



SECTION 4

**D: Sensory and/or Physical Needs:
Physical Disabilities**

PHYSICAL/PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR USE OF PROGRESS FILE FOR MEDICALLY FRAGILE PUPILS

Access to the use of Progress File may be restricted for medically fragile pupils in the following ways (there will be others – this list is primarily aimed at stimulating further discussion).

1. Use of standing frames, wedges, splints, hoists and wheelchairs could affect use of workbooks, CD ROMs in a practical way with regard to access to equipment in school – including resources to support tasks.
2. 'Medical programmes' may intervene in timetable terms and pupils may miss the 'group discussions' ie
 - occupational therapy
 - speech therapy
 - nurse
 - changing/toiletry
3. The materials created so far make little use of symbols in written or CD format and may require addition to ensure clarity of text for some pupils.
4. Some pupils will require either readers or signing to allow for access to the text/CD ROM.
5. All medically fragile pupils will have missed schooling in varying amounts and as such often require reinforcement of key concepts in understanding new topics. A key worker (preferably the same one) will be required to interpret meanings on a one to one basis.
6. In some cases the pupil will also require a scribe. These two support staff will need some in-set as to the delivery of the programme of study.
7. Medication: Some pupils will take regular medication and this may affect concentration. Key staff will require to 'focus-attention' and to ensure appropriate medication enhances access to pupils.
9. Immaturity/Puberty: Some pupils will be confused with regard to some of the self-reflection tasks, as awareness of 'adult-perceptions' can be inhibited by immature responses and delays/or onset of puberty (rampant hormones).

5. CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1

Gay Keegan

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VERSION OF PROGRESS FILE MATERIALS USED:

Getting Started: Wake up to Learning

Pages 27 to 29

Tips for Teachers – Getting Started

TARGET GROUP:

These materials were used with a group of eight Year 11 pupils of both sexes (4 girls and 4 boys) in an all age special school (3-16 years) for pupils with physical impairments and associated learning difficulties.

These youngsters have complex and multiple problems with ability levels within the moderate learning difficulties range, though they may have additional specific learning difficulties in various areas. There were three wheelchair users in the group and impairments included Frederick's Ataxia, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, severe visual impairment and a non-verbal child who was a high technology voice output communication aid user.

CONTEXT

The session was held in the pupils' usual classroom setting in the school's senior department between 11.00 am and 12.30 pm. I led the session; there were two adult support staff also present and the class teacher observed the session.

PLANNING

On two previous visits I had discussed the Progress File materials with the class teacher who is also the senior teacher with responsibility for the transition process for school leavers and liaison between the school and the pupils' future colleges/ subsequent placements. I had negotiated the timing and availability of this group for the exercise.

CHANGES TO MATERIALS

Before the session, I modified the materials to give:

- 1) a larger type face and simplified layout
- 2) colour and pictures
- 3) a reduction in the information on each sheet
- 4) removal of some difficult vocabulary.

RESOURCES USED

The two supporting adults were required to scribe for two of the pupils. I had copied sheets for each child.

OUTCOMES

The group were welcoming and well-motivated. They attended well and co-operated with all requests. They were not overly anxious – I am a familiar adult frequently in the school. I have worked with some of them individually before and I am also a wheelchair user.

It became immediately apparent that these pupils could not complete these activities independently. I spent about thirty minutes explaining the vocabulary used in the first activity – the Personal Qualities Quiz. I explained what was meant by “personal qualities” and we tried to think of examples to define the words used in the quiz, eg “tactful”; “responsible”; “helpful”. Three pupils dominated the responses, three of the others replied when individually questioned, but appeared to have more difficulties conceptually with the words used. The pupil using a communication aid could not find the vocabulary he needed to define “enthusiastic”, though non-verbally he indicated that this was how he felt about football.

The pupils were asked to rate themselves on the scale. I spent about five minutes explaining how to use the rating scale. However we all overlooked that 4, the “highest” score on the scale was actually a “don’t know” category. The pupils were cautioned by their class teacher not just to give themselves “high” scores on everything which they had a tendency to do, since all the personal qualities were so positive.

The pupils were asked to choose a partner to score them on the qualities. We had to find some strips of paper to cover up the scores already given, as the partners tended to copy these. Again very high scores were given on almost all “qualities” by partners. The class teacher offered to complete the ratings scales as he saw them for each pupil so that his ratings could be compared to the pupil’s own self-ratings.

Out of 21 possible ratings there was a mean of 4 ratings (range 0-7) where the pupil’s ratings matched the teachers. In many cases the ratings were opposite (mean 7.5 range 4-11). For this calculation a mid-point rating of 2 (discounted that scale). One youngster with severe visual impairment had difficulty visually matching the line of the rating scale with the word, so some were missed whilst others were double scored, making 6 void).

The pupils enjoyed this game but I am not clear what was actually achieved. It did become apparent that these pupils tend to have an unrealistic view of themselves and others – an extremely positive one within the context of the school, which promotes a positive ethos and environment. However the pupils comments throughout were not self-evaluative or aimed at seeking self-improvement and personal growth (though this may be somewhat typical of immature adolescents).

The pupils were then asked to add any qualities they wanted to the bottom of the list. This produced the following responses:

fit
clean
nice boy
play good
work OK
good looking (2)
smart appearance
talkative
funny
music
easy
mad
trustworthy

This gives a flavour of the perceptions and vocabulary level of these youngsters.

The second activity asked the pupils to give examples of what they had done which proved that they had the designated quality. The following responses were received:

My Personal Qualities

What I've Done

Neat

I tidy up all the time.
At tidying up my Beanie babies.
I am a very neat writer and I am a very neat person who cares about the work I do.

Hardworking

Hard work with my writing and reading.

Sense of humour

That I'm nice for kids and I am happy and got nice hair.
I tell jokes.

Determined to go to college

I've visited and I've got a place for September.

Helpful

I helped people with their coats and help them with their work.
Help people with their work or other things.
I am creative.

Polite

Talk with respect.
I say please and thank you.
I would open the door.

Friendly

Hang around with friends and help them.
I talk to people.

Creative

Draw a picture.

	At drawing.
Determined	Always play to win.
Enthusiastic	Always take a very active part in school activities.
Patient	Helping out at lunchtimes with younger children.
Adventurous	Go out a lot.
Easy going	At reading books. Not angry.
Fit	I do lots of swimming.

This seemed a more useful exercise and it encouraged the pupils to think how some of these qualities applied to them. However it also revealed immaturity and continuing lack of understanding with regard to some of the vocabulary for some youngsters.

CONCLUSIONS

The above detailed description outlines what worked well and what were the difficulties with the materials used. Learning outcomes were as follows:

Learning Outcomes for Pupils:

- 1) The pupils were introduced to the vocabulary of personal qualities.
- 2) They began to think of things they do which illustrate that they have these qualities.

Learning Outcomes for Teacher:

- 1) The naiveté and unrealistic outlook of these youngsters from the “special” environment – the need for further preparation for the realities of the outside world. However there is no clear evidence that these materials are the most appropriate vehicle for this.
- 2) The need to differentiate these materials considerably and support their delivery and implementation with these pupils.
- 3) Further thought needs to be given to recording achievement and to give consideration to the introduction of reality into the process by:
 - a) removing demeaning activities
 - b) introducing visual representations of tasks
 - c) creating transition to work activities with relevance and reality.

Case Study 2: SCOPE Colwyn Bay
Contact: Chris Alsop

MATERIALS USED:

Progress File "Broadening Horizons"
Skills Page 12
Key Skills Page 14, 15

TARGET GROUP:

8 people whose disabilities include:

- Turner Syndrome
- Mitochondrial Disease
- Heart condition
- Moderate learning difficulties
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Asperger's syndrome

This group have voluntarily joined one of the 10 first tranche New Deal Innovative Schemes for disabled people called "Disability Business Partnerships". This provides for a 8-10 week personal development programme before individual support to get jobs.

The material from "Broadening Horizons" was incorporated into a job choice profile as part of a confidence building module. The group meets once a week for 2 hours.

In the end only the ideas matrix was used from Broadening Horizons page 13, and even this needed considerable explanation through discussion (eg what is an inventory, a blueprint, machinery, does driving include learning to drive?)

Experiences in sessions suggests that it is best to avoid too much written work and move quickly into inter-active elements. These can be developed as ways to practice conversational skills, going to meet an employer, having a guest speaker.

This same material could be used with less adaptation with another group under the same scheme which incorporate older adults. This second group will include people with mental health problems, physical disabilities but no learning difficulties.

Case Study 3: Support into Work

Contact: Anita Elwell

MATERIALS USED:

Widening Horizons – Planning how to move on

TARGET GROUP:

Adults with physical health problems in training with training provider

CONTEXT FOR USE:

As an additional activity to boost confidence at the beginning of Planning how to move on (WH page 35).

This is an individual activity to help clients feel positive about moving forward and choosing a career direction.

SESSION PLAN

Aims:

- ? ***To help clients feel positive about “moving forward”***
- ? ***To help clients identify issues about choosing a job***
- ? ***To help clients identify the barriers to making progress***

Method:

Client completes questionnaire

Talking through answers helping client to identify personal priorities and how to look for these in making applications for jobs.

Resources:

Widening Horizons and questionnaire (see next page).

Evaluation: What worked well?

- ? Clients' responses to experiences of work and being well/badly managed.
- ? Opportunity to set goals about personal priorities, eg “I will take more care to read adverts and job descriptions so that I can get some ideas about how companies value people”.
- ? It gives the trainer the opportunity to discuss the effects of positive and negative attitudes in the workplace.
- ? It gives the trainer the opportunity to discuss the effects of physical working conditions, hours, holidays etc on clients' health problems.

QUESTIONNAIRE

What is important to you about work?

Rate each of these factors on a scale of 1-7 where 1 is high.

1. The physical work condition
2. The freedom to choose your own method of working
3. Your fellow workers
4. The recognition for good work
5. The supervision you receive
6. The amount of responsibility you are given
7. Your rate of pay
8. Your opportunity to use your abilities
9. The chance of promotion
10. The way your organisation is managed
11. The attention paid to suggestions you make
12. Your hours of work
13. Holidays
14. Your job security
15. The training you receive
16. Relationships in your office/department/section
17. The quality of relationships between yours and other departments.