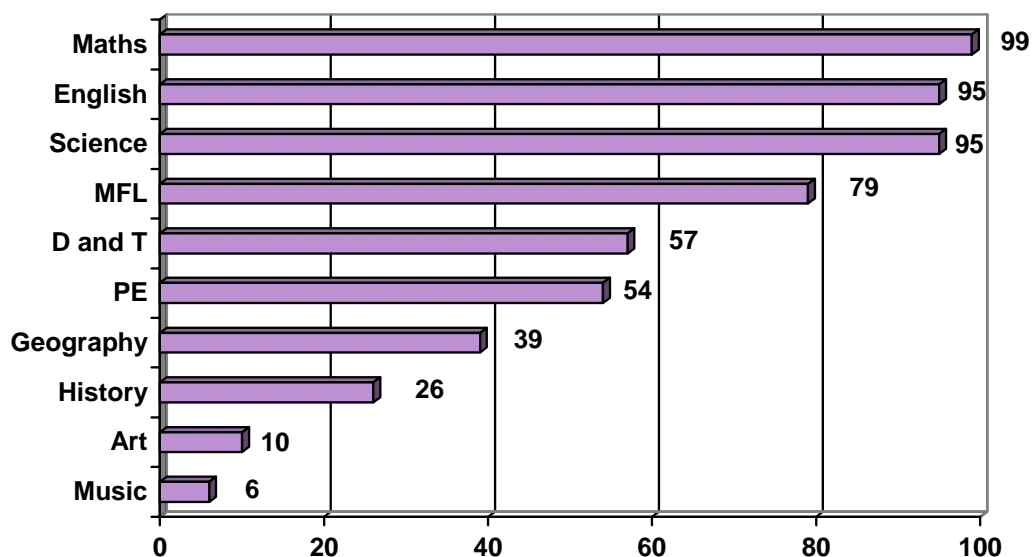
Table 5: Is coming to college helping you with these skills?

Skill	Yes	No
Good at following instructions	91%	9%
Good with my hands	99%	1%
Better at solving problems	88%	12%
Better at fixing and mending things	90%	10%

Question 13

The group was asked which subjects they studied at school. The responses were as shown in Chart 6 over the page. The only major surprise is the relatively low proportion of youngsters stating they study D and T. However, this is likely to be due to pupils failing to recognize the term D and T as encompassing other subjects they study, such as graphics or resistant materials.

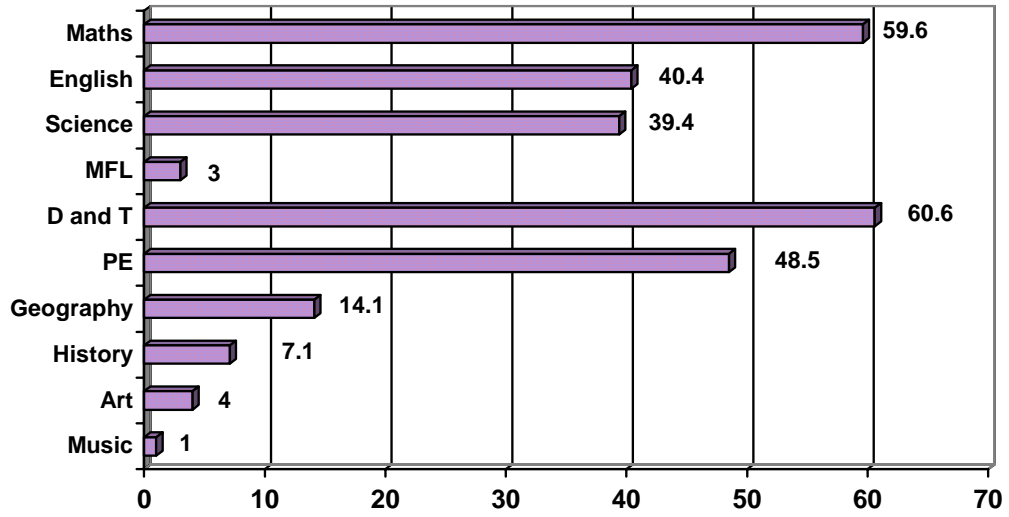
Chart 6: Subjects studied at school



Question 14

When pupils were asked what were their best three subjects at GCSE, the figures are quite different. Design and Technology was explained in this question, which accounts for the figure being higher than for those actually admitting to studying the subject. Chart 7 shows that Pupils mentioned D and T, Maths and PE most often as being their best subjects and Art, Music, MFL and History were mentioned least often. This ties in with the results from the 1998 SRB Highway to Success survey in Barnsley mentioned earlier, which found that PE was very popular. The D and T and Maths popularity among the construction sample is greater than for the Highway to Success sample. This may be because pupils who are interested in construction are likely to be more interested in these technical subjects as well.

Chart 7: Which are your best three subjects at school?



Section 2: The Interview Data

Introduction

This section provides an analysis of the 100 pupil interviews carried out during the Spring and Summer terms 2000. The pupils were asked 4 questions after completing the questionnaire analysed in the previous section; the results are grouped by these questions, although clearly there are relationships between the answers.

Question 1: What do you like best about coming to the construction centre?

The pupils almost without exception tended to compare the College course more favourably with the work they did at school.⁷

The single biggest theme to emerge from these answers was that the work was much more practical than at school. College work was seen as being different from school, and provided an opportunity to “get out of school” or “get out of lessons” for some.

Other comments from the pupils include:

- “It’s better than Maths, Science and English. If you do them, you don’t get a qualification that’s relevant”
- “It’s more relaxed”
- “It’s a lot better”
- “There’s more freedom”
- “You don’t get treated like kids”.

⁷ This finding and the reasons for it are in line with findings from the NFER National Evaluation: see final report summary at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/citb2.htm>

Related to this was the feeling that the work was more relevant. Many pupils mentioned learning new skills – “we actually learn something not like at school”, “we learn more than at school”. Also, the pupils talked about the better relationships with the staff.

Some further pupil comments include:

- “You don’t get shouted at”,
- “They are approachable”
- “We get treated like adults”
- “It’s more friendly – you call them by their first names!”

Many youngsters also said they felt less “pressure” in college.

Perhaps associated with these better relationships and more relevant learning were the links to the future. The college activities were seen as being relevant to future work by many pupils, and relevant to things outside of work by others. The group work, and working with pupils from other schools, was also seen as a benefit by some youngsters.

Several youngsters believed they were learning skills that would be useful either around the home. These skills included “fixing fences, welding and brickwork” - and even “building your own home”.

Some of the other benefits mentioned in this question were:

- Getting a qualification
- Working in a better environment
- Variety of work
- Fun
- Individual subjects

Question 2: Is there anything you don't like?

There were only answers from about half the sample for this question, indicating that many youngsters could not point to any problems (as can be seen by the positive responses given in Section 1, Table 2).

The most common problem discussed was the travelling – either the “long walk” or the distance from school. In an area with a high proportion of schools a substantial distance from the town, this is perhaps not a surprising result.

There were some problems mentioned with timings - for some youngsters, the sessions started too early, for others they finished too late, and several pupils mentioned that the break they were given was quite short.

The other points mentioned by only one or two individuals were:

- Particular subjects
- Clearing up
- Setting out
- Working all the time
- The work being disorganised

Some youngsters mentioned that they disliked the theory work – but as one pupil said, “there’s only the writing in the classroom [that I don’t like], but it’s got to be done hasn’t it?”

Question 3: What would be some good things about working in the construction industry?

Good pay was mentioned by many of the youngsters as being a benefit, along with it being practical and hands on, and interesting. Some pupils perceived that

there were “plenty of jobs”. Some talked about being able to work with family (a dad or uncle who already worked in construction) and the possibility of being your own boss, by eventually owning a business. Several youngsters mentioned meeting new people and working with “mates” and others said they liked the variety of work involved.

Other youngsters mentioned:

- The satisfaction of seeing a job well done
- Training opportunities
- Enjoyment
- Working in the open air (one said “it would be boring working in an office”)
- Travel – “exploring the country”
- “Driving a JCB!”

Question 4: Are there any bad things about working in the construction industry?

The major points mentioned here were the weather – “it’s always raining here” – and the possibility of accidents (some had known others who had been seriously injured in on site accidents) and other health risks (arthritis, tinnitus, back problems) along with the possibility of unemployment. Some youngsters mentioned the long hours, physical work and travel to get work as being possible difficulties, although several of these finished by saying “I still want to do it though!”.

Travelling away to work (as opposed to travelling a long distance in the morning) was seen as an advantage for some youngsters, but as a problem “if you’ve got a family”.

Other points mentioned by a small number of youngsters included:

- Seasonal work
- Getting up in the morning
- Boredom
- Quality of work - “you’ve got to be fast” and “do a good job”
- Low pay (contrasting with the general perception that the pay is good).

The Year 9 Girls Focus Group

Introduction

The 10 pupils present were asked a number of questions, which have been organised in this section into two areas: aspects of the course and links to the future. Where pupils have been quoted in conversations, names have been changed, since the discussion was confidential. Some comments by female pupils in the Year 10 survey, as well as comments by one former participant have been integrated into this section, since the themes emerging from these interviews are the same as those that came out of the focus group.

Aspects of the course

Introduction to technical and professional aspects

The initial response of the pupils was fairly negative – “I didn’t enjoy it” – but after being asked if there were positive aspects, one pupil said “the video was all right”, and another was interested in the discussion about different styles and types of housing. One of the pupils suggested “its not interactive enough; games would be better than just talking to us” but admitted, “some of the Health and Safety stuff was important though”.

The CAD work was thought to be “quite interesting” by some but “boring” by others, perhaps because, as they admitted, they found it difficult. The group could see how CAD linked into real work though: “When we went out to the offices, people were doing this kind of thing there”.

Tiling

Responses to this work were generally very positive: it was “dead good” because “it was different”, “it was something you are going to use in later life”. The plastering that went with it was not so well received because “it was hard to learn. The tiling was explained well, but they didn’t explain the plastering as well”. One of the pupils clarified this: “There weren’t as many tips, but it was on the spur of the moment because we finished early”.

Painting and decorating

All of the pupils enjoyed this aspect of the course. This was related by many of them to the fact that they had a female tutor; they commented “there are more women in Painting and Decorating than in other areas”.

Site Visits

These were well received by most of the pupils. One said “it was interesting, looking at building houses. We went round with the site manager; they showed us some really nice stuff”. One of the pupils said that she had “looked at different houses – it was boring”, but the others argued that it had been a good experience. Some of the girls had visited the local planning department where they had seen the school plans, and they had enjoyed this visit.

Links to the future

Recommendations to others

Most of the pupils said that they would recommend others to try the course, for several reasons: “you get to go out of school” (echoing comments made by the larger sample in Section 2), “you get to do different things”. One of the pupils said

that she knew several of next year's Year 9, and had already mentioned it to them: "they are interested in doing it" she said. Another commented "It opened my eyes, so it might do the same for them". The past participant thought that the course had been a very positive experience overall, and felt that the tutors had treated her more like an adult (again, linking to comments made in the larger sample reported earlier).

Some of the pupils expressed concern that others had not had the opportunity to do the course this year: "some weren't told about it, lads as well as girls. It was only set 1 and set 2 that got the opportunity". Ironically, the only pupil who expressed an interest in the construction option in Year 10 (see next subsection) said that she had had to ask to be included in the Year 9 taster group.

Plans for next year

Only one of the pupils said she was definitely going to change her options: "I've been thinking about it [working in construction] for a while, but this has made my mind up", and hoped that there would be an intermediate level GNVQ available the following year⁸. Two or three others were considering Masterclasses⁹ in construction areas.

Others said that they had considered it: "I would do it, but I've got other career plans" and others explained that they'd like there to be more options available, as the following exchange shows:

⁸ This pupil did not choose construction in her options in the end. In informal conversation with one of the evaluators, she said that she did not want to be the only girl on the course.

⁹ Masterclasses are short taster sessions run after school at Barnsley College to introduce post-16 courses. They are open to Year 10 and Year 11 pupils from Barnsley schools.

Pupil 1 I'd like to do joinery.

Pupil 5 There's not much option for craft.

Pupil 2 There are only two craft options, and they're not specific enough – they're very general.

Pupil 1 You might not want to do all of them.

Working in construction

When asked whether they would like to work on a construction site, around half the focus group said they would. Their comments reflected those of the larger sample reported in section 2: one pupil explained: "I want to do something, not be sat behind a desk all day"; another said, "It's good to see something that you've made". Other pupils gave a number of explanations for their reluctance including worries about appearance – "it's really dusty!" – and "safety problems": "You need to be strong, and I'm not." The past participant was not working in construction, and did not intend to. The two girls involved in the Year 10 and 11 large pupil survey did not intend to work in construction.

The pupils were all keen to talk about the problems for women in construction. This started with the course, as highlighted by the following exchange:

Pupil 3 There should be more women lecturers.

Pupil 2 It would be more interesting.

Pupil 6 There should be equal amounts of men and women lecturers.

Pupil 1 If more women were lecturers, more girls would want to do it.

Pupil 3 One of the lecturers calls us fellas; it doesn't encourage you.

But it was recognised also that it would be difficult in the world of work:

Pupil 6 Physically it's hard for women, men can do more things because they're stronger.

Pupil 2 it's really difficult for women. You have to be physically strong, you have to have qualifications and you have to be emotionally strong. Because you are going to get a lot of stick.

Pupil 6 Male trainees will take the mickey out of you. They did laugh at us when we were getting our overalls. It didn't bother me, but if you had to face it every day it would be hard.

The comments made by pupil 6 were echoed by the only two girls interviewed in the larger survey of Year 10 and 11 students. They commented on being "harassed by male students" who whistled and made comments to them. One of the young people said that some of the boys thought girls should not be doing construction, and sometimes felt excluded by them. The past participant, however, felt spurred on to do well by the lads who felt she should not be on the course.

Recommendations for the future

Particular improvements that could be made included these points:

- Make it more practical, less talks.
- Make it longer, so you can get more in to it.
- Do it before the options, because lots of us had decided our options already.
- Let boys do it too; you need to get girls used to working with lads. (The past participant agreed with this. She enjoyed meeting trainees from other schools, and said she preferred mixed rather than single sex courses).

Section 4: Interviews with college tutors

Introduction

Data was obtained from 7 tutors delivering the programme, (including one programme leader) and the Head of Department. The tutors all have industry experience and teach their specialism to students following a range of qualifications. The pre-16 course started as a wood occupations course with 8 students in 1992 with some students aiming for a qualification. Trowel occupations were eventually introduced and the current course (NVQ) which has run for the past 3 years now includes plastering, plumbing and painting/decorating. There are now about 120 pre-16 students following the Building Crafts Occupations course (which can lead to the award of an NVQ level 1) and a smaller number following the GNVQ Foundation route. Tutors would also like to offer a GNVQ Intermediate qualification. The interviews have been analysed using a thematic approach. Emergent themes are used as headings below.

Is the pre-16 course successful?

Tutors all feel that the pre-16 course is now working well and has improved as it has grown in size. The main improvements have been to the selection process and liaison with schools. Selection now begins in Year 9 and consists of a tour of the Construction Centre, meeting some current pre-16 students if possible, a short test paper and finally an interview. Feedback is then given to the school and some negotiation takes place about which pupils are eventually selected (about 30% are not successful).

A measure of success is that the applications have increased each year – there are now more applications than the places available. All tutors are happy with the organisation of the course. They feel that pupils are gaining a useful introduction

to construction, which should encourage some to enter the industry. But there are many other benefits to the pupils, for example they can make more informed career choices, gain in confidence, increase their knowledge of life skills, get an introduction to college life, and develop Key Skills such as team working and communication. The pupil survey (Chart 4 on p15) shows that these benefits are seen to be real by the pupils themselves as well. The positive relationships established with teaching staff (again, reported by pupils, in section 2) clearly make an important contribution to this. All tutors are keen that students gain a broad background to the construction industry. Schools particularly value the GNVQ as it counts towards league tables. Maintaining the motivation of the pupils on the GNVQ when undertaking classroom based activities is sometimes problematic. However pupils respond well to practical activities and trips out.

The number of girls opting to take the course is low and during the past year a pilot course for Y9 girls from one secondary school took place. Reasons why girls do not often opt for the pre-16 construction course may be related to the availability of other vocational courses (such as business studies, health and community care and leisure and tourism.) which have traditionally attracted strong female participation¹⁰.

Tutors feel that the students from a local special school also acquire considerable benefits from the course. Adapting the tasks to meet the needs of this group was challenging but very worthwhile. As there are no workshop facilities at the school and D and T is not taught, the practical experiences at college are particularly valuable.

¹⁰ See previous section for some pupil views on this.

Influences on career choice

Students are issued with CITB training application forms and are advised to attend an industry talk and video. If asked by students, tutors say they would recommend the construction industry and CITB training routes as a career choice but do not see their role as being careers advisers. One tutor interviews a large number of students who wish to join the college (as part of general college/school liaison) for post-16 education or training. Students give the impression that they value the experience of being at college regardless of their future focus of study and that the pre-16 construction course has made a positive contribution to their thinking about their individual attributes and aspirations.

Students from different schools

There were mixed views about the influence of post-16 students on those currently at school. Groups from schools were seen to vary tremendously. They were described variously as being for example, large; hardworking; a problem in terms of attendance and timekeeping; and having different mannerisms.

Individual students had in some cases improved dramatically from Y10 to Y11 in terms of commitment and desire to achieve the qualification. Information about each group is passed between tutors before each rotation period. Overall, it is felt that there is no direct correlation between the success of students with the course and their school. Pupils frequently have doubts about their abilities and are often surprised at their eventual achievement. Disciplinary incidents are quite rare and the tutors are happy with the arrangements for dealing with these.

Possible improvements

Stronger links with D and T teachers - perhaps by putting on some taster sessions that would alert teachers to the content of sessions, teaching

approaches and the assessment framework and different ethos of the college – are seen as being important. This could lead to schools integrating the college based learning into the school curriculum, perhaps in the choice of D and T project briefs, but also for other subjects as well, particularly mathematics and science. Examples of these links could include: linking the conceptual development of pressure in science with practical skills in plumbing; relating knowledge of the properties of materials acquired in science being related to construction; and developing measurement (central to mathematics, science and D and T as well as construction).

Tutors regard site visits as important and would like to have more of these. The organisation of these should ideally be facilitated by the CITB.

Perspectives on the initiative from Barnsley Met Training and Lifetime Careers.

Barnsley Met Training's construction centre (now The Construction Training and Assessment Centre - CTAC) was involved in the delivery of the pre-16 course until 2 years ago. The expansion of the programme resulted in the course being based at the college. It was felt there were substantial gains to pupils should they eventually opt for a career in construction, but for those who do not there are gains in knowledge about an important industry and the benefit of learning in a disciplined environment different to school.

There were a number of instances where participation in the course has helped students to become re-engaged with their education¹¹ and have a more positive attitude towards their future. Most of the pupils following the course were the least academic, and these students generally responded well to the learning environment. There are a number of success stories where youngsters had

completed the NVQ level 1 pre-16 and who had continued their training to NVQ level 2 and secured employment. CTAC would be keen to develop work with disengaged youngsters further if funding were available. To gain maximum benefits, teachers would need more release time from schools (a sentiment echoed by the teachers themselves in the next section). Also site visits and employer contact were very valuable to the success of the course.

Lifetime Careers value site visits. These benefit teachers as well as the students. Technical visits to planners, architects, environmental waste etc are all as important as visits to show craft skills and house building. The pre-16 course has a valuable part to play in providing a richer KS4 curriculum as it helps careers choice and has a role in maturing students' attitudes to their future. All KS4 students "should have a vocational component to their curriculum regardless of their ability".

Careers consultants work with around 3 secondary schools each and not all of them would be familiar with the pre-16 construction course. Similarly, teachers need more time to visit the college to become familiar with the different approaches to learning and the construction curriculum in general. Teachers might then be able to integrate the learning achieved into the National Curriculum subjects e.g. Mathematics, D and T and Science.

¹¹ Although the NFER evaluation found that youngsters became less positive about school over the course, which might reflect their greater enjoyment of the different learning and teaching styles experienced in colleges – see <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/summaries/citb>

Section 5: Interviews with teachers

Introduction

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 8 key staff from the schools participating in the project. School involvement varied from those who had been actively engaged in organising work-related curriculum opportunities for 5 or 6 years, to those who were just completing their first 2 year cycle of courses at the college. Similarly, the numbers of pupils attending from each school ranged from about 30 (usually equally divided between Year 10 and Year 11 pupils) down to 6.

Analysis

Respondents saw their roles variously as being:

- the person in the school whose responsibility it was to make this particular link happen
- an intermediary between college and parents
- part of a wider role e.g. options coordinator, school-college links coordinator, head of department
- the contact in case of discipline problems
- the person responsible for identifying pupils who would benefit from the programme in partnership with other colleagues e.g. curriculum coordinator

Views expressed regarding the organisation of the courses were almost wholly positive and the following views are representative across the sample:

- respondents praised the Barnsley college representatives, picking out working relationships as being excellent
- one respondent felt the courses were “the best fit in terms of the curriculum” and saw “no problems as far as I’m concerned”

- attendance was very good, with only a few pupils not achieving
- the pupils were thought to like the courses “because it’s a chance to get away from this place for the afternoon” (echoing comments made in the pupil interviews)

Overall, respondents felt the courses had been very successful, giving the following reasons:

- would only do it if happy with it
- the college/school gave something to some disaffected lads who felt there was nothing for them. The object was not just to get them a qualification but to re-motivate them. In one case there had been a complete attitude change. In another there was some initial improvement but this had waned as the year went by.
- The lads enjoy it, often writing thank you letters
- A lot of pupils have taken up college courses
- They perform at least as well as they would on GCSE
- Pupil feedback has been very positive
- On visiting the college, the teacher observed the pride the pupils took in their practical work
- The pupils appear to gain in independence

One respondent thought the course had not been successful for the pupils at his school. This was felt to be due to pupils in Year 11 being poorly selected by another member of staff within the school (they were disaffected pupils who “if they are not attending school, are not going to go to college”). Year 10 pupils had been seen to benefit more because the respondent had selected them.

According to this respondent, the benefits had been enhanced by a classroom support assistant who had been sent to support the pupils who sometimes adjusted poorly to the more relaxed atmosphere at the college.

In answer to the question, “What do you think the pupils gained?”, the following are representative replies:

- Knowledge of building practices
- Gaining and practice of skills
- Work experience
- Conducting themselves off-site
- Being taught by others not of the school
- Some now have jobs in the building industry
- An insight into construction trades – to decide if they want to pursue that path
- Getting used to a more adult way of working “because they do lack a certain self-discipline”
- A sense of purpose
- Self esteem
- More focus, direction
- An enrichment of their learning experience
- Employability skills
- Helps raise boys’ motivation and achievements
- Enables the pupils to mix with pupils from other schools
- Develops confidence
- Broadens horizons and gives hope

On the whole the respondents felt the courses were well-matched to the students. One respondent remarked that the feedback from students had been very positive, observing that, “A happy child is the best possible advert for the course.” Another felt the positive response of the students was very much to do with the fact that, “they are interested in hands-on stuff”. The exception was the respondent who had indicated that he felt the course had not been successful (see the final paragraph on page 35).

The school representatives expressed a number of concerns, indicated below. The long list should not be interpreted as indicating a greater “amount” of dissatisfaction on their part. The bulleted points below record the concerns of individual respondents:

- the profile of the course needs raising within school, for example through displays, mentors and careers interviews
- it is difficult to match up slots available with the school timetable
- more career guidance at Y9 before option choices are made would be helpful
- very happy with NVQ but not in favour of GNVQ – general vocational courses not seen as relevant
- not so happy about the way GNVQ is organised
- would prefer it if college had direct contact with parents
- not enough time to make college visits
- one respondent felt communication regarding meetings has not been good leaving this person feeling “out of the loop”
- communication with regard to the structure of the course, attendance and positive feedback was seen to be a problem by one respondent. The construction course was compared unfavourably in this respect with other NVQs, such as hairdressing.
- confusing and unclear in the early stages of involvement

The following improvements were suggested:

- more direct contact between college and parents on the grounds that direct contact might have more impact
- some in-service training for college tutors on dealing with 14-16 year-olds (although the respondent added that college staffing was becoming more regular and consistent and therefore there was a sense that these staff were getting to grips with any problems)
- more courses (but recognising the problems here), for example courses run at school but run by college staff

- blocks of time for all Y10 to do a week long taster course at college
- taster lessons in Year 9 before option choices
- better communication with other schools, perhaps sharing resources and ideas (e.g. communication with parents)

The only issues arising during the training were operational ones, such as Health and Safety and misbehaviour. Several respondents had had to come to college to help “reinforce high standards of behaviour”. Attendance problems arose with some schools but not others, possibly relating to the culture of schools, according to one respondent. However, issues such as coursework, attendance, reporting and completion of tasks were felt to have been resolved. Generally school respondents expressed regret at not having visited college more often, giving their workloads as the reason for not doing so. One school felt there was more demand for places on the course, but that the school did not have the staffing or facilities to contribute to deliver or facilitate any expansion.

Views regarding the NVQ were mainly positive but those regarding GNVQ were more mixed. One respondent was very critical of GNVQs for being too general, arguing that vocational courses should develop specific skills. Another felt that the pupils responded better to NVQs because they are more skills based and entail less paperwork. However, another respondent held more positive views on GNVQ, seeing their whole approach to teaching, learning and assessment as more suitable for the majority of the children in the 14-16 age range. There was some criticism of the withdrawal of the NVQ in Building Craft Operations although the reasons for doing so were understood and accepted as valid. However, respondents were fairly happy with the intended replacement Foundation Construction Certificate. There was also a sense of general support for the direction in which the vocational curriculum 14+ seemed to be developing, although some caution was suggested so that the “fit” with the National curriculum would be ensured. It was also felt that there was more to do in promoting vocational curricula with parents, colleagues and pupils. One

respondent observed that the “government have recognised that some pupils are just not suited to school” and supported the push for increasing links with training and work experience.

On selection, the general view was that pupils’ freedom of choice was essential. Respondents were happy with the tests introduced by the college to gauge suitability and readiness. Regarding the low involvement of girls, one respondent observed that “there is an immense awareness-raising job to be done”. Another, accepting that the image of the course is “extraordinarily male”, felt that a strategy for girls would be inappropriate, claiming that “building and brickwork is something that doesn’t appeal to girls”. Another identified the possible source of the low involvement of girls as being the “boy culture” attached to the courses, noting however that more girls were now opting for resistant materials in school. Again, however, there were no specific strategies for encouraging girls in that school. One teacher did mention that girls had been encouraged to take more traditionally masculine subjects like electronics concentrating on getting the personality mixes right within the group.

The impact upon the school was generally thought to be, in many ways, immeasurable. For example, for one respondent, the Year 9 initiative had apparently been a short-term failure in that no girls had opted for construction in the coming year. Yet the respondent argued that such initiatives were needed to help break down barriers over the longer term and to help pupils become more aware of what they are choosing. As such, it is argued that it would be wrong to rely too much on quantifying the results of these initiatives. Another observed that no colleague had identified a causative effect with regard to pupil performance, but that the pupils themselves had shown enthusiasm for their NVQs. Another had noted occasional positive comments from colleagues, but pointed out that numbers on the courses were small and their profile in the school relatively low.

Overall, then, the school representatives had very positive views on the organisation and impact of the construction courses, typified by the following remark:

“They’ve done a marvellous job, they really have, and in terms of value for money they could not have done better.”

In terms of qualifications gained, views were mixed.

One respondent felt that one could not judge the success of the courses in terms of GCSE grades, “because they are dealing with very difficult kids, on the whole”.

Another, observing that the pupils would typically score between grades G and D at GCSE, noted that they had performed at least as well as they would have on GCSE. However, one other respondent felt under pressure at his school, because pupils were taken out of technology to do the college course. He noted that 93% of pupils within the department got at least a grade G technology, whereas few of the pupils attending college courses instead gained an NVQ. He noted that pupils would be better off being taken out of another subject – “like German, because they have poor literacy skills”.

To conclude, a short list of comments made in response to a request for memorable incidents:

- unfortunately, incidents of ill-discipline do tend to come to mind
- a pupil who is now doing a degree in a construction subject
- pupils writing thank you letters to college
- pupils coming to the school representative and thanking him
- one lad, “difficult by any definition” – “to see him actually running across a playground to show me his certificate”

Section 6: Interviews with other Key Players

Introduction

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 3 key staff representing employment interests participating in the project. All had been involved since the inception of the project and two had been involved in initiatives in the area prior to that, as well as having worked at Barnsley College. Two of the respondents currently include the construction initiative projects as one of their main job roles. The third has a major involvement in careers advice. Other respondents were consulted informally; their responses have also been integrated into this section.

Analysis

Two respondents had been directly involved in site visits and all three had very positive attitudes towards the value of these. For example, respondent 1, who liaises with employers (carries out risk assessments, outlines what is wanted) felt that site visits “really gel the whole project together”. Respondent 2 felt that site visits need to be more focused on what the pupils need to experience, for example shadowing the construction professionals, rather than the actual construction work. This person expressed concern that the industry is not attracting enough interest in the professional end of construction work and talked of site visits as means of attracting pupils to GNVQ courses. Respondent 3, with a careers background, concentrated more on the school aspects of organising visits, and claimed that the visits benefit teachers too in broadening their appreciation of the scope of construction industry jobs. This person reinforced the view of respondent 2 by emphasising the need to highlight the technical and professional aspects of construction work.

Respondent 1 felt the visits had been 100% successful and respondent 2 thought they had been “well received”. Respondent 3 saw the gains to pupils in terms of

better knowledge about the skills levels and types of work involved and thus better decision-making regarding career choices. He also felt that, as part of the courses, they contributed to an enrichment of the KS4 curriculum, arguing that all pupils regardless of ability should take a vocational subject.

Respondent 2 saw the gains as raised awareness, use of construction as a context for learning and a greater understanding of industry, although he was not sure how well pupils appreciated how their school learning fits into the requirements of work in the construction industry and in industry in general.

Respondent 1 saw the gains as:

- Construction awareness (of structures as well as roles)
- An insight into what is expected in the outside world
- The experience of working in an external environment
- Working with adults outside of the normal school environment
- Social skills
- Communication skills – “how to relate to people apart from teachers and parents”
- Helping to make relevant some of the subjects taken in school e.g. Maths.

In terms of improvements, respondent 3 felt that, although the amount of time on the course was about right for the pupils, teachers would benefit by more release from teaching duties in order to become more familiar with the college aspects, recognising however the limitations imposed by paucity of resources.

Respondent 2 thought that improvements could be made through better selection, while acknowledging the recent improvements. This person also suggested that there was a need to talk more to teachers to raise awareness, for example by not just showing the traditional craft areas but promoting the professional and technical jobs too. Respondent 2 also felt that getting good work experience was important. Respondent 1 picked out getting the co-operation of

teachers, meaning their involvement at school as well as their visits to college and attendance at steering group meetings. The latter was seen as a need regarding employer participation too. Respondent 1 also felt there was a lack of appreciation of what was being done on the ground at the awarding bodies, giving the example of BCO NVQ1¹², and that there was a need to look again at the courses on offer.

Regarding their own level of involvement, all three saw themselves as having made a strong contribution. Respondent 3 felt that careers construction in schools needed to be more aware of CITB and what it offers. The other two saw the involvement as CITB as strong and could foresee this continuing to grow. Respondent 1 remarked that not enough recruits are attracted to construction across the board, giving ability levels as the key problem, although the “glamour aspect is also an issue”. Respondent 2 felt that the gains for CITB are a heightened awareness of the industry and the advantage of helping people enter the industry who are likely to stay and who therefore represent money well spent on recruitment. Respondent 1 echoed these views, adding that the effect was “an increased awareness of what we are, what we do and hopefully an improved image”. All three saw a continued high level of involvement of their respective organisations in the project and respondents 1 and 2 could only see that involvement increasing.

Memorable incidents related included:

- 2 girls achieving a full NVQ in 1999-2000
- a couple of pupils from an earlier year who initially said they were not coming back who ended up getting student of the year awards
- comments from school colleagues regarding the positive changes in pupils’ behaviour (that is achievements other than academic)

¹² BCO NVQ Level 1 has not been ratified for use in pre-16 courses from December 2000. Teachers, tutors and key players were unhappy about this.

Finally, respondents made a number of additional comments. Respondent 1 wanted to add that giving young people more options before they have to make choices is important. The respondent went on to say that more and more pressure is being put on young people to make decisions earlier and they cannot be expected to make these decisions without the information and experience: “I’m sold on the ideas of what we’re doing here”. Respondent 1 was also keen to discuss issues regarding the participation of girls, observing that some employers showed reluctance, claiming that they did not have the facilities, but also that girls’ attitudes and the problem of working in groups of boys were also barriers. Respondent 2 added that the initiative is “a worthwhile programme” and, although expensive, it is good value for money. The programme was seen as raising the industry’s image, and most of the companies CITB talks to feel it is beneficial too, and that it should continue.

Conclusions: Synthesis and key findings

Introduction

In this section, we present some of the key findings, produced by synthesising the work presented in the previous chapters. We present these under thematic headings. These also form the basis of most of the recommendations in the final chapter.

Profile of Y10 and Y11 course participants

The beneficiaries can be characterised as having the following attributes:

1. They wish to stay in the Barnsley area (p14)
2. They have a high level of awareness of the construction industry
 - over 50% have a friend or relative working in construction (p9)
 - nearly 80% had visited a construction site (p10)
 - 70% are considering working in construction (p13)
 - a fifth had worked on a construction site (p10)
 - they have a realistic view of positive and negative aspects of working in the construction industry (p21-23)
3. They are more likely to want to get a job (either with or without training) than most youngsters at that age (p13-14)
4. They are orientated towards practical and technical work
 - Their preferred subjects are Maths, Design and Technology and PE (p17-18)
 - They are keen to develop the practical aspects of the course (p14-15; p20)

Pupil attitudes

Pupils are, on the whole, extremely positive about the course, although there is evidence that they are less positive in Year 11 (p10). The high level of satisfaction, along with the knowledge of construction pointed out in the previous section, is likely to be linked to the selection procedures used. Both college tutors (p29) and teachers (p36) thought that, on the whole, selection procedures were now working very well.

Specific points related to their attitudes are presented below:

- There is a high level of satisfaction with all craft areas tried (p11)
- Course participants prefer the learning and teaching strategies at the college – these involve more practical activities, and depend on good relationships with college staff who treat youngsters as adults (p19-20). The college tutors also mention that positive relationships are important (p30).

Skill Development

There is a high level of agreement between all respondents (pupils – p15, p16; college tutors – p30; teachers – p36; key players – p42) that key skills are developed through the course, and that this is an important aspect of the programme.

Pupils felt that they developed teamworking, practical skills and, to a lesser extent, communication (p15). College tutors echoed this view (p30). The key players mentioned communication skills in particular (p42).

School/college links and communications

Pupils felt that the craft activities they took part in at college were helping them (p15-16) with Design and Technology (around 80% of pupils) and, to some extent, Maths (just over 50%). However, they were less likely to think it helped with English (just 10% thought it helped) or Science (around 20% thought it helped). None of the pupils mentioned these links in the interviews.

College tutors mentioned that they would like to see stronger links with teachers and links in college work with Science and Mathematics (p32), and the other key players (p42) were aware of links although teachers did not bring this up themselves.

Some college tutors and a minority of teachers mentioned that there although communication was good, some improvements could be made. College tutors were concerned about linking work to the school curriculum (p31-32), whereas the teachers were also concerned about tracking pupil progress and general communications with college tutors (p37). Teachers noted time constraints meant that they were unable to spend more time in college – p38.

Gender issues

The female pupils and students involved in the data collection were very aware of the male culture in the construction centre, and, in particular, the attitudes of certain boys that they should not be there (p28). Teachers also identified that there was a male culture on the courses (p39), although one of the key players noted that this was an issue for the industry as well as the centre (p44). The college tutors tended to focus on the availability of alternatives (p30), which may be preferred by some girls.

Employer links and site visits

College tutors (p32), Lifetime Careers (p33) and other key players (p42) were all concerned that site visits should be developed. This is an ongoing issue, which may be related to a lack of agreement as to who should take responsibility for them (CITB or college tutors), as well as being linked to the lack of employer representation on the steering group, as noted on p7. This has been an ongoing issue in steering groups over the past year.

Recommendations

Six key recommendations are presented below. These are aimed at helping to develop the already highly regarded and clearly positive model used at present.

- The selection procedures appear to be running smoothly, and are targeting youngsters who appear to be well suited to the construction crafts. However, there is a need to develop options that will attract youngsters to the professional and technical areas. GNVQs are a possibility, but are as yet not completely trusted by schools. There is evidence that youngsters do not think about professional/technical options, for example, Year 9 pupils and GNVQ pupils discussed 'construction' purely in terms of craft occupations.

Recommendation 1: Stakeholders should examine how best to promote professional/technical options further, perhaps by further developing GNVQ routes, or the new vocational GCSEs¹³.

- Teaching and learning styles in the college are viewed positively by pupils on the courses. However, with the exception of Rockley Mount Special School, the skills and knowledge learned by pupils are, on the whole, not being related to work back in school. Not only are skills being learnt that could be accredited (for example, as key skills or as part of ASDAN certification), but work that is directly relevant to Mathematics, Design and Technology, Science and, to a lesser extent, English is usually not linked back to school by pupils or by systems in schools.

Recommendation 2: Schools and the college should aim to integrate aspects of the college work into Key Skills, ASDAN and core curriculum programmes. There is a particular opportunity for the construction course to enhance pupils' literacy skills.

¹³ see press release 24th January 2001 'Blunkett urges business to back ambitious new drive to bring vocational education into the educational mainstream' at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2001_0036

- Communication between schools and the college are good, but some improvements could be made. A minority of teachers feels that they are unable to track pupil progress at the college, and regret not being able to spend more time working with youngsters in the construction centre.
Recommendation 3: More thought should be put into how best to further improve school/college communications, within the current time and cost constraints. If additional resources become available, opportunities for teachers to spend time with pupils in the construction centre (e.g. by providing money to cover classes) could be enhanced.

- At present, there appear to be limited links with employers, at least in terms of the steering group and the provision of site visits.
Recommendation 4: Renewed attempts should be made to more fully involve employers in the initiative. This could involve, for example, defining a role for them in developing site visits, visiting schools during options and providing careers talks.

- Some female participants are put off by the male-orientated culture of the course, and by the negative attitudes of some male participants towards them. There are indications (p39) that in some schools the gender imbalance is accepted.
Recommendation 5: Further thought should be put into how best to make courses more female-friendly. This could involve work with the schools that have already developed strategies for encouraging girls to take more traditionally masculine options. National CITB initiatives for encouraging girls into construction could be investigated further¹⁴

¹⁴ For example, the CITB national Women Into Construction conferences

- Once pupils have left school, current procedures to track former pre-16 course participants have limited success, even where youngsters move on to courses (other than construction) within the college.

Recommendation 6: Further work should be done to improve tracking of former participants post-16 alongside development of procedures to track progression within the college.

Appendix: Summary of Issues and Data Sources

Issue	Employee IS	Employer IS	Placement teacher IS	Teacher IS	Training provider IS	Y10/11 pupil IS
background to initiative		4			4	
career destinations	4			4	4	
careers knowledge	4		4	4		4
course organisation					4	
enjoyment	4					4
gender issues				4		
impact on school				4		4
impact on teachers			4			
improvements		4	4		4	
Key Skills				4		4
learning outcomes	4	4			4	4
level of involvement		4			4	
management issues					4	
outcomes		4	4		4	4
placement organisation		4				
preliminary details	4	4	4	4	4	4
pupil feedback	4			4		4
pupil links to industry						4
qualifications						4
recommend to others	4		4			
success		4			4	
support	4					4
teacher feedback			4	4		
usefulness	4		4	4		4

IS = Interview schedule