Evaluating the Connexions Card Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects

CRG

Research Report RR318

Evaluating the Connexions Card Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects

CRG

CONTENTS

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Overview

CRG were commissioned in November 1999 by what was then DfEE[1] to carry out the national evaluation of eight local 'Learning Card Demonstration Projects' which had been set up in Leeds, Bradford, Northumberland/ Durham, Tyneside, Merseyside, Nottingham, Essex and Humberside. The Demonstration Projects had been set up to look at a range of approaches to implementing an IT-based Card system for young people, to encourage *"greater levels of participation and attainment in learning*[2]*"* The Projects were deliberately intended to be exploratory – gaining an understanding of features which seemed not to work in practice, as well as those which did.

The objectives for the national evaluation are summarised in Figure 1.

Fig 1

National Evaluation Objectives
<u>Aim:</u>
- Draw out lessons from across all Demonstration Projects which will inform the further development of Learning Card and, in particular, inform future decisions about a national role for an IT-based Card
<u>Objectives:</u>
- Assess the extent to which an IT-based Card system contributes towards the achievement of the objectives of Learning Card (see Fig. 2) and any additional objectives set for it at the level of the local Demonstration Projects
- Assess the relative contribution of each core function (see Fig. 3) to the achievement of the objectives
- Identify the conditions which need to be in place for an IT-based Learning Card to be successful in meeting national and local objectives
- Identify (and where possible quantify) the key outcomes and costs from the use of Learning Card for both the individual and organisation who promote its use
- Assess how outcomes and costs come about, how they vary across key functions and technologies
- Identify the extent to which outcomes are sustainable over the longer term
- Identify the extent to which the key outcomes are additional to those anticipated from other initiatives (including non-IT based Leaning Card)
- Form a judgement about whether the degree of additionality represents value for money in relation to the costs of the Learning Card
- Identify factors which influence and explain variations in the way in which an IT Learning Card is used (by reference to) similar groups of individuals and in similar organisations across all Demonstration Projects

---

[1]   For this report the current terms 'DfES' and 'Connexions Card' are used, rather than earlier ones (e.g. 'DfEE', Learning Card) unless the context requires what are now superseded terms to be used.

The national evaluation was extended in May 2000, linked to agreements to upgrade three of the Demonstration Projects (Northumberland/Durham, Nottingham, Merseyside) to 'Pathfinder Projects', further testing out a number of Demonstration Project features as well as several additional functions. A fourth Pathfinder was also established in Bracknell at the same time.

The overall position has developed yet further since then, as plans have been established to roll-out what has become the Connexions Card across the whole of England through a major Public Private Partnership (PPP), starting in September 2001.

Faced with high levels of interest in the achievements of the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects, associated with emerging plans for the national Connexions Card, two substantial interim reports were produced for this evaluation - in August 2000 and May 2001 respectively. These were intended not only as a means of reporting back to the evaluation steering group, but to feed into broader Connexions Card policies, and a number of meetings and presentations of interim findings took place around the time of these reports.

This - final - report draws heavily on the two large-scale interim reports, but considers Projects' overall performance and achievements for the whole of their operational lives, including additional data gathered up to the end of August 2001.

In brief, the experiences of the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects have been rich and extraordinarily varied. They were always designed to be experimental, drawing out lessons from practical experience, so that in the longer-term it might be possible to 'cherry-pick' from the approaches and solutions they were able to explore. Certainly much has been learned about what works - and does not work - when implementing ambitious, complex, multi-Agency Projects like these.

---

[2] For Objectives for the Learning Card and Demonstration Projects themselves see Figs. 2 and 3 below.

A great deal of practical experience can certainly be pointed to. In just over two years Project staff have designed and installed complex IT systems, distributed many thousands of Cards, engaged significant numbers of schools and colleges in their Projects, recruited appreciable numbers of commercial-sector sponsors, and much else.

It has to be said, though, that many technical challenges have been taxing in the extreme, achieving 'buy-in' from key stakeholders has been variable (sometimes very disappointing), and the levels of resources and effort required to make any progress often sizeable.

The Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects[3] will now start to 'migrate' into the national Connexions Card roll-out with, typically, a legacy of established links, contacts and skills to build on. As always envisaged, however, results from the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects have been mixed. In particular, one Project[4] had largely wound up its operations by the summer of 2001, and a second,[5] which had carried out a fundamental redesign and relaunch early in 2000, had to cope with an embargo on involvement from the Local Education Authority in its area for most of the year 2001.

The view of the evaluation team is clear, however: no Project has 'failed.' The range of technical solutions, stakeholder links and other features were never likely to be completely successful in all areas, and the core purpose of both Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects has been to learn lessons about what does – and does not – work in practice. All have learned a great deal and the information they have gathered should be invaluable to the national Connexions Card roll-out and the development of broader policies in these crucial personal growth, social inclusion and overall competitiveness agendas.

---

[3] With the probable exclusion of Leeds.
[4] Leeds
[5] Tyneside

The research team are deeply grateful to many people for helping us in this complex and often challenging evaluation. Particular thanks must go to Project managers with each of the nine Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects, to Dr Ian Drummond - Project manager at DfES - for much wise counsel, and to the other members of the evaluation steering group - Ian Bland (Humberside Partnership), Christine Fitzsimmons (Essex Careers Guidance), Tom Delaney (Bracknell Forest Borough Council), Jo-An Higginbottom, Fiona McCulla, Christine Munday and Lindsay Jackson (all DfES) for much support, information, guidance and encouragement. The responsibilities for any errors or omissions in this report rests with CRG, however.

1.2   The Learning, Youth and Connexions Cards

The concept of what a Card-based initiative directed to young people might consist of has progressed significantly over the last three years, so we think it important to summarise, briefly, what has led up to current plans for what will soon become the national Connexions Card programme. The main elements have been:

- A 'dumb' Learning Card (i.e. without any IT-linked features) was introduced across England in January 1998 (for objectives see Fig. 2). With strictly limited features, responses to this Card often showed low levels of enthusiasm, but it was soon identified that this Card might be able to provide a basis from which 'smart' features could be introduced.

Fig. 2.

Learning Card Objectives

Overall Objective:
- to contribute towards an increase in levels of participation and attainment in learning amongst the 16 –19 year old age group and to enable everyone, through the best possible opportunities in education, training and work, to enjoy a fulfilling life, to have a stake in society and increase Britain's competitiveness in the 21st century.

Intermediate Objectives:
- to increase young peoples' awareness of their entitlement to learning and of the choice of qualifications and providers available
- to empower and motivate young people for the provision of guidance and information across all routes, thus encouraging them to participate in education and training
- to encourage young people to make (more) active, considered choices and take (more) responsibility for their own choices
- to reduce the number of young people changing options because their first choice is unsuitable, and for more young people to complete their courses successfully
- to improve the responsiveness of providers to young peoples' needs.

- Following a feasibility study (reporting in April 1999) DfEE invited bids for what were then described as 'Learning Card Demonstration Projects' to develop and introduce a range of IT-based Cards building on the 'dumb' Learning Cards with a varied mix of 'smart' features. These additional features are described in Fig. 3; different Projects have developed different combinations of functions. Successful bidders were based around Careers Companies operating in Tyneside (Gateshead); Northumberland/ Durham; Bradford; Leeds; Essex (Thurrock); Merseyside (Knowsley); Nottingham; and Humberside (North-East Lincolnshire including Grimsby). The Demonstration Projects themselves started in late 1999/early 2000.

Fig. 3

Functions tested through the Demonstration Projects
• providing a mechanism for recording attendance and tracking young people electronically
• providing a mechanism for accessing/validating entitlement to the Education Maintenance Allowance
• providing access to an internet careers package
• providing a means of rewarding young people for participation and attainment
• providing a means of storing information on young people which, for example, will help in the enrolment process.

- In October 1999, the Prime Minister announced the development of the smart 'Youth Card' that would encourage young people to stay in learning through several features, including facilitating reduced costs of transport and learning materials. A decision was taken subsequently that the Card should be called the Connexions Card to emphasise links with the Connexions Service – both offering support to young people to make the most of their talents.

- In May 2000, linked to plans for a wider roll-out of the Connexions Card, DfES reached agreement to promote 4 'Pathfinder Projects' with objectives including *"building on Demonstration Projects' experience by testing key Card functions in greater depth across a range of environments".* Three Pathfinder Projects (Merseyside, Northumberland/Durham, Nottingham) were migrated from existing Demonstration Projects; a fourth Pathfinder Project has been implemented in Bracknell by the Borough Council's Education Department, linked to the existing 'Edge' Card being developed by Bracknell Forest Borough Council. The 'Edge' Card's initial focus was to provide loyalty/ reward incentives to encourage shopping in Bracknell town centre, but a range of additional functions were already under active consideration by the Council.

- As a result of a competitive bidding process and agreements reached during the early part of 2001, the Connexions Card is to be delivered through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) involving DfES and Capita as the private sector partner. A geographically phased roll-out will commence during autumn 2001, starting in the North East. The Card will be available throughout England by September 2002, with a progressive growth in the numbers of young people and institutions involved throughout the period of the roll-out.

It is important to note that objectives set for the Learning/ Connexions Card are far from free-standing, but closely linked to major concerns about relatively low numbers of young people continuing into learning post-16, and the limited achievements of a sizeable proportion of those who do continue into learning – often linked to early drop-out. These issues had been brought into particularly sharp focus by the report 'Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training'[6]. Longer term consequences of poor national levels of adult literacy and numeracy have been further highlighted by the Moser Report[7]. National level concerns about current levels of learning are summarised in Fig. 4, drawn from the White Paper 'Learning to Succeed'[8]

---

[6] Report by the Social Exclusion Unit: Cm 4405 (July 1999)
[7] *"Improving Literacy and Numeracy – A Fresh Start"* Report of the Working Group Chaired by Sir Claus Moser. DfEE 1999.
[8] Cm 4392 June 1999

Fig. 4

Areas of Concern Over Current Levels of Learning – Particularly for Young People (from White Paper "Learning to Succeed")
• low levels of national productivity, by international standards • low levels of technical/intermediate skills, by comparison with key international competitors • low rates of learning and staying-on rates at 16 (focusing particularly on approximately 160,000 young people between 16 and 19 – around 1 in 11 of the age group – who are neither in learning nor in work) • a cycle of deprivation and disadvantage, whereby people with low skills and poor qualifications are the least able to respond to the challenges of the knowledge-based economy • particular difficulties faced by people with special needs • poor levels of Basic Skills amongst adults, for example, the one in five adults with a lower level of literacy than is expected of an 11 year old, and the further findings of the Moser report[9] which stresses the wide range of disadvantages which low Basic Skills mean • skills shortages and recruitment difficulties for employers, based around 'skills gaps' between what employers need and the skills that potential recruits possess • patchy support, advice and guidance to young people: although many successful initiatives can be pointed to, *"the picture is far from consistent and the volume and quality of service is not uniform"* • too much learning provision which is unsuited to the needs of learners, in particular provision which poorly addresses the needs of those reluctant to learn through 'classroom' environments or who need to learn in flexible ways. Conversely there is, of course, a good deal of evidence that with the 'right sort of' learning provision, individuals can learn very quickly indeed, despite serious disadvantages in other areas

1.3   The Evaluations

Each Demonstration and Pathfinder Project has been required to carry out a local evaluation as part of its contractual arrangements with DfES, with CRG being available to provide advice and support to the local evaluators, as well as carrying out the national evaluation itself.

---

[9] op cit.

The data collection programme for the national evaluation has been based around:

- Monthly returns submitted by the Projects to CRG and to DfES (a copy of the blank proforma used is given in Appendix 1). These cover:
    - progress with Card distribution
    - progress against key milestones
    - 'good news stories' and other points of interest
    - attendance data
    - data on those thought to be dropping out of learning
    - data on contact with Careers
    - take-up of rewards and discounts
    - usage of websites
    - comments received from young people and other stakeholders
    - attainment data

- 4 rounds of visits to the initial 8 Projects - centred on December 1999, March 2000, June 2000 and February/March 2001 (visits to Bracknell took place in the autumn of 2000 and March 2001) at which face to face discussions have been carried out with Project management staff and other 'stakeholders' (including teachers/lecturers, school/college administration staff, suppliers, managers, young people using Cards)

- 2 questionnaire surveys distributed to samples of young people holding Cards in the Spring of 2000 and one year later

- A workshop for representatives of all Projects and DfES held in York on April 2nd and 3rd 2001, which looked at what had been learned from experiences so far – including what results had been achieved, what had helped achieve good results, what problems had arisen, how problems had been overcome and what areas look as if they will need attention in the future. A principle outcome from this workshop was the 'messages to the roll-out' summary given in Appendix 3

- Interim internal evaluation reports, submitted by Projects to DfES in March/April 2001 and final reports submitted during July/ August 2001

- A series of very helpful inputs from the evaluation steering group

- Attending all-Project meetings with DfES, and reviewing paperwork produced for these meetings

- A range of ancillary data sources including telephone contacts with Projects, attending local steering groups, reviewing local progress reports, etc.

As part of the national evaluation, the CRG team were available to give advice and support to local evaluators. This included devising a preferred format for local evaluations, issuing a 'guidance' paper, and carrying out a range of additional discussions with individual Projects – for example to clarify issues raised (or not raised) in monthly data returns[10] - which in turn gave useful contextual information for the national evaluation.

We have pointed out already that substantial interim reports were produced in August 2000 and May 2001. The overriding theme identified in the first interim report was the **delays** being encountered by Projects at that time in meeting planned milestones - although it was pointed that, for example, in early-stage feasibility study anticipated that anything up to seven years might be needed to implement complex IT based systems, rather than the two years envisaged for Demonstration/ Pathfinder Projects. Delays were difficult to foresee, and often arose in areas previously considered quite 'solid' by Project managers, for example simply achieving delivery of Cards ordered from suppliers and encouraging those who had previously offered full support to do so.

A comparable theme for the second interim report was the **'considerable efforts and inputs'** needed to make even limited progress against the challenges that had been identified during the early stages of the Demonstration/ Pathfinder Projects (for example achieving effective stakeholder 'buy-in', developing truly robust IT systems).

---

[10] See Appendix 1.

A key indicator of progress made by Projects during their first 1-2 years of operations was identified as simply achieving practical Card distribution, and Table 1[11] summarises different rates of progress made, and some of the reasons why delays arose.

For the rest of this report, Section 2 focuses on progress made by the Projects, including case studies for each one and an up-to-date review of achievements in relation to a series of key themes, tracked through both of the two interim reports.

Section 3 reviews responses from different categories of stakeholders - particularly important, in the view of the research team, because successful performance has usually depended on achieving active support from most - if not all - individuals and organisations involved: at worst, relatively small sub-groups have been able to cause major delays (occasionally abandonments) for significant elements of whole Projects.

Section 4 gives a comprehensive review of what has been learned in relation to different Card functions (see Fig. 3) and Section 5 draws overall conclusions for this evaluation – including a list of recommendations which draws on issues raised at different points within the rest of the report.

Important data is included in the appendices too: for example, plans for two large-scale comparative surveys of users could only be carried out in part, because of delays in issuing Cards to young people. Data from the second survey (April 2001) is given in Appendix 4, but comments from both surveys – given in Appendices 5 and 6, represent - we believe - important indications about what young people 'really think' about the Card and what it offers.

---

[11] See section 2; a combination of data presented in the first and second interim reports.

2.   PROJECTS' PROGRESS

2.1   The Projects

It is important to remember that the 9 Projects were always designed to differ appreciably in a number of their characteristics including:

- Technologies employed (with great variety in hardware, software, data transfer arrangements, magnetic stripe/chip platforms, etc.)
- Different target groups (e.g. all young people in a locality; targeted schools only; FE).
- Different kinds of areas (e.g. urban, rural, conurbations)
- Differing funding and resourcing patterns. Projects' funding was the subject of individual negotiations with DfES; significant additional funds were also provided for Demonstration Projects migrating to Pathfinders.
- Links to existing Cards (e.g. Bracknell's links to the 'Edge' Card; Tyneside's partnership with the MML/WorldCard programme).
- Card/ system functionality (a variety of features linked to EMA, auto-enrolment etc - see Fig. 3).
- Different approaches to offering rewards and discounts.
- Local functions/ features (e.g. e-purse, transport arrangements, library access systems, etc.)

Case studies for each of the Projects are given later in this section, noting both some of the key characteristics of the local Projects, but also progress made throughout what is close to being 2 years of operation for most Projects[12].

In practice, there have been a number of major changes to plans for several Projects: we look at these on a case-by-case basis later. As well as the issue of straightforward 'slippage', formal revisions to Project plans, agreed with DfES, were apparent in a number of cases (notably the Pathfinder Projects) and elsewhere (notably Tyneside) fundamental changes to Project plans, milestones, objectives and partners had to be put in place.

---

[12] Less than 1 year in the case of Bracknell

2.2　Progress with Projects

We pointed out in Section 1 that most Projects encountered delays and early-stage difficulties - which in a number of cases still have not been fully resolved, although this has been the focus for a great deal of learning, which does need to be recognised.

We look at this point on a Project by Project basis later, principally through the case-studies, but also through a group of themes which have been tracked throughout the course of the evaluation. Nevertheless as a simple summary of progress being achieved at different points during the course of the Projects, it is convenient to refer to Table 1, which combines data drawn from the first and second interim reports. This table gives details of the rates at which Cards were issued to young people, some of the factors behind slower-than-envisaged progress, and some of the other constraints upon achieving full functionality which emerged - even when Cards **were** successfully issued.

Table 1: Summary of Projects' Progress in Issuing IT-Based Learning/ Connexions Cards to Young People

Name of Project	Initial plans for issuing Learning Cards: 1999/2000; (similar figures planned for 2000/2001)	Number of Cards Issued up to July 2000	Number of Cards issued up to May 2001	Functionality				
				Swiping for Attendance	Show and Go Discounts (note 7)	Rewards	Proof of Age	E-Purse
Merseyside (pathfinder)	4,400: November 1999 - January 2000	229	2,500 (note 1)	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	NA
Leeds	8,000 although only around 1,500 planned to be used in full (at local FE colleges): Autumn 1999 on.	16,141	16,141	Maximum of 400	NA	NA	NA	NA
Humberside	3,700: Autumn 1999 onwards	2,104	2,700	100 (note 2)	2,700	2,700	NA	NA
Bradford	4,100: starting September 1999	7,844	7,693	NA (note 3)	5,646	60 (Claimed)	NA	NA
Essex	3,000: Autumn 1999/ Spring 2000	2,635	3,262	2,020	3,262	2,020	NA	NA
Nottingham (pathfinder)	2,500: Autumn 1999	180	2,573	2,573 (note 4)	2,573	2,573	478	**NA**
Northumberland (pathfinder)	5,000: January 2000 onwards	250	5,552	1,725	5,552	1,725	5,552	NA
Tyneside	2,000: Autumn 1999 (note 6)	0	2,188	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bracknell (pathfinder)	(note 5)	NA	1,200	485	1,200	485	1,200	800

Source: Monthly data collection proformas, internal evaluation reports and direct from Project staff – hence minor differences with figures in Appendix 2.

Notes: 1: Approximately 1,500 fully functional Cards activated during April/ May 2001

2: This number declining due to major changes to Project during 2001: see section 2.4

3: Bradford Project does not (now) include swiping for attendance. Internet-based system allows access from any internet linked site

4: Approximately 2,000 functional Cards issued April/ May 2001:

5: Bracknell Project started later than others. Cards issued from January 2001 only. 485 'swipable' Cards issued, with approximately 800 more used for school meals functions

6: Major Project redesign and re-launch, early 2001. Gateshead Cards currently not in use due to local authority intervention. Cards may be distributed in Newcastle (outside the Project area) shortly.

7: Estimates: most discounters cannot provide accurate figures of redemptions.

2.3   Projects' Progress – Key Themes

Projects' performance has been monitored by CRG and DfES through monthly data returns (See Appendix 1 for the proforma used, agreed through meetings with the Projects themselves). The proforma was designed mainly to collect quantitative data to provide some measure of progress against milestones over time. The proforma did, however, also allow for the collection of relevant qualitative data to supplement the figures. A numerical analysis of monthly data returns is given in Appendix 2 and comments/qualitative information are drawn on throughout the report.

A series of themes underpinning Projects' performance have been tracked through the interim reports, and further developed at, for example, the York workshop (see Appendix 3). These themes summarise some of the key factors which have been identified as helping achieve or constrain successful progress by Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects. What we believe to be the principal themes to note are given below.

Technical Issues

The first Interim Report noted major challenges for several Projects in simply getting equipment delivered and installed. Over and above this, appreciable work had often been required to develop systems, and ensure reliability in key areas including data transfer, reporting, system reliability, etc. In a number of instances additional software had been developed to counteract problems arising during system implementation. In particular there had been unexpectedly high levels of errors in databases made available by schools, colleges and local education authorities so that information held about young people in the target cohorts was frequently inaccurate, out of date and generally unreliable. Errors in spelling of young peoples' names, multiple entries, missing records, failures to eliminate records of young people known to have left the area and a range of other inaccuracies were widespread.

Over the past 12 months, many of these early-stage problems were steadily resolved, but only after major efforts and much learning on the part of Project staff. For example *"Following the initial orders and the delivery of these there has been a marked decrease in the level of support and development offered without further payment. The systems … did not have the functionality now*

required for the attendance monitoring of students in all/ any of the institutions … (our) staff have had to spend considerable time writing software for basic procedures that were absent from the system originally purchased …" (Nottingham internal evaluation report).

More worryingly, several significant technical challenges have not yet been solved – for a variety of reasons, often quite outside Project staff's control. We look at these in more detail later, but reliable systems for recording and aggregating attendance data, achieving 'smart' operation on buses, rapid points redemption, getting management information (MIS) data back to schools/ colleges and fulfilling other functions (links to EMA, autoenrolment, etc.) have not been achievable within several of the Projects so far and – with the national roll-out rapidly approaching – will have to wait until what are hoped to be more robust and better developed systems are provided through the PPP.

Figures for issuing Cards (see Table 1; also Appendix 2) show great variation. Where relatively low numbers were issued in the early months by comparison with initial plans (e.g. Nottingham, Merseyside) this usually linked into Projects' arrangements for issuing Cards only when supporting systems (e.g. for 'swiping') were in place, with Cards begin distributed to users only with a full explanation. Elsewhere, much larger numbers were issued, before most Cards could be 'swiped'[13] - if only to allow young people to take advantage of features like 'show and go' discounts, proof of age and web-site access. Questions can be asked, however, about how fully functional Cards like these really have been.

Levels of reissues (see Table ii, Appendix 2) often link closely to issue patterns (the more Cards are issued, the more need to be re-issued because of loss, errors, malfunctions; if Cards are actively used by young people, they ask for lost Cards to be replaced promptly, etc). Reissue rates are never high, however; 2% seems to be a typical maximum annual rate and many Projects have achieved much lower figures.

---

[13] Depends on local features – not all Projects include 'swiping' features.

Instances of detected fraud and misuse have not been high. Several Projects have reported occasional deliberate damage to Card readers (inserting card or gum into reader-heads is the commonest) – but this has mainly been a problem with fixed readers, rather than portable readers used by several Projects and a feature of the national roll-out. There have also been examples of pupils swapping or tampering with Cards; and at least one example where young people have taken advantage of careless security by teachers. Misuse has **not** emerged as a significant problem so far, however.

Rewards, Discounts, Website 'hits'.

Considerable efforts have been needed to build up good-quality reward/ discount 'offers' (we return to this in Section 4). Again, information about rewards and discounts taken up, website 'hits' and other activity has been patchy (the varied progress made by Projects is an important factor, but not the only one). Where data is available (e.g. Merseyside, Bradford) it is becoming apparent that significant usage numbers can rapidly build up (see Appendix 2, Tables vi, vii). There is a need for both a good 'offer', however, and well developed means by which young people can take advantage of rewards/ discounts/ other features on offer.

Gaining Buy-in

Projects generally received good **formal** support from key (usually senior) individuals in schools/colleges. At the time of the first Interim Report it was pointed out that this support had *"… **not** guaranteed active on-the-ground support from teachers and others who need to monitor "swiping", transfer data, supervise young people and so on. From a strategic level it may seem that – once senior level commitment to proceed is given – everything else should be a straightforward line-management issue. At a local level though, individual members of staff may well see things differently… In practice limited sanctions are usually available if tasks are not carried out fully, or at all."*

This remains well and truly a 'live issue'. Experience is rapidly building up about successful strategies for maximising 'buy-in' (see outcomes from York workshop – Appendix 3), but - to a greater or lesser extent – this issue of gaining on-the-ground staff commitment remains a serious concern for all Projects, despite heavy time inputs, extensive training and familiarisation,

considerable 'hand-holding' and a range of other means by which teachers, lecturers and administration staff receive support.

At worst, limited 'buy-in' has threatened Projects' whole operations and viability. For example: *"Some schools and colleges would not even consider taking part in the Project and although it was endorsed by the Director of Education … they would not be swayed"* (Tyneside internal evaluation report). More recently the Gateshead Project *"… has not made much progress since April. During this time an embargo had been placed on using the Cards and technology in any Gateshead school …"* (by Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council) ... *"no progress has been made with FE as these institutions prefer to wait until the Connexions Card… training providers again have not been keen to get involved. Teachers and other organisations have, at times, expressed great concern and confusion over what is happening…" (*Tyneside internal evaluation report).

The more general picture is one of useful progress being made, but only after substantial efforts on the part of Project staff and their partners.

"It has been necessary for Project team members to spend considerable time at the schools to 'hand hold' them through the installation, promotion and training …" (Essex internal evaluation report)
" … (school) representatives had differing expectations in terms of organisational needs in order to fit existing systems and procedures – it was difficult if not sometimes impossible to reconcile these differences." (Humberside internal evaluation report)
"A Project such as this needs to win friends within schools. Without friends and supporters on the teaching staff (and the IT team) it will struggle. … it is very often forgotten that schools regard subject teaching as the main priority. Everything else is secondary, the best you can hope for is to be regarded as a positive support to teaching (via improved motivation and attendance)" (Bradford internal evaluation report)

Logistics

The first Interim Report pointed out the major physical challenges involved with collating information about large numbers of young people, producing photographs and adding them to Cards, making up 'packs' with ancillary material, and achieving reliable distribution to the young people themselves.

Each individual Card is, of course, fairly small, but when several thousand are involved, perhaps linked to supporting material arriving on several substantial pallets, significant workloads for clerical and administrative staff have been a feature of most Projects' experiences so far.

Clearly appropriate resourcing and good systems help to make sure these tasks are completed satisfactorily, but the scale of what needs to be done must not be underestimated. Projects have increasingly built up procedures and expertise (sometimes contracted out, as in Tyneside) to carry out the tasks of taking many photographs, printing thousands of Cards, making up packs, distribution to tutor groups and the rest - but: "*A local delivery team needs to be adequately resourced, task-orientated and dedicated. Committees do not work…*" (Bradford internal evaluation report).

Monitoring Information

The quality and quantity of monitoring data available from Projects (see particularly Appendices 1&2) has been very varied, often because of differences designed-into the Projects themselves. Project staff stressed at the outset that some of their systems simply would not generate the information requested (except, perhaps, through annual returns); that definitions (e.g. *"what exactly is attendance?")* were capable of different interpretations; and that, for some Projects, data is simply not relevant (e.g. asking about rewards for the Leeds Project, where they are not offered). However, a number of Projects have been able to provide good-quality data regularly (Bradford, for example, can provide monthly attendance data on a school-by-school basis) and this does help considerably in making soundly-based judgements about Projects' progress and achievements. For the roll-out, we do recommend that early-stage attention to agreeing definitions and establishing data collection arrangements **in detail** should be given high priority.

Contacts with Careers Companies.

Information about young people contacting Careers Companies - or being contacted by them – as a result of the Card Projects is not as extensive as we would wish. Sometimes this is because of limitations within Projects' own systems, sometimes relatively low levels of Card issuing need to be borne in mind. Nevertheless evidence from Bradford (linked to young people accessing the web site) and Essex (linked to a targeted additional rewards structure) indicates that the Card **can** act as a useful additional tool for 'tracking' and maintaining contact with young people – particularly those young people most likely to 'drop out of sight'.

2.4 Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1 – MERSEYSIDE

(Pathfinder Project)

Overview

The Merseyside Project is focused in Knowsley, ranked as the 9th most deprived borough in the country. Unemployment is high and most learning-related indicators (e.g. GCSE performance, unauthorised absences) are significantly below national averages. The key milestones for the Project, as initially established, focused on achieving formal agreements with key 'stakeholders' by November 1999, then completing Card distribution (for Year 1) by January 2000. An initial launch **was** achieved in the autumn of 1999, but Cards were issued to only a small sample (just over 200) of the overall cohort at this stage. Much was learned from this early-stage exercise, however, leading to major upgrades to IT systems, hard work to achieve teacher/lecturer 'buy-in' and build a **really** attractive rewards package. The Project has now been developed into a Pathfinder Project which has seen a change from a magnetic-stripe card to a chip based card (one school, Ruffwood, have retained their existing magnetic stripe card for use with lunch payment and other internal functions).

Project Objectives:

The current objectives for the Knowsley Pathfinder Project include:

- Extend Learning Card Demonstration Project model to cover all 16-19 education and training providers, as far as possible.
- To extend scope to reward participation in:
  - Alternative learning provision (e.g. Newstart registered programmes)
  - Other behaviours (e.g. Millennium Volunteers)
- To develop functionality of the Card to include:
  - Attendance monitoring for payment of EMAs
  - Proof of age Card
  - E-purse
  - Discounted travel

Project Challenges and Achievements:

The Merseyside Project was able to achieve a smooth transition from a Learning Card Demonstration Project to a Pathfinder Project despite a number of technical and 'human factor' issues. Despite the majority of technical glitches being resolved, a number of technical problems have persisted which have affected other elements of the Project, and additional resources have had to be allocated to remedy problems.

In January 2001, a part time Systems Technician was appointed to support implementation at sites. In September 2001, the Technician was appointed as full time Systems Co-ordinator, responsible for managing the operation of the Card system and related ICT support. With this appointment, the team was able to make major changes to the system design, the most important of which was bringing 'in house' a number of functions that had previously been managed under contract: attendance data collection, processing, verification and reporting. This has also presented exciting opportunities to develop the website, which is described later in the case study.

Early stage efforts to ensure buy-in from teachers and lecturers through presentations, training events, high levels of 'visibility' from Project staff, and other inputs have paid off. Despite a modicum of early stage resistance, staff are now generally positive about the Project and its proposed outcomes. To maintain this good relationship with learning providers, the Rewards Co-ordinator has been meeting with the responsible senior manager in each learning provider on a fortnightly basis and the Systems Co-ordinator visits each site at least fortnightly, in addition to collecting attendance data via e-mail on a daily basis.

Ensuring attractive and relevant rewards for young people remains a major priority for the Project team. Evaluation questionnaires are collected and focus groups conducted to gain feedback from young people. The first edition of the monthly 'Connexions Magazine' was printed in October 2000. The magazine takes over from the 'Club News' newsletter and describes current and up-and-coming rewards and how to achieve them. Awareness levels for the offers amongst young people in participating institutions remains high, and keeping up this level of interest through continually refreshing the 'offer' of rewards is

being given high priority. During the Summer term of 2001, Writers Workshops were established (facilitated by a news editor of a local TV channel) which recruited young people from all the sites to write copy for the magazine. The purpose of this is twofold: firstly to ensure the 'pitch' of articles is right for young people and secondly to engage with young people at the sites and encourage participation in the scheme.

There have been serious issues in establishing the linkage with EMA payment, some of which are technical, some institutional management and process issues and some focused on the partnership between learning providers and the LEA. The Pathfinder Project has worked closely with learning providers and the LEA to address some of the above and hopes to 're-open the case' on EMA linkage during the continuation period from September 2001 to March 2002. Again, bringing data management 'in house' should greatly facilitate this and a pilot with one school is planned for the Autumn 2001, which will cover the whole EMA process from data collection, through verification to triggering payment.

As mentioned earlier, the website strategy has been totally reviewed following the Project's experience using an external contractor. The original contracted site has now lapsed and a new site is being built as part of the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership website. This site will be hosted within Connexions, and will be managed directly by the Pathfinder Project team. Again, bringing data management 'in house' will enable the Project to now develop the 'on-line' rewards system through the web and is expected to increase participation in the rewards scheme considerably more than the 'Connexions Magazine' approach. It is planned that the magazine and website will run side by side for 2-3 months and then reviewed. At that stage the magazine may be wound down.

Key Issues and Lessons Learned

- At the commencement of implementation, expectations must be carefully managed (but not to the extent of stifling interest and imagination)
- Gaining user confidence is essential, and seems best achieved by 'starting simple' in system design and operation. Once confidence is gained, there is a firm foundation for exploring further potential of the system.

- Young people do find the concept of a rewards scheme both relevant and attractive, but the proposition has to be right, offering a wide range of rewards.

- Merseyside has been amongst the most active Projects in recruiting sponsors for its rewards 'offers'. Achieving sponsorship has not been easy, but several attractive and highly valued rewards have been made available. The attractiveness of the 'offers' – with regular updates - is seen as essential for gaining and retaining young peoples' interest. High priority is given to producing and distributing the regular 'Connexions Magazine' newsletter to promote interest in the rewards and generally promote the Project. The Rewards Co-ordinator is now focusing on securing a greater range and quantity of rewards to be made available each month. A typical target of 20 reward opportunities per month is the aim from January 2002.

- Young people also seem to make a strong connection between the use of the Card and benefits of the Card. Clearly a Card which does not carry benefits to the cardholder will not be used but, interestingly, the Project has discovered that the benefits themselves appear more attractive when clearly connected to Card usage. This discovery is important in that it begins to provide some insight into exactly how young people view the physical Card and what the whole concept represents.

CASE STUDY 2 – NORTHUMBERLAND

(Pathfinder Project)

Overview

The Northumberland Project emerged from a larger, regional Project not supported by DfES in 1999, but was seen as particularly important because it covers a **very** rural, sparsely populated area (Northumberland and Derwentside were covered by the Demonstration Project; the Pathfinder also covers Central and East Durham). The Project was one of the few to carry out a wide-ranging review of potential technical solutions – both in the UK and abroad – and its preferred technology, with a strong emphasis on portable, hand-held equipment has – by and large - showed a range of strengths.

Initial milestones included training key individuals (particularly teachers) in the period up to December 1999, then issuing Cards to young people during January 2000. Achieving teacher 'buy-in' has taken much longer than planned, and there have been concerns about, e.g., interfacing with other systems and 'customising' approaches to meet schools' specific requirements. A pilot school became operational (just) before Easter 2000, and the Project was developed into a Pathfinder Project in the autumn of that year. Roll-out to other institutions has gathered pace during 2001 – although further attention to local needs/ preferences has been needed even at the 'launch' site, so that significant continuing workloads have been experienced by the Project's staff.

Project Objectives

The Demonstration Project tested attendance/tracking and loyalty rewards, and the Pathfinder has been extended to incorporate additional functions including an EMA link (Northumberland is an EMA pilot, although Durham is not), internet links (including points redemption), transport concessions and e-purse facilities. This Project has used microchip-based technology, with a heavy emphasis on portable readers, from the outset. This Project has been specifically designed to focus on the practicalities of introducing a Card Project in a sparsely populated rural area.

Project Challenges and Achievements:

The Demonstration Project was the last to be formally agreed and covered a large area, amongst the most sparsely populated in England, where issues like distances, no major centres (excluding the Tyneside conurbation which is outside the area) and very limited public transport must always be borne in mind. The Pathfinder area is larger again, but now includes centres like Durham City, further adding to the complexities addressed by this Project.

The Northumberland Project's managers did considerable research in this country and abroad before identifying the platform and supporting infrastructure they wished to promote, and concluded that a flexible, microchip-based platform was most appropriate to their needs. Considerable use of hand-held Card readers was envisaged from the outset, minimising the requirements for fixed readers, installed cabling and data transmission links – particularly attractive in rural areas.

A close partnership with a local IT supplier was also built into the Northumberland Project, with the supplier taking responsibility for a higher proportion of installation, software modification, data handling/storage and reporting in comparison with most other Projects. Contracting out these functions remains attractive in principle, but has not ruled out the need for the Project team to spend considerable time addressing technical challenges, particularly linked to gaining full support and involvement within participating institutions.

The roll-out has, however, been tortuous, requiring a major effort to contact schools and actively seek 'buy-in'. This has taken longer than planned: as with other Projects, Northumberland has found teachers –understandably – thinking mainly of **their** priorities, which do not necessarily coincide with those of the Project. The 'lead' high school also repeatedly stressed the 'uniqueness' of their own arrangements and sought to achieve appreciable customisation to the Card, its associated operating systems, reporting arrangements and administration arrangements – all funded by the Project.

Chip-based platforms **can** of course offer high levels of customisation, and offer additional local functions like electronic purses and access systems which some schools/colleges are interested in developing anyway. None of these 'customisation' issues are likely to be insuperable, but these often very detailed

discussions have all taken time and effort to conclude – particularly in highly rural areas where institutions can be at least one hour's drive away from the Project head office.

From this experience, the Northumberland Project has steadily sought to implement more standardised approaches across the area as a whole, and to minimise the levels of detailed variation or 'customisation' on offer. There is, potentially, the opportunity for schools/colleges to add further local functions – for example library management functions – through the Project, although they may need to provide additional resources, and carry out the necessary administration and specification work themselves.

Local discount/ reward functions took time to develop in the highly rural areas. With very few 'High Street' names in the small towns which act as centres in the area, developing the kinds of offers seen in more urban settings is not easy. Discussions have been taking place for many months with sports centres, transport operators, leisure facilities and groups of local traders and have ensured a satisfactory level of local incentives, although more are still being sought. One problem which arose, though, was with one sponsor backing out of a previously agreed promotion as a result of managerial problems from a quite different direction – even after initial promotional material for the Connexions Card Project had been printed. After considerable further discussion the sponsor is once again committed and has become one of the Project's biggest successes in terms of reward partnerships.

By the end of June 2001, over 7000 Cards were in circulation and a total of 20 education institutions actively involved throughout Northumberland and Durham.

The Project team have held talks with both Northumberland and Durham Trading Standards Departments about using the Card as proof of age. Both areas are very keen to use the Connexions Card in their battle against under-age sales. The Trading Standards Departments are producing their own marketing materials and promoting the Card to the retailers, while it was agreed that the Northeast Connexions Card website (www.Connexions-northeast.co.uk) would be the prime source of marketing to Card holders.

Using the purpose-designed website to communicate with Card holders has proved to be the most effective method of keeping in touch. With such a large

geographical area and a large Card base other forms of marketing material such as magazines and flyers have proved ineffective.

Key Issues and Lessons Learned

- Rural areas **are** going to be different from urban areas: in particular, rewarding through 'High Street names' will not be relevant (although other rewards, e.g. transport, phone cards, may be particularly valued).
- Achieving support from schools/colleges (particularly teachers/lecturers) has taken considerable effort. The question *"What's in it for us/our school/college?"* has not been easy to answer.
- 'Customising' the basic systems to support individual schools' requirements has been tried out, but is **not** now being encouraged. More effective is likely to be a simple, standardised system, to which schools/colleges **may** be able to add their own functions (probably on a paid-for basis).
- The Project has recently been emphasising 'managing the expectations' of participating schools and colleges more carefully: Project staff are *"keen to help schools/ colleges get the most from the system – but the line has to be drawn somewhere".*
- The Project's flexible IT systems, requiring a minimum of hard-wiring have, overall, provided many benefits, as has contracting-out most data handling/reporting functions – but there have still been many technical challenges for Project team members themselves to address.

CASE STUDY 3 – GATESHEAD/TYNESIDE

Overview

There were, initially, very high hopes indeed for the Tyneside Project with a bid which was well supported and carefully linked into other established programmes. Initial milestones included being able to track all Gateshead young people leaving Year 11 in 1999 (from October 1999 onwards) and utilising the Card for EMA administration (from January 2000 onwards). The Project was to hit massive problems with getting delivery of reliable equipment and systems, however, and was at something of a crisis point in early 2000 – when, despite the very high levels of effort and concern on the part of the Project team, very little had been achieved on-the-ground.

The Project was, in effect, almost fully re-designed in the early summer of 2000. After this point, the Connexions Card was, in effect, 'piggy-backed' onto a commercial card-based reward scheme, which was being launched throughout Tyneside anyway.

Changing from a magnetic strip Card to a Smart Card and forming partnerships with a private sector organisation represented major changes from the original plans, and by the spring of 2001 there was clear 'on-the-ground' evidence of progress being made in a range of areas. Card distribution to young people in years 11, 12 and 13 was building up rapidly, against revised targets agreed with DfES. Card readers were installed in the first tranche of schools (3 within the Demonstration Project area), and worked satisfactorily, despite a number of early-stage technical delays. Young people using the Card responded positively to it: they can link into entertainment events and other features of the commercial card with which the scheme links, and an increasing number of local discounters are now actively involved.

The Project was not in any sense 'out of the woods' after the relaunch, however: in April 2001 Gateshead MBC put an embargo on using the Card and associated technology in Gateshead schools. However, by September, Gateshead MBC lifted the embargo and this problem at least appears to have disappeared
.

Project Objectives

Initially – attendance/tracking, EMA, auto-enrolment. The Card has the capacity for the following.

- Purchase school meals
- Redeem goods from the website
- Attendance monitoring
- Recording achievement
- Holding a CV

Initial target cohort: Around 2,000 young people, Years 11, 12 and 13 in Gateshead.

1998 'in learning' figure in Gateshead was 78% - the target is to increase this to 81% by 2001. Close links to the EMA pilot were planned as part of an integrated initiative.

Project Challenges and Achievements:

Tyneside's initial proposal was widely seen as thorough and well prepared. Testing out all 5 possible functions, building on a number of existing local initiatives and with plans to involve transport operators and leisure facilities this was – in a number of respects - the Project closest to becoming a full-scale pilot for what was then known as 'The Youth Card'.

In practice, what amounted virtually to a new Project arose during 2000 - 2001, however. A commercial loyalty/reward card was also being planned for a launch across Tyneside as a whole in mid-2000 by Music Marketing Services (MMS). The Tyneside Project team were already in touch with MMS, essentially to minimise overlaps in activities and avoid conflicts of interest that might arise from the deployment of the two separate cards. As the Tyneside Demonstration Project hit a major crisis point, however, discussions with MMS started to unlock the possibility of much higher levels of working together.

WorldCard and Card Europe wrote a specification for Tyneside Careers to use a 'tailor made' Smart Card for the Tyneside Project. Special Cards, with additional functionality programmed into the chip, and clearly printed as Learning/Connexions Cards, were issued to the Gateshead target cohort of

young people. Varying the kinds of card being offered to local young people is less of a difference from other practice than might be envisaged: it is already expected that three or more separate versions of the MMS 'WorldCard' will be launched in Tyneside for different commercial operations.

The Connexions Card Project can 'piggy-back' onto standard MMS procedures in areas like Card preparation, issue/ reissue and data transfer – although carefully designed systems have been put in place to ensure that data collected for Connexions Card purposes is not held by MMS, and cannot be accessed by commercial interests, although commercial organisations can access some data with the signed permission of the young person. In principle, 'piggy-backing' does, however, allow the Connexions Card team to work very closely with MMS staff to market the Card, carry out briefings within schools/ colleges, and co-operate closely in technical issues like installation, reporting, training staff and problem-solving.

There have been a number of delays, for reasons familiar to other Projects including the need to resolve early-stage technical malfunctions, reluctant support from some schools/ college staff, and so on. With the national roll-out fast approaching (it will start in the North East) it seems these challenges will remain largely unresolved. But – at least in principle – the new arrangements for the Tyneside Project **might have** allowed both categories of partner to operate in the areas they know best. MMS are developing a slick, high-volume system geared up to issuing/re-issuing large numbers of cards anyway – together with the capability to recruit sponsors and manage points gaining and rewarding as integral parts of its 'core business'. Tyneside Careers and its public sector partners could then have focused on learning and careers linked issues.

The Project design allows for attendance data to be transferred directly from PCs/ websites to the WorldCard main office. Schools were offered a simple and effective way of rewarding and young people responded positively. Group sessions for young people have been held to both offer briefing about the Card and to gain feedback about the Card. Most young people reported liking the proof of age 'function' of the Card as well as web interaction and discounts and rewards.

For the reasons we outlined above, however, practical progress with schools and colleges has been heavily curtailed by an unwillingness to give **true** support - as opposed to the formal commitments initially offered. Many individuals within schools and colleges **have** been supportive, but this Project demonstrates a need for effective support to be achieved from most (ideally all) stakeholders at the same time. For a variety of reasons - not helped by early-stage technical problems - this has not been achieved in Tyneside.

Key issues and Lessons Learned

- To start with, lessons learned in Gateshead were all about coping with major, wide-ranging supplier and systems problems – and about finding alternatives quickly when some of these problems seemed insuperable.
- After the relaunch, experience of working in close partnership with the private sector built up rapidly, with many successes to point to. In areas like logistics and marketing, private sector expertise has been invaluable to the Project as a whole – although familiar concerns about the prevalence of technical 'glitches', and slow and unenthusiastic responses from **some** schools and colleges, do need to be recognised.
- Learning points from the close partnership the Tyneside Project has built up with its private sector partner include the need for high levels of mutual trust and respect, clarity on the respective roles and priorities of each partner (for example in relation to access to information sets) and – irrespective of contractual details - a readiness to work jointly to resolve unforeseen problems and jointly promote the benefits of the Project for all partners.

CASE STUDY 4 – ESSEX

Overview

The Essex Project is based in the Thurrock area, which has much lower figures for young people continuing in learning, successfully completing training and NVQ attainment than the rest of Essex. With good partner support built into the bid, initial milestones focused on ensuring systems were fully developed and implemented by the spring of 2000. Achieving anything like planned early-stage progress in Essex was rendered impossible by a persistent problem in that most basic of requirements – simply getting Cards delivered. Over the last year the Project team have worked hard and made progress in a number of areas, including web development, the production of literature and the inclusion of a number of new training providers within the Project.

For long periods, persistent technical problems caused delays in the roll out to training providers and caused disruptions to implementation plans in a number of locations. Most technical problems have now been resolved, and the numbers of institutions involved has developed steadily. Nevertheless the later stages of the Project have still encountered continued challenges in getting buy-in from a number of stakeholders.

From the summer of 2001 onwards, however, the Essex Project has also been developing particularly interesting ways of implementing the Card in informal learning settings - targeted particularly at very poor attenders and those seen as at risk of exclusion.

Project Objectives

Loyalty/reward; attendance/tracking. Locally branded as the 'Thurrock Smart Card'.

The initial target cohort was approximately 3000 Year 11 pupils in Thurrock, involving 10 mainstream schools, 4 special schools, 1 Sixth Form College, 1 FE College.

Thurrock has appreciably worse levels of learning and attainment than the rest of Essex, including high levels of 'Destination Unknown' young people (3.3% in 1998/9); low levels of involvement in any post-16 learning activity (estimated as 35% of school levers 'not involved' in 1998/9). Specific targets include 'lower drop-out rates as a direct result of an effective Learning Card system fully integrated with other products and services', 'continuous improvement through tracking young people more effectively', upgraded management information, targeted interventions involving local partnerships, improved contributions to lifelong learning agendas, etc.

Project Challenges and Achievements:

Essex was relatively late in getting formal approval to proceed, but then encountered particularly severe equipment delays – notably simply getting delivery of Cards - and the Project has been dogged with a number of other technical 'teething' problems: Palmers College in particular encountered difficulties in ensuring system compatibility and data transfers with its existing BROMCOM system – an issue finally resolved in July 2001.

Having said all of this, issuing Cards and equipment in schools/ colleges progressed steadily during the latter part of 2000 and the early part of 2001 and some experience has built up with training providers. Five new training providers went 'live' in July 2000 and the Youth Service also came 'on-line' about this time. However, software problems delayed a fuller roll-out, and led to repeated visits to some of the institutions formally 'live' to resolve technical problems, re-assure staff and generally 'embed' the systems and its usage.

The Project team have had successes with the development of the website which has increased the interactivity of the Project: monthly hit rates have been around 240. There is already evidence that this is encouraging more contact from young people and helping with tracking and other work – particularly with the some of the more 'disadvantaged' groups within the area. The site includes extra icons, and visual links to help pupils with special needs and limited literacy and eventually will have spoken alternatives to text.

Essex has its own distinctive marketing materials – with high levels of direct involvement in the design from young people themselves - and has evolved a system of 'smart points reward cheques' as a means of distributing rewards in ways which are not seen to be 'hand outs'.

The rewards 'offer' has been built up steadily through a range of local and national organisations. Feedback from young people (and their parents) indicates that rewards **are** valued, although the process of building up the 'offer' has sometimes been difficult: one local restaurant chain, for example, specifically banned all 16-18 year olds because of rowdy behaviour. However, recently they have joined the scheme and these problems are being resolved steadily.

The team have also published several editions of their newsletter 'Smart News', and have produced a number of 'home made' posters - again involving local young people to a high level - which have been distributed to colleges and which students are reacting well towards.

Informal learning is being facilitated through the 'Thurrock SmartCard', by Essex Careers and a number of other partners including Millennium Volunteers, New Start, Princes Trust and the Learning Gateway. The role of the group is to engage disaffected youngsters in activities and give them a SmartCard. Project staff spend time on a one-to-one or group basis explaining the nature and benefits of the Card and offer points. The youngsters are encouraged to use computers though checking their points status and obtaining rewards.

Key Issues and Lessons Learned

- Successfully involving young people themselves in designing publicity and support material; addressing concerns like the potential stigma from voucher 'hand-outs', and making the Project accessible to those with special needs.
- Promoting a wide range of opportunities for young people to win 'points', particularly linked to using/involving Careers.
- The Essex Project has started to produce evidence that even the more 'disengaged' young people can find the Connexions Card sufficiently attractive to encourage them to contact Careers and take an interest in at least the possibility of engagement in learning.
- Efforts to involve/inform parents **seem** to be showing positive signs.
- Issues Essex has faced are overwhelmingly about coping with delays, however – and seeking to catch up as rapidly as possible once their main equipment/supply problems were behind them.

- The Essex Project has had to cope with the same kinds of challenges in winning over schools and colleges that other Projects have encountered. The Essex Project has tried a variety of approaches, and offered high levels of assistance and 'hand-holding'. Even so, progress has been patchy, and no real alternative to these relatively high levels of personal commitment from the team has been identified.

- Experience of using the Card to promote 'informal' learning, through volunteering and other partnerships is at an early stage, but does show encouraging signs.

CASE STUDY 5 – BRADFORD

Overview

The Bradford Project focuses on a group of relatively 'disadvantaged' mainstream schools and 8 special schools within the City. Analyses when the bid was prepared showed links with appreciable unemployment, high proportions of ethnic minorities and low academic achievement. By focusing on internet-based technology from the outset, Bradford's Card users have been able to access their personal data from any web-connected location, view photographs and video clips (e.g. of organised outings) as well as getting up-to-date information on the Project itself, and broader employment/ Careers/ learning topics. Early stage delays with equipment deliveries and achieving active support from some key stakeholders have been resolved and the Project is now consolidating on early success.

Project Objectives

Loyalty/ Reward and Attendance/ Tracking.

Around 4,200 Year 11 and Year 12 pupils at 12 'mainstream' local schools and 8 special schools. The mainstream schools within the pilot were identified as relatively 'disadvantaged'.

School-by-school attendance rates are being monitored (1998 absence figures vary from 0.8% to 12.6%) and local targets for improvement have been agreed. Bradford-wide targets include reducing the 'destination unknown' figure by 100 young people/ 1.5%; and increasing numbers remaining in first destination from 67% to 75%.

Project Challenges and Achievements:

Based on a magnetic-stripe platform, the Bradford Project is almost entirely internet based. Initially , the Project also relied on high levels of existing wiring and data exchange facilities already installed in schools for other reasons in Bradford. Card holders were expected to 'swipe' at fixed readers attached to PCs at participating institutions. Since the summer of 2000, however, open access from any internet-enabled PC has been encouraged through a PIN number system.

The Bradford system is not used to record attendance, as in most of the other Projects, but takes young people straight to a personalised web page on the Careers Bradford Learning Card site. This page contains the individual's personal details which, if incorrect, can be reported to the Project team and changed swiftly. Attendance data was initially expected to be fed into the system separately from data already collected by schools, but this facility has not been implemented. Tracking activities can be triggered in other ways, and – as with other Projects – interest within schools/ colleges in replacing or duplicating already existing attendance monitoring systems has been minimal.

The Project team have steadily increased the interactivity of the site including the availability of an on-line 'mock interview' which includes video clips of questions from an interviewer. The call centre 'Careersdirect' was launched in September 2000, and school leaver vacancies now go onto the website via Careersdirect, which enables 'live' vacancies to be updated daily. A free telephone hotline exists for pupils and teachers to contact the Careers Project team with queries regarding the Learning Card and Careers issues more widely. The hotline also enables schools to contact one another and discuss Learning Card issues.

Cards are currently operational in 12 mainstream schools and 8 special schools. Following an initial induction, pupils in mainstream schools have been encouraged to use the Internet site independently, without staff assistance, during lunch times or after school. Interest in both the Learning Cards and the website has been considerable and youngsters – including several previously thought 'lost to the system' - have contacted Careers Bradford offering updates to personal details for tracking purposes, and with enquiries regarding the Learning Card itself.

Teachers in special schools have tended to spend time with pupils individually, taking them through the site as well as encouraging them to browse independently. The combination of pictures and text on the site make it easily accessible to most pupils, and Makaton symbols are actively used to supplement text messages.

Staff on the Project team have been keen to ensure a wide appeal of the site. This has included taking pictures of pupils from a number of special schools when they are taking part in day trips or visiting companies, and posting their

picture on the website. This has enabled staff and pupils to see what other schools are doing and has provided a motivational boost for pupils seeing themselves on the internet.

The Bradford Project sought to engage with young people and listen to their views throughout the lifetime of the Project. Some examples identified through these processes are worth noting including:

- *"Young people told our call-centre staff and their own careers advisers that they did not claim discounts because they were unsure and did not see posters in the shops/restaurants. We printed posters for the sponsors and the discount claims shot up.*
- *Young people in schools told our call-centre staff and careers advisers that the website needed new pictures and graphics. We completely redesigned the site.*
- *In the same way, we were told that vacancies would attract them (young people) back to the site. We got vacancies on eventually.*
- *In the same way, we were told that sponsors were missing in the Keighley area. We now have McDonalds in Keighley."*

The Project is also involved in informal learning in a number of ways. The Project team have formed a partnership with Millennium Volunteers whereby the Project team promote the Millennium Volunteers campaign and give leaflets to Leaning Card holders, and existing Millennium Volunteers can obtain a Learning Card. They are also involved in the local 'JAS' (Joint Activities Service) Project, which takes pre-16 year olds who are on the verge of dropping out of education (and can be badly behaved and poor attendees), and involves them in activities which offer learning and development opportunities through teamwork and other activities. The youngsters attending can also obtain a Learning Card and get rewards.

A continued priority for the Project team has been to attract 'big name' retailers to support the Project through discounting products. A number of key successes, including McDonalds Restaurants, Virgin Megastores and Odeon Cinemas remain popular with many young people. Bradford is one of the few Projects to be able to collect up-to-date information on discounts and recent monthly figures of 600 to 800 discounts taken up are notable.

A problem for the Project team has been getting the rewards function off the ground. They have now developed, in partnership with schools, careers advisers, teachers and pupils, a certificate for schools for good attendance, achievement and behaviour. The Project team continue to receive feedback from teachers that the Card **is** making an impact on the attendance of young people (see Section 2.5).

Publicity and promotion are key areas for the Project team; initially a Learning Card Newsletter was produced but this is being replaced by targeted leaflets on specific topics, e.g. how to access rewards. These leaflets for young people and potential partners are due to be distributed in the coming months.

Increasing the number of 'hits' on the web site requires increased access to computers. The team continue targeting local libraries, Youth and Community Centres and training providers with the aim of installing Card readers to increase usage.

Key Issues and Points Learned

- Active and sophisticated use of internet technology has worked well, and offers the potential for a series of further developments too.
- Carefully involving special schools from the outset has worked well: time and effort to work with special schools has been needed, but the Project's relevance to their pupils has been amply reinforced.
- By making the internet site as attractive as possible, actively marketing the benefits of holding the Card and making all contact with the Project as easy to use as possible, good tracking data is being achieved, even without a formal attendance monitoring function.
- Work to build up an attractive and varied mix of sponsors has been effective, although more are actively being sought.
- Incorporating job vacancy data on the website is proving very popular with users, further reinforcing overall take-up of what the Project offers.

CASE STUDY 6 – LEEDS

Overview

The Leeds Project was designed to incorporate several features not seen in other Projects. To start with, this Project did not offer discounts/rewards to motivate young people to 'swipe'. The major feature of the Leeds Project which attracted attention from the outset was, however, its focus on FE colleges. The FE sector is particularly large and complex in Leeds, with several large, multi-site colleges, lots of students crossing borders (both ways, but mainly **into** Leeds) and colleges offering courses for **all** age groups (16-19 year olds on full-time courses are often a very low proportion of all students).

A decision not to include rewards or discounts within the Project was made because students on full and part time courses in Leeds are encouraged to join the National Union of Students and they can access a wide range of discounts through their membership Card. A number of retailers also offer discounts on the production of a college identity Card, the local authority still offers free transport to and from college, and Leeds Metro have a student travel scheme which provides half price travel on the production of an identity Card.

The Card did offer internet access for those college students attending buildings where readers have been installed, but more generally adding value to the work of colleges and careers via the Learning Card proved difficult for the Project team. There were repeated problems in gaining **true** support from colleges, however. By the early part of 2001 successful 'swiping' was taking place with a fairly small group of young people at one college, but prospects of significant further up take did not seem to be growing closer. Because of this, in June 2001 the Project was - in effect - closed down.

Project Objectives

Primary Objectives
- Develop auto-enrolment processes
- Develop attendance monitoring/ tracking procedures
- Reduce the number of young people changing options because their first choice was unsuitable

- Increase the number of young people who complete their programmes of learning successfully

Secondary Objectives
- Raising young people's awareness of their entitlement to learning, and of the choice of qualifications
- Empowering and motivating young people through the provision of guidance and information
- Encouraging young people to make more considered choices.

Project Progress and Challenges

The Leeds Project faced a number of problems and challenges from the outset. Despite supplying over 16,000 Cards to local young people only one college became actively involved in using the Cards for attendance and (some) auto-enrolment purposes.

The problems encountered fell into several categories. First, FE colleges in Leeds tend to attract a high proportion of their students from outside the Demonstration Project's catchment area and target group. As elsewhere, colleges cater for students of all ages, not just 16-19 year olds. This definitely impacted upon colleges' readiness to be involved. Typical comments were: *"It's a lot of work for only a very small percentage of students"*.

Secondly, many colleges have their own technology-based attendance monitoring systems already; system incompatibility issues were rapidly identified so colleges chose simply to pull out of the Project. Thirdly, because FE students have NUS Cards and these entitle them to discounts, the Learning Card team felt that no additionality would be gained from offering discounts as an incentive for Learning Card use. This has, though, reinforced questions about *"what's in it for us"* from both colleges and students.

A major problem was encountered through developing Project plans with introductory phases over the summer months, initially in 2000. Colleges effectively close down at the end of June and the staff present in colleges were not informed of the proposed plans. The results were BT lines being cut and IT staff not undertaking necessary installation activities. The auto-enrolment functionality **was** in place in September 2000, but it was not used because relevant staff were not informed and trained. However, a number of PCs have

now been installed into colleges to enable students to access the Careers websites.

The Project team recognise the fundamental importance of gaining 'buy-in' from colleges from the outset but the 'package' on offer was continually seen as needing further development, and answers to the question: *"what's in it for us"* still remained uncertain for students, and particularly colleges.

Help with administrative burdens for EMA **might** have become an important facilitating factor, however, and auto-enrolment remains very attractive in principle to colleges.

Key Issues and Learning Points

- Leeds issues are all about the complexity of the FE sector, including how the Learning Card can integrate with other systems and 'add value' to the institutions themselves and the 16-19 year olds attending there. Satisfactory answers here may never be fully identified but interest in auto-enrolment, EMA administration and additional Management Information **may** give productive ways forward for the national roll-out.
- Information on job vacancies and placements, and links to the Careers websites and data on work experience and university entrance **did** attract interest from young people.
- Most FE colleges already have complex IT and administration systems of their own for features like enrolment and attendance monitoring. It is rarely attractive to have 2 systems for these functions! A key challenge for the Demonstration Project became achieving satisfactory data exchange between systems but again, this was never satisfactorily achieved despite extensive and intensive efforts by Project management and IT staff. For some time it was thought that 'middleware' might have been needed to protect the integrity of data held by both systems - again a point the National Project may need to bear in mind.

CASE STUDY 7 – NOTTINGHAM

(Pathfinder Project)

Overview

The Nottingham Project was able to base its initial plans on an established Tracking Project (it was formally submitted on behalf of the Tracking Project Steering Group), with good links into the local authority (including the EMA pilot), the 'CityCard' (a reward scheme including local retailers) and the Nottingham City Transport (NCT) operation. Good early-stage experience was achieved with one school during 1999/2000, but progress with the broader roll-out to the rest of the target cohort proceeded more slowly than planned. Obtaining hardware offered no particular problems, but providing a range of solutions to satisfy implementation and data collation requirements to schools and colleges, and developing software, have been time consuming.

The Project has seen a mix of good successes and major disappointments. Key systems have now been installed and operational for some time at several sites (well over 350 readers were in use by the summer of 2001) and a high-profile article, featuring The Nottingham Bluecoat School, appeared in the Times Educational Supplement during June 2001. On the other hand, one school and one college withdrew from the Project during the summer 2001, and it had still not been possible to activate the e-purse function on Nottingham buses, albeit for reasons to do with NCT rather than the Project.

The Project has been an ambitious one, however, particularly in its link to EMA and the requirement this has for lesson-by-lesson attendance monitoring.

Project Objectives

Loyalty/reward, EMA and attendance/tracking, auto-enrolment, proof of age, rewards for other behaviours, e-purse and leisure centre discounts.

The Project was originally targeted at all school sixth forms, FE colleges and selected training providers within a 3 mile radius of the city centre - a total of 29 establishments with a cohort of 14,000 students and trainees (giving 98% coverage of EMA students)

Initial targets were based around reducing figures for Year 11 leavers who progress to a non-learning destination (around 25% for each of the 3 years before the Project was set up).

Project Challenges and Achievements:

As well as addressing core functions and supporting wider education/learning initiatives (e.g. building onto the existing tracking system) the Nottingham Demonstration Project was designed to build close links with the established Card-based 'CityCard' loyalty/rewards scheme operating in the City, and with the City Transport bus company, as well as enabling users to obtain discounts in the 13 City Council leisure centres, and allowing auto-enrolment for those participating in Work Based Learning programmes.

Nottingham was able to introduce its Demonstration Project systems at one participating school well before the crucial Easter break in 2000, and so became one of the first Projects to gain 'real' experience of issuing Cards, 'swiping', data handling, and so on. Responses to this initial pilot were, generally, very positive from staff and pupils, and considerable interest was generated both within the City and more widely.

The Nottingham Project has required high and continuing levels of IT input and even now (September 2001) some systems are having to be rewritten/ updated. The Nottingham Project has found out just how complex issues can be, for example the time needed for *"incorporating data from the school record system, and comparing it against the careers service database; generating temporary Cards; importing student images; printing both sides of the Card and also being able to read and write to and from the Bull chip …"*[14]

The team have also experienced delays obtaining and validating the attendance data from colleges using MIS systems other than SIMS, (e.g. FEMIS, Dolphin), to compare with the data held on the Careers Service's own databases. These delays have frequently been due to a lack of available time for teachers to complete tasks by agreed deadlines.

The Project team worked hard initially to build good relationships with partners and teaching staff. They have also worked hard more recently to maintain and

---

[14] Taken from monthly return comment March 2001.

develop those relationships. This has meant accepting and working with schools and colleges' own constraints, priorities and pace of working.

Literature has been developed to facilitate training in schools - which adds to the work the Project team have put in not only to build good relationships with learning providers, but also to ensure maximum involvement with minimum disruption.

Throughout the Project GuideLine has worked hard to communicate with the learning centres involved. This has included clarifying responsibility for the individual tasks required to get to the Go Live stage so that the opportunity for misinterpretation could be minimised. One strategy adopted was to draw up Partnership Agreements between GuideLine and the individual schools and colleges. In this way it was also hoped to increase the ownership the institutions felt towards the Project overall.

Nottingham's early start, albeit with a relatively small proportion of its total cohort, taught everyone involved a great deal. It also brought considerable interest from other centres in the East Midlands and more widely, interested in what systems like these can offer.

Key Issues and Learning Points

There have been **many** learning points for the Nottingham Project including:
- *"The high cost and time taken to develop the software and provide individual solutions for the participating institutions*
- *The need to keep the participants on board and convince them that there is something in it for them and the students*
- *That problems will surface continually and some of them will be 'Show-stoppers' (e.g. the need for Fire Registers to be produced for both the portable and fixed readers*
- *Manuals to accompany the training had to be prepared and amended to adapt to changing circumstances*
- *Not all institutions have the same MIS systems, thus different routines were required to allow the data for the Project to be extracted*
- *In spite of Guideline's constant encouragement and support, institutions will still, without extra resources, not afford the Project the priority needed to keep on schedule*

- *That any arrangements/ agreements with contractors are put into writing to prevent misunderstandings later."*[15]

On the other hand, there have been many positive aspects, for example: *"... one institution has decided to extend the … system to provide electronic attendance monitoring for the whole of the school...."* [16]and there is mounting evidence of good responses from participating young people.

Nottingham has had to work hard at the details – getting equipment and systems to work fully, training/involving stakeholders, etc. The key learning point is about just how much time and effort this all can take. Much 'behind the scenes' work has been necessary to link varying IT systems, establish reliable databases and much else - work which is certainly time consuming and not apparent to other partners pursuing their agendas.

---

[15] Taken from Nottingham internal evaluation report
[16] Nottingham internal evaluation report

CASE STUDY 8 – HUMBERSIDE

Overview

The Humberside bid was carefully researched and linked into other Partnership activities (e.g. the local Strategic Lifelong Learning Partnership). Key milestones were initially planned around a staged roll-out, starting in the autumn of 1999, but covering training, equipment testing/installation and face-to-face Card distribution. Using (largely) well-established microchip-based technology, and with good formal commitment from key stakeholders, it was expected that the Humberside Project had good chances of proceeding quickly and effectively.

Significant numbers of Cards were issued in the spring/ summer of 2000 although, as elsewhere, the numbers which were fully functional, particularly in relation to attendance monitoring and 'swiping' were much lower. The key points about Humberside are, essentially, that *"everything's taken longer and been harder to do than anyone expected"*.

National changes for the Connexions Card, linked to the evolving Connexions strategy, had an important impact on the Humberside Project, however. The original plan to concentrate on Year 11 young people was overtaken by events and in September 2000 the Project team met with DfES and decided to pull out of schools, reflecting the revised focus on 16-19 year olds. The Project team then focused on the local FE college in Grimsby, the 6th Form college, and local training providers. By the summer of 2001, 2,700 Cards had been issued and 2 institutions equipped with Card readers. Only one college is using the Card for attendance. The other readers were installed in a pilot school and are no longer used.

Project Objectives

Loyalty/reward and attendance tracking.

Current cohort: young people (16-19 year olds) at Grimsby FE College, local 6th Form Colleges and local training providers.

Initial targets were to improve a range of learning-related outcomes, including: Year 11 attendance (84% in 1998); Year 11 pupils gaining one or more GCSE

passes (91% in 1998); 16 year olds taking up positive learning outcomes (81% for 1998); early leavers from post-16 full-time education (20% in 1998); leavers from WBT without NVQs (65% in 1998). Since the changed emphasis for the Project agreed in September 2000, objectives focus much more closely on testing out the loyalty/reward functions, and associated infrastructure, particularly in the FE sector.

Project Challenges and Achievements:

Envisaged as using a microchip-based platform from the outset, the Humberside Project also focused on what was hoped to be reasonably 'tried and tested' systems. In practise, technical 'glitches' appeared in Humberside as they did elsewhere, but again the role of individuals needs to be noted. Achieving active buy-in at schools and colleges proved typically challenging, but the Card has been actively taken up by **some** staff within FE in particular.

Unlike elsewhere, the greater autonomy of the FE sector has made working with colleges **easier** than working with schools, particularly where key individuals have approached the Project either with an open mind or the positive expectation that it can 'add value' to what they are currently doing. *"Staff and management at classroom levels have agreed to the Project with enthusiasm, and were engaged in determining how the reward system would work … The data from the Card system is collected by student support advisers, whose job is to monitor attendance within courses*[17] *"*

An early example of FE interest came from staff delivering courses where attendance has traditionally been unreliable anyway – on the basis that *"it might help; it can't do any harm"*. Also, as we point out elsewhere, staff who have actually tried to promote the Card have often received very favourable responses from young people. *"Anecdotal evidence from young people and stakeholder representatives suggests that the concept of the Card has been greeted with enthusiasm by young people, who understand its value in terms of motivating them to maintain engagement in education or training, and there has been a significant uptake of discounts and rewards".*[18]

---

[17] Humberside internal evaluation report para 6.
[18] Internal evaluation report para 4.

A range of problems hampered rapid progress with the Humberside Project, rather than one single major constraint. Early-stage delays arose with getting equipment delivered and installing it, receiving national material from DfES, extensive inaccuracies in school lists and other databases, a range of detailed queries from various stakeholders which all took time to handle, and administration requirements which turned out to be appreciably more complex and burdensome than originally envisaged.

What was, in effect, a re-launch of the Project was agreed with DfES in September 2000, focusing on 16-19 year olds particularly in FE, and made steady progress since then.

A number of big name high street retailers including, WH Smith, McDonalds and the Body Shop are helping raise the profile of the Card among young people. Leisure discounts are available at 6 venues across North East Lincolnshire where activities can include gym, badminton and ice-skating amongst others, often with highly attractive discounts of up to 50%.

Key Issues and Learning Points

- At more strategic levels, the need – in effect – to redesign the whole Project because of changes to national-level thinking is worth flagging up. Changes to the parameters of broad policies (in this case the target age groups) can have the most fundamental implications for those designing and implementing Projects on-the-ground if not carefully aligned and planned.
- Humberside proves that *"the devil's often in the detail"* for Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects. It has been hard work to build support from teachers/lecturers and obtain sufficient commercial sponsorship - and further strenuous efforts are almost certainly going to be required for some time to come. Specific learning points identified by the Project's staff themselves include:

  - *"The necessary amount of time taken whilst discussions took place with participating institutions about the ways in which the Card was intended to be used, due to their differing expectations and needs, was underestimated*

- *The production and distribution of Cards happened more slowly than originally anticipated, especially due to the delay in receiving the final version of the "welcome pack" which accompanies each Card*
- *In the light of the above, a smaller scale Project, perhaps focused on 2 schools and one aspect of FE provision, might have proved more manageable*
- *The search for and agreement with a range of local and national sponsors/ discounts prove more difficult and time-consuming than expected*
- *"Ideally the Project would have benefited from a period of planning time which we did not have the luxury of" .*[19]

---

[19] Humberside internal evaluation report

CASE STUDY 9 – BRACKNELL

(Pathfinder Project)

Overview

The Bracknell Project is unique in a number of respects, not least because it started in the autumn of 2000, around 12 months later than the others. The area covered is smaller than in other Projects and the Project was also expected to get something of a 'flying start' through investigating the benefits and pitfalls of piggy-backing the Connexions Card on to Bracknell's local 'Edge' Citizens Card, and to explore the effects of Local Education Authority involvement in the Project. The Project is also unique in that it is being run by Bracknell Forest Borough Council Education Department, in partnership with each of the secondary schools in the Borough, the DfES and BT.

The Edge Card was initially introduced in Bracknell as a 'Dumb' Citizens Card, principally to encourage more shopping within the town centre by offering discounts at over 100 local retail outlets. Plans were already in hand to upgrade the Card to offer 'smart' features, including promoting greater access to Council facilities and the possibility of offering a 'single Card' option for a range of functions including education-linked services. The opportunity to link up with the Connexions Card offered Bracknell the opportunity to accelerate and broaden some of the plans already under consideration. For the Connexions Card initiative, there was the opportunity of testing out functions by 'piggy-backing' onto a card already part-way developed, in a part of the country with a range of different characteristics compared to the areas where other Projects were operating.

The Bracknell Card is 'swiped' by Year 12 students at 7 schools in Bracknell to register attendance when they enter their classroom at the start of the morning and afternoon periods. Data is fed from the Card readers into a PC installed in every school and then transferred to a central computer. Every time a student swipes, their Connexions Card is credited with points which can be redeemed as rewards at a number of local leisure facilities in the community, including the UCI cinema, the Bracknell Sport and Leisure Centre, the Downshire Golf course, and the Coral Reef Waterworld. Alternatively students can choose to redeem points for retail vouchers. 30 points will allow £5.00 vouchers for WH Smith, Body Shop, UCI Cinema, Burtons, Top Shop and Our Price.

Students can also attain additional points on a termly basis through improved work and effort, and through positive contributions and activities in the local community. Those students whose attendance is over 95% are entered into a prize draw sponsored by local businesses. The response from students has been extremely positive so far and the commitment from all partners in the Project has been of paramount importance to ensure active participation and buy-in from students.

Project Objectives

- Introduce a registration system to 7 secondary schools in Bracknell using a Connexions branded smartcard, with students building up points for attendance
- Set up a points redemption system using smartcard readers at various points to claim rewards
- Introduce a multi-application smartcard functionality with one school using smartcards for registration and as an e-purse for school meals
- Trial integration with the 'Edge' Card which offers local retail discounts

Project Challenges and Achievements

The Project experienced some early stage delays due to software glitches in the registration system. However, additional resources and testing during December 2000 rectified problems, enabling the roll-out to commence in January 2001. Delays were also encountered in the school meal e-purse function: ensuring the 'limited spend' function was working properly delayed the proposed implementation date until March 2001. The function is now working, however, and students can pay for lunch time meals and snacks in the canteen by swiping the Card across the reader. The Project team have tried to ensure that all erroneous functionality is rectified before going live, to minimise disillusionment about the Project from both students and teachers.

A successful demonstration event was organised by BT to highlight the potential uses of the Card on public transport. The demonstration focused on local buses and used a contactless smartcard in association with a reader, which in turn transferred transaction data into the onboard till as if the student had paid with cash. Further development work is planned.

Students have been involved in offering feedback about the Project, particularly through focus groups: responses have been positive and a local newsletter has also helped in retaining interest and participation. The response from teachers has also, for the most part, been positive *"as long as it doesn't take up too much of our time, we're really behind a Project that will encourage increased participation from students"*.

However, there have been concerns that commitment from some teachers may not be being fully sustained: the Project team are trying to counteract this with continuing support. Training has been given on site by the Project team, with an emphasis on training key staff to train other teachers and cascade the learning about the Project and its operations.

A summary of strategies used to overcome scepticism/ resistance encountered includes:

- *"Constant assessment of how the Project impacts on teachers' time, and looking for ways to reduce this*
- *Use of a prize draws for good attendance in the initial stages*
- *Ensuing that 'DfES and Government requirements' are mentioned as drivers in the Project*
- *Working around severe sceptics by focusing attention on those tutors who are positive*
- *Focusing on testing hardware/ software to minimise appearance of bugs in live environment*
- *Constant promotion - maintain the profile of the Project*
- *Additional funds were given to schools for extra admin/ staff training time*
- *The Bracknell Edge Card was a topic of local interest throughout as well as the Connexions dimension*
- *Highlighting the positive responses from pupils in press releases and TV features*
- *The lead was taken by the LEA with its history of working in partnership with schools*
- *Regular discussions on Connexions between the Director of Education and Head Teachers"*[20].

---

[20] Bracknell internal evaluation report.

Key Issues and Lessons Learned

- Making the operation and implementation of the Project as simple as possible for students, teachers and all others involved was essential to ensure early success and buy-in. Swiping and points redemption are straightforward processes, and despite the potential high-level functionality of the Card, the Project team have maintained that *"adding too many clever features should be avoided early on"*.

- 'Hand holding' of staff through the implementation and early stages of the Project was vital to ensure that staff and students 'own' and are involved in the Project as much as the Project team.

- Despite the success the Project is now enjoying, the resources and effort required to attain this level of functioning has been significantly more than was originally anticipated.

2.5 Evidence of Impact

It is easy to focus on the work involved in distributing Cards, training staff, installing systems and a range of operational matters as key features of a local Project. But we must always remember the underlying goals of the Connexions Card Project are to influence young peoples' attitudes towards, and engagement in learning - and to support secondary aims including better 'tracking' of those thought not to be engaged in learning, or at risk of dropping out.

Any data gathered so far in these areas has to be treated with great caution. There is certainly anecdotal evidence to draw on, but reliable evidence would probably need to be gathered over a period of several years, rather than the 6-18 months during which Projects have been operating, and with widespread delays in achieving planned milestones, the extent of any influence from Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects on these variables can be certainly be questioned – at least so far. Other factors are also at work to encourage greater involvement with learning (e.g. EMA). The Connexions Card has always been planned to operate in concert with a range of other initiatives, not alone, and there may well be wider social patterns to note, for example those associated with higher numbers entering FE/HE generally.

Having said this, however, two Projects have identified very interesting – if tentative – positive trends.

In Bradford, the Project has had both clearer targets (including numerical goals for improving 'destination unknown' and attendance figures) and – as we have noted elsewhere – good monitoring information (at the level of individual schools for several monthly figures) so that opportunities for monitoring progress have arisen quicker than for most other Projects.

This makes some of the early-stage findings from Bradford of tantalising interest: *"The (destination unknown) figure fell from 7.6% in 1999 to 4.3% in 2000, a welcome reduction of 3.3% (9 of the 12 pilot mainstream schools had positive results in this area) … [The monthly absence] figures showed reductions in 8 of the 12 mainstream schools. The reductions were between 0.1% and 3%. …*

In both cases the received wisdom is that other factors have a stronger bearing …However, two points are worth emphasising:

1) *The Project has definitely been an aid to tracking of young people. They want the Learning Card so they have to tell us who they are and where they are. They do come on the website and tell us they have moved. If they are not on the roll at the school then the Card comes back, often with notes saying where the teacher thinks we can find him/her.*

2) *There has been positive feedback from pupils about the Card and some evidence that it encourages disaffected young people to stay 'in the system'".*

In Northumberland, issuing large numbers of Cards has been so recent that their influence on **apparently** improved trends in areas like staying-on rates has to be uncertain at this point, although the available data is promising so far. The internal evaluation report very fairly summarises the point: *"In both Northumberland and Durham there has been an improvement in into learning figures. However it is debatable … that the Card has had any significant impact on this…"*[21].

It is, of course, dangerous to read too much into these findings, a point made very fairly by the Bradford and Northumberland teams themselves. It is, though, worth noting that this early-stage 'hard' evidence, whilst very preliminary, **tends** to support assumptions behind the Connexions Card Projects: there is also a certain amount of 'softer' data about positive reactions from young people and other stakeholders giving cautious grounds for optimism.

Only with access to good-quality, detailed monitoring information will it be possible to track important trends like these with any confidence at all, however – a point we return to in Section 5.

---

[21] Bradford internal evaluation report.

3. STAKEHOLDERS

A wide range of stakeholders can be identified for the Connexions Card Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects. We point out elsewhere that the responses from these Stakeholders can often be very different. In practice, success typically depends on having commitment and active support from most - if not all - categories of stakeholders. The position is further complicated, in many instances, by varied reactions from different sub-groups **within** specific stakeholder groupings - for example, widely different responses from teachers who are prepared to 'champion' Connexions Card Projects, as compared to many of their colleagues. We review below, therefore, broad patterns identified through the evaluation summarising responses of different categories of stakeholders.

Young People

The overall (though not universal) picture indicates that young people have been enthusiastic about the Card and the benefits they are deriving from owning one (see in particular comments in Appendices 5 and 6). Some form of proof of age is both useful and beneficial to them; 'show and go' discounts are usually popular - although peer group pressure needs to be recognised: one teacher stressed *"'trail blazers' need to flash their Cards in shops and leisure facilities to really get the others going"*. Big name companies such as McDonalds, Virgin and Odeon Cinemas remain the most popular discount choices.

Anecdotal evidence is suggesting that rewards **can** have a positive impact on attitudes and attendance, although any evidence is only just starting to appear in most areas. Less positively, there are also early-stage indications that young people can lose interest and stop being involved with the Project if their enthusiasm is allowed to falter - because equipment does not work properly, there is inadequate support in schools/ colleges, 'offers' are not appropriately refreshed, and so on.

A number of local evaluations have identified positive responses from young people using the Cards. For example: *"Anecdotal evidence from young people and stakeholder representatives suggests the concept of the Card has been greeted with enthusiasm by young people, who understand its value in terms of motivating them to maintain engagement in education and training, and there has been a significant uptake of discounts and rewards …"* (Humberside internal evaluation report).

As part of the national evaluation, 2 surveys of young people receiving Cards were carried out in March/April 2000, then about a year later. Key findings from the second survey are summarised in Appendix 4, and comments from each are given in Appendices 5 and 6. It had been hoped that the 2 surveys would allow some estimate of 'distance travelled' by surveying young people with experience of using Cards soon after they were launched, following up their views about a year later. In practise, this was not possible: the numbers of young people actively using fully functional Cards in both the Spring of 2000 and 2001 was small for a variety of reasons (usually very small numbers using Cards at all in 2000, but in some cases, e.g. Humberside, some of those using Cards at the time of the first survey were no longer using them in 2001).

The surveys have been of considerable value despite this, however. The comments in Appendices 5 and 6 do give a picture of the 'voice of users' – reflecting considerable general interest, but also frequent concerns for 16-19 year olds including repeated attention to *"how I look in my photo."* More serious points include significant potential scepticism - which Connexions card Projects have sought to dispel with a combination of good experiences and regular reminders/ reinforcements/ refreshing the overall experience and 'offer'.

In Appendix 4 we give both numerical responses gathered in 2001, and also responses from the 2000 survey to the same questions. These should not be taken as directly comparable – for reasons linked partly to the numbers and characteristics of those receiving Cards in the 2 years, partly to the way Projects were able to distribute questionnaires and partly because of slight timing differences (which seem to explain different patterns of contact with the Careers Service, for example).

Appendix 4 should be seen as combining 2 separate snapshots of different groups of users, therefore. Nevertheless a number of important points can be drawn from the quantitative and qualitative data generated by the surveys including

- Most young people report fairly 'responsible' attitudes to learning, staying in learning, etc
- Very high proportions recall recent careers advice, and know where to go to get more careers advice if they need it
- Discounts/ rewards are seen as 'attractive' or at least 'OK' by a significant majority
- The features most disliked usually have little to do with strict functionality – particularly the young person's appearance in the Card photo.
- Most users surveyed have had the Card handed to them 'with a full explanation', even so, comments indicate that initially they often do not fully understand how to use the Card and what it allows them to do. Reinforcement, and particularly peer group support do seem important
- Most young people seem either positive about the Card or at least prepared to 'give it a go': there is a significant core of scepticism, however
- It is impossible to assess the likelihood of the Card having an impact on users' attendance patterns robustly for many reasons: around 10% in both surveys saying 'it may encourage me to attend more regularly' seems to offer grounds for cautious optimism, however.

Schools - Teachers and Support Staff

Many teachers and support staff **are** prepared to support the Project. Comments gathered through the interview programme included: *"anything that will benefit the kids and help increase their attendance will be welcome here"*. Positive responses are far from automatic, however: there is still resistance in some areas to giving **any** support, and elsewhere support has only been achieved through appreciable efforts on the part of Project staff. The most productive relationships have ensued where Project staff have worked hard to foster good relationships with teaching and support staff and have assisted in all stages of implementation and training. It is important to note just how much Project resources have been required to provide support, however.

It is common for schools/ colleges to have had regular weekly visits from Project staff – often over a period of several months – and one-off visits have been needed to address specific (usually systems) difficulties. Problems have consistently occurred where school staff have not been thoroughly briefed and trained, or systems have been underdeveloped resulting in lost data and significant disillusionment.

Schools - Management and Administration

The picture on support from schools management has been uneven. Most have given ready 'in principle' support, and this has often been followed up by adequate levels of practical involvement (but see the point about the time and effort frequently needed from Project staff, made above). The enthusiasts, of whom there are steadily increasing numbers, have retained a high interest in the Project – albeit mainly where it is seen as both beneficial to students and compatible with current systems.

Technical glitches and system incompatibilities have not helped and in some areas this has led to major scepticism. School management remain an integral component in ensuring success within Projects, however: a Connexions 'champion' who will drive the Project through and work closely with Project staff has usually been vital to ensure other staff are kept 'on side' and young people suitably informed and involved.

Further Education

The primary focus of most Projects has been on schools (although the Leeds Project is a notable exception with its focus on FE, and others – e.g. Essex - are starting to build up practical experiences of working with individual colleges).

Nevertheless, it is clear from the experience of all Projects who have attempted to engage FE actively (with the possible exception of Humberside) that FE **is** different – colleges are typically very much larger than schools; many have multi-site structures; the 16-19 age group may only be a very small proportion of total student populations; patterns of attendance are very different from those seen in schools; colleges usually have their own automated systems anyway; and so on. Sixth form colleges have often been easier to involve

than large-scale 'general' FE colleges, but even so, involvement has only been achieved after considerable effort. Effort alone does not guarantee success (e.g. Tyneside, where what was hoped to be the 'lead' institution still has not agreed to become involved). The response of FE institutions has varied widely, usually because of a combination of systems/ compatibility problems, concerns over 'what to do about all the other students,' the inherent complexities within very large, multi-site institutions, and reluctance to devote time to 'somebody else's scheme'.

Projects' continuing experiences have merely reinforced the point that FE will be 'a hard nut to crack' for Connexions Cards – for all of these reasons and more. **Samples** of the kinds of issues which have arisen include:

"Colleges do not wish to have to run 2 registration systems in any one class … (but) … in colleges there are several different systems in operation … (and) only one is capable of producing the required ASCII reports." (Nottingham internal evaluation report).

"We spent 3 months negotiating with … College, offering attendance monitoring/ EMA logging and so on. After many hours of meetings the administrators of the college decided that they did not want to participate … (but would prefer to wait until the national launch)" (Tyneside internal evaluation report).

"… colleges … are unable to bear any significant increased administrative costs, and only if the Card helps to reduce or eliminate such costs in the sector will the Card prove a success …" (Humberside internal evaluation report).

"FE colleges have no fundamental objection to smart Cards … provided a whole college solution is offered. This of course raises the question of who pays …" (Northumberland internal evaluation report).

There are additional sensitivities: with colleges' attendance data having an important impact on FEFC funding, a number of colleges have indicated (usually informally) the importance of having a degree of 'control' over this information if it is gathered by Card-based systems through the Projects. Further technical issues have arisen including how best to treat students on work placements and 'roll-on-roll-off' courses, non-compulsory library sessions, and so on.

Successes **are** apparent, for example in Humberside where the Card has helped improve attendance on traditionally 'difficult' courses. Soon after the Card had been introduced, one member of staff reported: *"the kids are buzzing – it's given them lots to talk about;"* and one motor vehicle tutor reports *"All the students are keen to swipe in. They do it religiously…"*. College principals are actively involved in elements of Project planning and implementation in Essex and elsewhere.

But it **cannot** yet be said that the question 'How best can FE take part in the Card Project?' has been resolved satisfactorily.

Training Providers

As with FE, the inclusion of training providers within Projects has usually been given a secondary priority behind efforts to introduce effective systems into schools in the first instance.

As experience with training providers has built up, indications **seem** to remain positive, with most training providers being at least prepared to *"give it a go"* - if only as a tool which **might** both motivate learners and assist with some of providers' administrative burdens. Several Projects (including Essex, Tyneside) have found that involving training providers can be at least as difficult as other education/ training centres. Inevitably there can be complications specific to this sector including: *"the lack of common systems and (providers) feeling that things are designed with them as an afterthought. The use of IT would be a step forward for one provider in particular, who currently relies totally on paper driven systems"* (Humberside internal evaluation report).

More seriously, however: *"Although receptive to trainees having a Card, the idea of using it as a registration/ tracking system is seen to be practically impossible. Reactions have involved suggestions that employers would not co-operate and that the points system would be violated …"* (Northumberland internal evaluation report).

Special Schools

Early-stage indications in the first Interim Report suggested Special Schools could become involved with the Projects very successfully indeed, and there is now even more evidence to support this picture. Special features (e.g. active use of Makaton special needs symbols in Bradford) have often been incorporated to help learners with special needs, but *"Success stories have included Special Schools taking part in the Project with their pupils being extremely enthusiastic"* (Tyneside internal evaluation report).

Initial concerns that it might not be feasible to include special schools fully in Projects have **not** been borne out, through a combination of introducing tailored features for special schools' pupils, considerable goodwill from the staff within special schools, and additional efforts made on the part of Project staff to train school staff and explain the Card's features fully to pupils.

Parents

Several Projects have made a certain amount of effort to involve or inform parents (e.g. through newsletters, presentations at parents evenings) although overall levels of activity have not been high. There is some evidence, however, (e.g. from Essex) that parents can be an important factor in encouraging some young people to make contact with Projects for a variety of reasons (including *"getting a discount we can all use"*). There seems scope for more determined and focused effort to build up at least basic awareness amongst parents of what Projects can offer on the part of Projects generally.

Partners and Suppliers

The 8 Demonstration Projects were based around Careers Companies, but formal support was required from education authorities and other local groups - and a variety of external suppliers have been involved in providing equipment, software, cabling marketing support, and other elements needed to allow Projects to become operational. The Bracknell Project is slightly different – being led by the Borough Council's Education Department - but again partnerships with a variety of other public and private sector bodies have been required.

Describing some of the delays and malfunctions which have arisen, some interviewees have made comments of the form *"it's about par for any new system with a high IT component"* and we have much sympathy with that view. The supplier issue will become much less relevant as the national roll-out gathers pace – it will be a matter very much for the PPP.

Projects' experiences have certainly varied. Major changes to suppliers have been seen in some of the Projects (notably Tyneside); other changes have arisen through, for example, the Merseyside Project's decision to move from magnetic-stripe to smart-card technology.

We have pointed out already that senior-level commitment from education authorities does not necessarily lead to automatic support from individual schools/colleges. Relationships with other partners have varied too, for example: *"The Project has also suffered from delays in software design and implementation … IT subcontractors need to be nailed down on delivery dates".* …And in relation to sponsors *"Commercial organisations are fickle. They can dangle you along for months and then decide to do nothing; alternatively they may "sign up" after one discussion".* (Bradford internal evaluation report).

The main points, perhaps, are that partnerships have needed to evolve as the Projects themselves have progressed. Often this has led to enhanced working arrangements and mutual learning and benefits – but, in other circumstances, some of the key relationships have become strained and at worst, have had to be replaced with other partnerships.

Partners – Sponsors

We were able to collect limited information only direct from sponsors but it does seem that a range of reported motivations were apparent ranging from 'public spirited' or quasi-philanthropic approaches (*"everybody deserves a start in life, Education's important"*) through to commercial approaches with greater or lesser degrees of sophistication (*"it can't do any harm - it doesn't cost much"; "it ought to be able to give us good exposure amongst young people with money to spend "*).

Recruiting sponsors (for discounts/ rewards) has certainly been challenging for Projects. Considerable effort – and, particularly, time – has been required. Eventually, however, an attractive 'offer' has usually been developed by those Projects needing one. It is too early to seek large-scale feedback from sponsors themselves but there is anecdotal evidence that positive results are perceived, either through straightforward marketing opportunities, or more general 'community support' objectives.

Careers Companies

Whilst DfES certainly provided substantial funds for each of the Projects, Careers Companies themselves[22] have had to provide appreciable additional resources (usually Project management and IT staff time). We asked Project managers 'Was it worth it?' conscious that - for a number - stresses and strains have been considerable, and, whilst a great deal has been learned, success has been far from guaranteed.

In practice, Project staff did report understandable pride in what they have been able to achieve, and a range of other benefits, mainly through *"being involved in something new and prestigious"* and *"being seen to be leading an interesting new initiative"*. The key, but currently tantalising, question relates to the possibility of Connexions Cards making a difference to attendance rates, tracking work, and hence to specific targets for Careers Companies. We discuss this possibility in 2.5: at present, the evidence is that the Card **may** help in these crucially important areas, but currently it is too early to say.

---

[22] Applies to the first 8 Projects only: the Bracknell Project is being promoted by the Borough Council Education Department.

4.   CARD FUNCTIONS/ FEATURES

Projects were designed from the outset to offer a varied range of features (see Fig. 3). Some have been much easier to implement than others – 'show and go' discounts, for example, have proved not only very popular with young people, but require little or no effort once sponsors have been recruited and Cards distributed.

More generally, some of the planned features have received considerable attention and have been widely trialled (e.g. Attendance Monitoring). Others (e.g. links to EMA and travel systems) are very much rarer and have hardly been implemented at all.

We look at these varied patterns below.

Attendance Monitoring

Projects where attendance monitoring is a feature have certainly had to work hard to make progress. As we point out in Table 1, for several Projects (e.g. Humberside) the proportion of fully functional Cards is fairly low in relation to the total issued and for others (e.g. Merseyside, Nottingham) high numbers of fully functional Cards have been achieved only recently. An operational system needs Cards to be distributed, extensive hardware and software to be installed and working, active support from school/ college staff, young people to be informed and motivated to 'swipe' – and, so far, considerable backup and 'hand-holding'.

Putting all of this together has been far from easy although, with perseverance, Projects can now point to increasing numbers of practical examples of 'making it work'. Extensive negotiations and discussions have tended to be needed at the level of the individual institution to agree important elements like defining attendance, agreeing 'how often to swipe' and what MIS reports are to be produced for the school/ college – all of which takes time, and is prone to cause delays and frustrations.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Because practical experience of recording attendance 'on line' is only just starting to build up (see above) information about linking with EMA payment systems is, in effect, nil. So far, it does seem that – if attendance recording can be made consistent and reliable – Card-based systems **ought** to be able to support EMA systems effectively.

Internet Access

The levels of internet linkages vary but a variety of attractive (and increasingly interactive) sites have been developed. Bradford, for example, now has considerable experience of using website 'hits' for tracking. Even where the internet is not needed for data transfer and other functions, though, websites can be made important and attractive features for Card users. Giving reliable, up-to-date information about reward/ discount offers, and the young person's own 'points' position, seems to be valued.

There are certainly concerns about young people without ready access to internet-linked computers using these features. Several Projects have actively supported access through schools, libraries and other publicly-available facilities. Evidence of success with 'harder-to-reach' groups is limited so far, but indications from Essex and elsewhere suggest that interest can be generated, if the site is seen as suitably relevant, attractive and interesting to young people. Features like information about current job availability and opportunities to apply on-line are showing particularly promising results, through increasing numbers of 'hits' and positive feedback from young people.

Auto-enrolment

So far, efforts to make auto-enrolment work in practice have been very limited, in the face of more pressing needs to get basic systems to work properly and gain 'buy-in' from key staff in institutions. All experience so far is based on trials and no fully 'live' experience has yet been achieved. This feature does remain highly attractive in principle, however, particularly for FE colleges - potentially faced with very large volumes of data indeed when substantial numbers of new students seek to enrol each year.

Discounts/ Rewards

Where Projects have tried to set up discount/ reward schemes[23], it has usually been hard work to get schemes up and running - both for offers from commercial sponsors, and 'money can't buy' rewards (e.g. visiting football clubs). Good results **have** usually been achieved eventually, however, typically when Projects have 'gone for it' and sold the benefits of involvement to potential sponsors firmly and actively. In Merseyside, for example, a varied range of rewards has attracted considerable interest and support from young people.

Achieving good results needs a carefully integrated programme of action, however. Young people need offers to be clear to understand and attractive - and points to be easily redeemable. There may be a case for offering vouchers in ways particularly targeted to young people from homes where credit cards and bank accounts are not commonly used, and the Essex Project has achieved a number of good results with 'smart points reward cheques' to minimise concerns about 'hand-outs'.

As well as recruiting sponsors - itself far from easy - reliable systems to support them have to be in place (in particular to allow for deducting points from the young person's total when they have been redeemed). Matters may become easier when the national roll-out gathers pace: as well as providing a more attractive proposition for gaining support from larger organisations in the first place, greater awareness amongst staff and better-developed systems could all support more effective operations on-the-ground when Cards are being used in association with sponsors.

A good initial 'offer' is important to attract young peoples' interest in the first place, probably with a mix of 'fun' elements (e.g. club nights, CD offers) and more serious rewards (e.g. books, leisure opportunities). It is also clear, though, that rewards and discounts need to be 'refreshed' with new offers fairly regularly if interest is to be retained.

---

[23] Not all of them offer discounts/ rewards: in Leeds, for example, this was never part of the Project design.

Good results in building up an attractive rewards 'offer' are certainly attainable, but significant levels of effort have been needed. In contrast, 'show and go' discounts have been much simpler to deliver. They seem to be genuinely valued by the young people themselves (see Appendices 5&6) and once sponsors are recruited and information about the 'offer' distributed, administration requirements are minimal.

Transport

A key feature of several Projects (particularly Nottingham, Northumberland) are links to local transport undertakings. Again, Projects' features vary somewhat: if Cards are used merely to prove identity/ age, problems are minimal (they approximate to 'show and go' discounts). Where automated systems are in place, technical problems have certainly arisen, and work is still going on to find robust solutions.

Nottingham seems closest to achieving a workable system, but has not done so yet -although current delays are due to changes taking place within the Transport undertaking, not linked to the Connexions Card Project. Transport environments are widely seen as 'harsh' for electronic equipment, and careful integration of hardware and software systems is essential. Further challenges have arisen in more 'people-related' areas: what should be done about the young person who has 'forgotten' their Card for example, and whether it is reasonable for very large numbers of young people getting on a school bus all to 'swipe' their Cards before travelling. In essence, further experience and development work does seem to be needed urgently.

Within-School Systems

Where electronic attendance recording systems are already in place, major work has been needed to integrate Connexions Card-based systems with them - but these activities are now showing satisfactory levels of problem-resolution (notably several Projects' work to interface effectively with BROMCOM systems).

Institutions may well prefer (or perhaps require) systems which cover all their students, not just 16-19 year olds. Understandably, they need robust systems which support **their** objectives, without imposing what they see as additional administrative, managerial or technical burdens. Unless they are **really** convinced on these points, the level of 'buy-in' from schools and colleges has usually been a problem.

Experience of linking Cards to existing school/ college systems (particularly school meals e-purse systems) is steadily building up. The general picture seems to be positive, although – by definition – appreciable effort may well be needed at the level of individual institutions to customise Cards and make the necessary arrangements.

Leisure, Libraries, Healthy Eating …

Local authority leisure services have been amongst the most active sponsors for Cards – giving both 'show and go' discounts and more attractive rewards when linked to attainment. For example: *"Bracknell Forest Leisure is playing a key role in the Project. Readers have been installed at three sites … for golf and swimming…"* (Bracknell internal evaluation report). As far as we can tell, no major problems have arisen either in relation to systems or staff training and motivation.

Experience of links to libraries (either school/ college facilities or local authority libraries) is limited so far, but there is no reason currently to envisage this to be more difficult to incorporate on a Card than, say, a school meals or leisure centre reward function.

Broadly, it seems that – whilst experience so far is limited – it **should** be possible to address a number of wider health, fitness and learning agendas in due course, given the will and resourcing to do so.

5. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This report focuses, as its terms of reference require, on "*drawing out lessons from across all … Projects which will inform the further development of (the Connexions) Card and, in particular, inform future decisions about a national role for an IT-based Card"*. It must also *"... identify the conditions which need to be in place for an IT-based Card to be successful in meeting national and local objectives... Assess how outcomes and costs come about, how they vary across key functions and technologies... Identify the extent which outcomes are sustainable over the longer term and identify factors which influence and explain variations in the way in which the (Card) is used."*

The experiences of the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects have been rich and complex: major challenges have been identified and often overcome - all in the relatively short period of time since the autumn of 1999 at most.

Counterbalancing the great achievements Projects can point to, it has to be said that a number of technical and operational challenges have not been resolved so far, or at least progress has only been achieved relatively recently.

Conclusions

Key conclusions from this evaluation must include:

- In general, most young people respond with interest and enthusiasm when the Card is explained to them.
- There have been very varied responses from other stakeholders - particularly teachers and lecturers. Many are enthusiastic, or at least prepared to 'give it a go'. Others have been very sceptical indeed, showing either outright opposition, or determined that there must be 'something in it for us.'
- Technical challenges have been big ones for almost all Projects. At worst, delays and malfunctions (often lasting for many months) have alienated those initially prepared to support the Card Project.
- Further Education **is** different. Evidence of the Card's viability, particularly in complex, multi-site colleges is very thin on the ground.

- The commercial sector has shown itself willing to become involved with the Connexions Card, in a number of ways but particularly through providing discounts and rewards. Major efforts have usually been required to gain this support, however.

Recommendations

Recommendations derived from the experiences of the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects so far have to take in to account the fact that the future is going to be very different – particularly as the national roll-out gathers pace. The evaluation team do not have access to any precise plans for the national roll-out, but believe a range of findings from Projects' experiences ought to be borne in mind for **any** IT-based initiative designed to promote greater involvement in learning.

These points are listed below:

Local-Level Partnerships

It is unclear how much local-level partnership working will be associated with the national Connexions Card Project, but experience from the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects indicates:

- Early stage briefings and promotions for all of those likely to be involved **are** important. Without active support from key stakeholders, there **may** be direct opposition: more likely is a series of delays, postponements, requests for further information or customisation - and a range of other brakes on making effective progress.
- Even when key stakeholder support has been promised, on-the-ground delivery should not be assumed. Resources need to be made available to brief individual schools/colleges, answer questions (perhaps via helpline arrangements), 'reinforce the message' and so on.
- Establishing and supporting networks of 'champions' within individual learning centres should be encouraged: These networks can enthuse others, solve problems and promote good practice.
- The Connexions Card should not be seen as a free-standing initiative: Serious consideration should be given to establishing formal local-level links with wider Connexions partnerships, Local Education Authorities, learning partnerships and other groupings.

- Where Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects are operating now, careful migration into the national Connexions Card Project will be essential. On a positive level, there are established skills and linkages to build on; on the other hand, if the migration is not handled sympathetically, dangers could arise from confusion in the minds of young people and other stakeholders about the role of two (potentially more) separate cards.

IT Systems

- IT systems must be as robust as possible, throughout the chain from delivering and installing equipment, issuing (and re-issuing) cards, 'swiping', producing management information for learning centres and awarding/redeeming 'points'. System glitches have bedevilled many Demonstration/Pathfinder Projects for very many months. They have required major resources commitments to resolve, but more importantly have been a prime cause of resistance and alienation amongst those considering supporting the Project – and have undermined the commitment of those who have agreed to participate.

- Expectations within schools/colleges need to be managed carefully: At worst, **very** large numbers of customised features have been asked for – at appreciable cost, but tending not to improve the operation of the Connexions Card itself.

- A well-designed website can work very well indeed, particularly if it includes job information (and maybe placement and FE/HE enrolment information too). It is helpful if young people can have ready access to the points they have been awarded, and it is essential that websites are inherently interesting and frequently updated. Opportunities for contacting 'hard to reach' young people have certainly arisen, and should actively be promoted up through website features.

- Many learning centres, particularly FE colleges, require 'whole organisation' IT solutions for attendance monitoring and other functions. Connexions Card systems need to be able either to offer whole-organisation solutions direct (maybe at extra cost) or demonstrate the capability for robust interfacing with established systems. Inter-operability is important to colleges to minimise administrative and IT workloads; minimising potential student confusion is important too.

- Many learning centres will find it attractive to add-on functions like school meal e-purse and library records systems. It will be helpful to offer these options via the Connexions Card, but very much as 'added cost extras'.

- A number of key systems – including EMA recording, transportation-linked systems (involving payments as opposed to discount/proof of eligibility functions) and auto-enrolment - will **probably** work satisfactorily and be attractive to various stakeholders. These functions are largely untested so far, however. Further pilot work should take place as soon as possible to prove reliability and relevance in this context.

- Fraud and misuse has not been a problem so far, but the position should be carefully monitored. Where questions have arisen about system reliability and over the fair allocation of rewards and 'points,' questions have been asked about the whole relevance of the Connexions Card Project.

- Web-based systems have worked well and attracted interest from many young people, including some who had not been in contact with schools/colleges/careers for some time. Many young people do **not** have access to the internet, however; publicising and facilitating access through libraries, community centres and other access points should be given high priority.

Cards

- Young people have tended to respond very positively to cards when they are first distributed. (At worst, they seem genuinely 'curious'). It is **very** helpful to distribute cards face to face, however, with a full briefing, supporting material, explanation of how they will work in particular learning centres etc.

- Databases used to generate list of eligible young people so far have had errors, ranging from missing/duplicated entries through to a variety of mis-spelling and other inaccuracies. Certainly ensuring that databases are as 'clean' as possible is important, but in practice facilities must be in place to correct errors, re-issue cards and issue cards to 'missing' young people as quickly and as effectively as possible.

- Young people typically welcome cards giving proof of age and identity. There **may** be a need for an 'opt-out' but in general, proof of age/identity should be used as a significant selling point for the whole Connexions Card concept.

- A **very** frequent complaint from young people is about what they see as poor quality photographs on cards. Every effort needs to be made to include photographs young people see as attractive. There **may** be scope for allowing them to supply their own photograph if they feel particularly aggrieved.

- So far, very few lost or damaged cards have had to be replaced. Some Projects make a charge when new cards are required, most have not. There seems to be little impact on loss rates either way, so it may be best to monitor

the position locally, making charges only if loss rates seem to be climbing to unacceptable levels.

Different Kinds of Learning Centres

- **Schools** Most Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects experiences come with schools, and good results have come from careful briefing, identifying an appropriate 'champion' within the school, giving good support when problems arise (or have been perceived) and - crucially – offering robust reliable systems. It is important to address the needs of classroom teachers and administrators, as well as head teachers, heads of 6th forms and IT specialists.

- **Further Education.** Large, complex FE Colleges have been very challenging indeed to involve effectively in the Connexions Card Projects. Good results seem to require **very** reliable, robust systems which need minimal administrative input; offering all-college systems (perhaps at extra cost) or at least robust interfacing with established systems, and clear answers to the question: What's in it for us?'. Further work to give robust EMA and auto-enrolment systems should be given high priority as these **may** be particularly attractive to FE Colleges.

- **Special Schools** The Connexions Card concept has worked very well with Special Schools. A small number of additional features (e.g. Makaton symbols and/or voice features) have been effective; good briefing for teachers (perhaps with specialist supporting materials) should be made available too.

- **Training Providers** There is limited information so far about how the Connexions Card can best be implemented within training provider organisations (particularly when a high proportion of learning takes place on employers' premises). Further development work should be considered to find the best ways of supporting effective training provider involvement. Those implementing the initiative within training providers in the short term should ensure the availability of robust IT systems, good supporting information being made available to young people and training providers (who may well be very small organisations) allowing the same access to helplines and systems support schools and colleges will need.

Rewards and Discounts

- An effective 'offer' is likely to need a mix of high profile national sponsors and local support, familiar to young people in particular areas and minimising any

concerns about 'remoteness' and 'national government initiatives'. A good mix should also include:

- both 'show and go discounts' and rewards based on performance;
- 'fun' items (e.g. leisure discounts. club nights, CDs) as well as learning-related incentives (e.g. discounts on learning materials; 'masterclasses');
- straightforward financial incentives together with 'money can't buy' offers (e.g. visits to football clubs, 'meet the stars').
- The offers must be regularly 'refreshed' to ensure enthusiasm is not lost.
- Mechanisms for gathering local-level feedback about rewards and discounts from young people should be considered very seriously indeed. As well as giving useful pointers to how discounts and reward offers can be developed over the medium-term, the Card initiative itself can be promoted as having a significant input from young people themselves.

Promoting Interest in the Connexions Card

- High profile launches of the Connexions Card have certainly been useful in developing interest, but have not built significant activity of themselves. An integrated approach leading up to Card distribution to young people through each learning centre, preferably face-to-face with a full explanation, will normally be required.
- Word-of-mouth is, inevitably, a crucial tool in building young peoples' interest. Key tools in maximising word-of-mouth referrals are ensuring the Card looks attractive in the first place, and making it easy to request one for those not reached direct – notably via attractively-designed websites.
- Parents should be a key target for promotional activities; presentations at parents' evenings, items in newsletters and targeted press information should all be considered as part of an integrated promotional strategy.
- As with involving young people in the detailed design of discounts and reward offers, there is much to be said for encouraging young people themselves to design marketing and promotional materials. If nothing else, material should be carefully 'trialled' with potential users themselves.

Impact

It is too early to judge whether the Connexions Card has had a definite, measurable impact on young people's attitudes to learning and career choices. The most that can be said is that a number of 'straws in the wind' are positive. There is evidence from some of the Projects that there may be more positive attitudes to staying in learning and keeping in contact with Careers amongst

young people, and 'tracking' and support systems now have additional opportunities for reaching young people who might otherwise have become 'lost'.

In practice, a range of other initiatives (particularly the EMA) also address broadly comparable cohorts for somewhat similar purposes: we are dealing with a group of complementary measures, rather than discrete initiatives. Accordingly, the Connexions Card is best seen as 'one of a number of tools', rather than something which transforms young people's attitudes and behaviour of itself.

The overall position is, perhaps, best summed up as both complex and tantalising. At best, Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects have operated well, with efficient IT systems, good responses from young people, positive support from schools and colleges, and the active involvement of the private sector and other stakeholders. But where IT systems had been delayed or failed, schools and colleges shown minimal buy-in, and other stakeholders failed to live up to their commitments, Project staff have come under immense pressure and the position has inevitably seemed bleak.

The Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects were always expected to face many challenges as they tested out a wide range of technical and operational features. Varied results have certainly been achieved, as Projects have explored what does - and does not – seem to work when Card-based Projects are implemented in practice.

Much effort has been devoted to the Demonstration and Pathfinder Projects by many people. Overall, their experiences indicate that the national Connexions Card **should** be able to achieve significant take-up from young people, learning centres and other stakeholders, and provide a useful additional tool for those promoting more positive attitudes to learning, taking up careers advice and others.

It does seem, though, that successes will often be very hard won indeed.

Appendix 1:

Monthly Data Collection Proforma

V.3: July 2000

NATIONAL EVALUATION

OF

CONNEXIONS CARD PATHFINDER/ DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

PROFORMA: MONTHLY DATA COLLECTION FROM INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Contact Details

Name of Project:

Contact Name/Phone No:

Data Collection Period (Month)

Date of return

Please return by e-mail to research@crg.org.uk or fax to 029 2066 7328

GUIDANCE NOTES

This Proforma

1. Please email or fax this proforma back as soon as possible after the end of each calendar month (details are on the cover).

2. All data fields can be extended to allow for more detailed information (e.g. for individual schools) if this is available: there is also space for any relevant comments/observations.

3. A standard format is being used for all Projects. We know some sections will be inappropriate/difficult to complete for some Projects, but please follow the points 4-7 below as fully as possible and contact us if you face particular difficulties.

Figures

4. Broadly speaking, **some** information (e.g. estimates, approximations) is better than **no** information. But please be as consistent as possible and describe any changes in assumptions, etc. if they arise.

5. **Wherever possible all figures should relate to young people 'within the Project'** – i.e. receiving Connexions Cards and in a position to use them -. If other figures are used (e.g. all-lea figures) please do use them, but mark clearly what they relate to.

6. Some Projects will not be able to get figures direct from Demonstration Project systems. Where this is not available, please give a 'best estimate' from other sources if possible (e.g. destination/activity survey data). But again, please explain the data sources if this applies.

7. We know some information may not be updated every month. If this is the case, please enter *"No new data this month"*. If data is genuinely unavailable (e.g. not relevant for your Project) or cannot be produced cost-effectively please enter *"No data available"*.

CRG's role will cover:-

8. Providing you with a comparison between your figures and 'all Projects' figures each month – unless you ask us not to

9. Monitoring trends rather than making judgements based upon absolute figures. We well appreciate that different local circumstances apply, the Projects themselves are very different and some of the data collection arrangements vary.

10. Encouraging a dialogue with Projects. We hope you will explain issues to us as they arise; we will need to ask you questions about specific points of interest, but

are glad to feed back emerging themes from our analyses and support your local evaluations as fully as we can.

11. Operating a help-line to support this data collection exercise and the local evaluation. If you have any concerns, questions, comments or observations please contact Richard Gaunt, Andrew Rix or Kyle Davies on **029 2034 3218**.

A. Card Distribution
(Note: cover Demonstration/ Pathfinder Project Cards only,
not 'Dumb' Cards)

i) Number of Cards issued this period:

ii) Please describe how these Cards were distributed, e.g. by schools, advisors:-

iii) Numbers of Cards issued to different groups of young people in this period:

Schools		
School Name	Number issued to Year 11/12	Number issued to Other Year Group(s)
FE Colleges		
College Name	Number Issued	
Training Providers		
Provider Name	Number Issued	
Others (Please describe)	Number Issued	

iv) Total number of Cards issued so far:

v) Number of Cards re- issued this period:

vi) Describe reasons for re-issue:

vii) Number of Card readers installed this period:

Institution Name	Number of readers Installed	Number of readers actively being used

viii) Total of Card readers installed:

B. General Progress with Project

i) Please list the key milestones for the Project relevant to this reporting period and describe progress against them:

_____

_____

_____

ii) Please write a brief description of what has happened this period, covering variance from plans, etc. where appropriate:-

_____

_____

_____

iii) Please write in any 'good news' stories or any other points of interest:-

_____

_____

_____

iv) Please describe any particular difficulties encountered this period that are not included in the answers to previous questions and tell us the strategies you have used to address them:

C.   Attendance

Notes:
- **See guidance notes 4-7 about using 'best available' data**
- **Please give an estimate of how reliable the data is on a scale of a-e,
   where <u>a</u> is a guess <u>e</u> is very reliable.**
- **If data can be made available at the level of individual schools/ colleges, please
   enter it in the appropriate fields (fields should expand to allow this)**
- **If at all possible, cover only young people taking part in the Demonstration
   Project: if other figures have to be used , please explain what figures you are
   using**
- **If data is not available, please mark the fields in line with guidance note 7 (i.e.
   "No new data this month" or "No data available")**

i)   Give percent attendance this period at:-

Participating Schools		
Name of School	% attendance (.x. reliability)	Year Group(s)
Participating Colleges		
Name of College	% attendance (.x. reliability)	
Participating Training Providers		
Name of Provider	% attendance (.x. reliability)	
Other (Please Describe)		

ii)   Give percent unauthorised absences this period at: -

Participating Schools		
Name of School	% unauthorised absence (.x. reliability)	Year Group(s)
Participating Colleges		
Name of College	% unauthorised absence (.x. reliability)	
Participating Training Providers		
Name of Provider	% unauthorised absence (.x. reliability)	
Other (Please Describe)		

iii)   Please give numbers/ percent changing initially selected courses this period:-

Participating Schools		
Name of School	% changing (.x. reliability)	Year Group(s)
Participating Colleges		
Name of College	% changing (.x. reliability)	
Participating Training Providers		
Name of Provider	% changing (.x. reliability)	
Other (Please Describe)		

iv)   Give numbers/percent dropping out of learning this period:-

Participating Schools		
Name of School	% dropping out (.x. reliability)	Year Group(s)
Participating Colleges		
Name of College	% attendance (reliability)	
Participating Training Providers		
Name of Provider	% attendance (reliability)	
Other (Please Describe)		

v)   Do you have any evidence that the Card has an impact on attendance: ☐ **Yes**
                                                                              ☐ **No**

- If 'yes' please describe this evidence

_____

_____

_____

- If **'no'** please explain briefly why this is (e.g. *"too early to say"*; *"no reliable data available; "too many other initiative to be sure"; "as far as we can tell, the Card is not having an impact on attendance"*.)

_____

_____

_____

D   Careers

Notes:
- Refer to guidance notes 4-7.
- We appreciate this may be a difficult section for a number of Projects, but seek 'best available' data – with clear explanations if particular estimates/ assumptions have to be made.

i)   Percent of young people taking part in the Demonstration Project deemed 'in contact' with Careers this period (wide definition: those thought to be 'in the system')

ii)   Number of young people deemed in 'destination unknown' this period

iii) Numbers of young people making **any** contact with Careers through Connexions Card Demonstration Project this period

Note: Include all contacts where young people are 'pro-active' where they are known: include, e.g., contacts purely to re-issue Connexions Card).

iv) Number of young people thought to have been 'lost to the system' successfully recontacted this period, linked to Connexions Card systems.

E.   Rewards and Discounts

Discounts

i)   How many local discounters are involved in the Project?

Please list existing discounters if these have not been listed in previous returns, and any new discounters who have come on board in this period.

_____

_____

_____

ii)   How many discounts are being redeemed by each discounter in this period? Please give the number and value if this is possible.

iii)   Do you have examples of positive feedback from the Commercial sector: If so, please give details.

_____

_____

_____

iv)   Can you identify any patterns in the claiming of discounts by Card users: For example, is there a core of repeat users? Do significant numbers of people claim only one type of discount?

_____

_____

_____

v)   How are local discounters promoting their involvement with the Card? For example, are they using posters, newspaper advertising, web advertising, school/college, or other promotions?

_____

_____

_____

Rewards

i)   How many rewards have been given in this period?

_____
_____
_____
_____

ii)   Please list the number of rewards given above by type, for this period:-

Type of Reward	No

iii) Of the number of young people who have a Card, how many of them have been given rewards in this period?

_____
_____
_____

F   Other Performance Measures

i)   Number of hits on local website this period

ii)   Percent of Cards issued accessing local Careers website this period

iii)   Number of positive comments from young people this period

iv)   Numbers of negative comments from young people this period

v)   Numbers of positive comments from other stakeholders this period

vi)   Numbers of negative comments from other stakeholders this period

vii)   Attainments

        Give data here on most recent figures for: -

        5 GCSE A-C attainment

        Leavers without qualifications

        Percent entering FE

        Percent entering employment without training

        Percent entering employment with training

Appendix 2:

Analysis of Data Submitted Through Monthly Proformas (see Appendix 1)

Table i: Number of Cards issued this period

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
Feb 00		508	0						
March 00		3,802	0		2,100				
April 00		0	0			8,096		250	
May 00		110	1,622					250	
June 00		67	1,013		480			350	
July 00		27	0						
Aug 00			0						
Sept 00		9	0				869		
Oct 00		6	19	2,188				2,679	
Nov 00	100	26	0		120				68
Dec 00		3,010	2						
Jan 01		35	1						
Feb 01	500	72	1				68		1,000
March 01	600	52				8,096		1,300	265
April 01							1,563		
May 01		1	58					850	1,100
June 01		3	0					38	96
July 01		8	0						
August 01			0						
Total	1,200	7,942	2,716	2,188	2,700	16,192	2,500	5,697	2,529

Note: More detailed figures direct from Projects lead to slight differences with table 1, which should be treated as more up-to-date.

Table ii: Number of Cards re-issued (either lost, damaged or due to incorrect data)

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
Feb 00									
March 00		22							
April 00									
May 00		57							
June 00		67	1						3
July 00		16							
Aug 00									
Sept 00		11					25		
Oct 00		28	10					31	
Nov 00				2					
Dec 00		9							
Jan 01			2						
Feb 01			4				50		
March 01			2					45	2
April 01									
May 01			11					23	4
June 01			11					3	3
July 01			0						
August 01			0						
Total	0	201	50	2	120	0	75	103	12

Table iii: Percent of Young People taking part in the Demonstration Project deemed 'in contact' with Careers

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex*	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
Feb 00		96%							
March 00		96%						0%	
April 00		96%					70%	0%	
May 00		98%	56%					0%	
June 00		98%	8%					0%	
July 00		98%							
Aug 00			4%						
Sept 00		90%	5%				90%		
Oct 00		90%	34%	89%					
Nov 00		90%							
Dec 00		90%	75%						
Jan 01		90%	75%						
Feb 01			75%				100%		
March 01		89%	75%						
April 01									
May 01		86%	75%						100
June 01		87%	75%						100
July 01		75%	8.4%						
August 01		75%							

Note: Figures from different Projects not strictly comparable because of definitional differences.

Table iv: Number of Young People making any Contact with Careers through the Learning Card/ Connexions Card Demonstration Project

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
Feb 00		0							
March 00		10							
April 00		20	8				20		
May 00		20	20						
June 00		23							
July 00		10	117						
Aug 00			153						
Sept 00		13	73						
Oct 00		6		21%					
Nov 00		9	165						
Dec 00		30	136						
Jan 01		26	114						
Feb 01		13							
March 01									
April 01									
May 01		49	317					11	50
June 01		49	133						32
July 01		28	31						
August 01		7	13						

Table v: How many local discounters are involved in the Project?

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
July 00		4			13		16		
Aug 00			7		13				
Sept 00		7	7		13				
Oct 00		7		19	13			20	
Nov 00		8			13				138
Dec 00		8	7		13				
Jan 01		8	7		13				
Feb 01		8	8		13				
March 01		8			13				
April 01		8			17				
May 01		8	9		17				103
June 01		8	9		17				103
July 01		8	9		17				
August 01		8	9		17				

Table vi: How many discounts are being redeemed by discounters?

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
July 00		148							
Aug 00			2						
Sept 00		164	0						
Oct 00		414							
Nov 00		846							
Dec 00		1,045	1						
Jan 01		703	0						
Feb 01		1,057	0						
March 01		620			5				
April 01		692							
May 01		618			12				
June 01		510							259
July 01		802							
August 01		257			3				

Note: 1) most Projects have no systems for recording 'show-and-go' discounts.

2) for Essex, one 'discount' or 'cheque' claimed may mean dozens of discounts taken up per discounter. For example, one cheque for McDonald's entitles the young person to 50p off a meal every day for the duration of the Project.

Table vii: How many rewards have been given in this period

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
July 00		0							
Aug 00			2						
Sept 00		0	0						
Oct 00		0					412		
Nov 00	10	10							
Dec 00		0	3						
Jan 01		0	0						
Feb 01		0	0				233		
March 01		9							
April 01		30							
May 01		11	21						48
June 01		52	22						324
July 01		3	6						
August 01		1	20						

Table viii: Number of hits on the local website

	Bracknell	Bradford	Essex	Gateshead	H'side	Leeds	M'side	N'berland	Nott'ham
Feb 00		0							
March 00		0						91	
April 00		0						153	
May 00		398						261	
June 00		205						489	
July 00		500							
Aug 00		205	61						
Sept 00		690	18						
Oct 00		720	83						
Nov 00		897							
Dec 00		789	1						
Jan 01		863	14					2,800	
Feb 01		453	24						
March 01		113							
April 01		24							
May 01		40	501					4,677	
June 01		61	242					6,091	
July 01		52	240						
August 01		24	350						

Appendix 3:

'Messages to the Roll Out'

Outcomes from the Connexions Card Workshop

York, April 2nd & 3rd 2001

Connexions Card: York Workshop 2nd & 3rd April 2001.

'Messages to the Roll Out'

THE PROCESS

The workshop members were drawn from all 9 Connexions Card Projects (both Demonstration Projects and Pathfinder Projects), together with representatives from DfES and from CRG.

The first part of the workshop looked particularly at what has been learned from experiences so far – what results have been achieved, what has helped achieve good results, what problems have arisen, how problems have been overcome, and what areas look as if they will need attention in the future. This led to the production of a list of 'issues' attached as Annex 1.

For the second part of the workshop, groups looked at this list of issues, modified some of the wording, grouped some of the issues together (and added 2 new ones, numbered 25 and 26).

They identified their 6 or so highest priority items and produced a summary, first of 'successful strategies' for addressing these issues (including partial solutions and 'good ideas'); then they produced a list of 'unresolved items' – where it seems that further work will be needed as the national roll-out gathers pace, and there may be a need to 'beware of potential pitfalls' in particular areas.

The outcomes from these assessments were gathered together as a series of 'messages to the national roll-out' and are summarised below.

The Issues

(numbers in brackets cross- refer to Annex 1)

i) . Building good operational partnerships, particularly with teachers and the FE sector. (1,8,17)

<u>Successful strategies</u>

- Sell as a whole college package offering a range of services, including fair attendance monitoring and links to EMA. Additional services may need extra funding.
- Work with enthusiasts and 'champions'.
- Interoperability to build bridges with existing systems.
- <u>Very</u> robust and easy-to-use systems.
- Rapid problem solving; help-lines; resources which can quickly be devoted to on-the-spot support.
- Investing resource into implementing systems within FE, maybe including seminars and face-to-face meetings. Possibly a phased roll-out within FE.

<u>Unresolved items</u>

- Acceptability when colleges cover wide age ranges, not just those entitled to Connexions Cards.
- Can high levels of support be maintained cost-effectively.
- Are colleges prepared to disclose attendance data to outsiders.
- How to ensure support from schools where there is a general lack of support for the concept.
- Can compatibility with other systems really be delivered.
- Establishing good relationships with LSCs.

ii). Ensuring a fair and attractive reward structure. (3, 13, 10)

<u>Successful strategies:</u>

- A flexible combination of national and local rewards: a strong core 'brand' with tailored local offers.
- Local rewards should be flexible and national rewards should retain a high profile.
- Incorporate a combination of 'show and go' discount rewards for all those with a Connexions Card, and incentives/ rewards for those students meeting learning-related goals.
- Consult students to ensure rewards are received favourably; this may be through focus groups or other feedback mechanisms built into the system.
- Reward redemption needs to be straightforward, including online options.
- Update or cycle rewards to retain motivation.

<u>Unresolved items:</u>

- Rewards need to be sustainable over time. Organisations involved need to be aware of the cost implications of involvement over time before signing up. Pulling out after a couple of months will create extra work for Project teams and the lack of continuity may harm the programmes credibility with young people.
- Rewards and discounts need to be in place when Cards are issued to increase involvement and reduce disaffection or disillusionment.
- Ensuring flexibility that doesn't mean a lack of clarity or confusion.
- Rewards need be an appropriate reflection of effort and behaviour.

iii.) Building and maintaining good working partnerships. (1, 11, 7)

Successful strategies:

- Focus on those who are more positive towards the programme and are more likely to get involved and stay involved.
- Effectively use established links with LEAs and other organisations.
- Use innovative methods for building new partnerships – thinking of creative 'routes in'.

Unresolved items

- There is a need to manage, where possible, misinformation.
- A fair approach needs to be taken, avoiding 'golden handshakes'.

iv.) Ensure and maintain, as far as possible, smooth and effective IT implementation and functioning. (2, 6)

Successful strategies:

- Careful attention to detail in all aspects of implementation and use – both hardware, software and human factors issues. Often it is the small glitches that have the greatest impact.
- A detailed communication plan for IT should, in practice, ensure successful implementation of IT systems.
- Open database compliance.
- Make websites attractive and appealing, and use them to communicate with young people; maximise interactivity.
- Develop standards for Connexions databases that Projects should adhere to.
- Ensure compatibility between paper based and electronic systems, encouraging a flexible approach.

Unresolved items

- Educate all those who come into contact with hardware. (including telling cleaners not to switch off machines).
- Synchronisation of systems.

v.) Achieving a smooth and effective transition from Development/ Pathfinder Projects into the national programme. (24)

Successful strategies:

- Communicate plans and strategies at an early stage to ensure buy-in and involvement from learning establishments and other stakeholders.
- Keep disruptions to a minimum.
- Look at each pilot area and ensure lessons are learnt.

Unresolved items

- Co-ordinate communications and implementation, i.e. young people need to know that the Card they have been given is the Card they have been told about – including knowing what it's for.

vi.) Ensure the continuing involvement of young people and getting the Cards distributed effectively and efficiently. (4, 5)

Successful strategies:

- Getting the right message across at the outset is vital. Allocating resource up front to enable Projects to spend time with teaching staff and young people ensures greater buy-in and loyalty.
- Keep communications informal and aimed at young people.
- Build in feedback mechanisms to maintain a young people focus, and ensure their involvement, e.g. focus groups to review Projects and progress.
- Get young people involved in the development and evolution of the Project. For example Connexions literature and websites locally should contain material written and produced by young people with a young people focus.
- All the benefits of the Card need to be emphasised and promoted.
- Databases from learning establishments have proved unreliable. Dedicating resource to ensure databases are accurate will reduce disappointment and embarrassment, and hopefully increase participation.

Unresolved items

- Loosing a young people focus may lead to them being misinformed or let down
- Cost implications of 'personal' approach.
- Inefficient or half hearted approaches can have profound negative impact.

vii.) How to publicise success and share good practice. (23)

Successful strategies:

- Develop and implement a PR and marketing strategy
- Provide up to date relevant examples of good practice that can provide useful lessons for participants at all levels
- Appoint 'champions' to promote and spread the word. This could include both young people and adults from learning establishments.

viii.) Managing expectations. (11)

Successful strategies:

- Set out clear objectives that can and will be achieved. This should establish a baseline level of confidence in the programme.
- Ensure good working relations between Connexions Services and learning establishments.

ix.) Involving all stakeholders. (9, 22)

Successful strategies:

- Appropriate marketing that sells the benefits to different stakeholder groups.
- The programme needs to retain a certain amount of flexibility without compromising it's overall purpose. Setting minimum standards for inclusion, e.g. include EMA, and then allowing local flexibility over and above that may be the answer.

x.) Who qualifies for the Card, what do we mean by 'in learning'. (25)

Successful strategies:

- A clear definition of 'in learning' needs to be promoted. This is likely to address informal learning issues as well.
- Issue Cards to all young people entering year 11, certain functions will only be available for those entering into further education and training.

Unresolved items

- When is the Card issued?
- There is a need to avoid marginalising students where possible.

xi.) Confidentiality and data protection. (26)

Successful strategies

- Personal details available over the internet need to remain secure.
- Students need to 'sign off' personal details offered as part of the programme, either over the internet or via a paper based system.

(CRG: April 4th 2001)

ANNEX I: ISSUES

1. How to build good operational partnerships
2. Effective tracking
3. A fair, attractive reward structure
4. Ensuring continuing involvement/ interest from young people
5. Getting the Cards distributed
6. Achieving smooth IT/ system implementation
7. Communicating with stakeholders
8. FE involvement: special requirements/ systems
9. Involving Work Based Learning providers and learners
10. Local flexibility vs. national structures
11. Managing expectations
12. Effective links to E.M.A.
13. Achieving attractive, popular discount 'offers'
14. Smooth, effective points award/ redemption
15. Building in extra functions effectively
16. Recording attendance
17. Gaining teacher commitment/ providing support
18. What resources are really needed in schools and colleges
19. Effective links with DfEE
20. Building really relevant websites
21. Winning over 'passive aggression' (and 'active aggression')
22. Achieving good partnerships with Careers/ Connexions
23. How to publicise the successes, share good practice
24. Achieving a smooth transition from Demonstration/ Pathfinder Projects
25. Who qualifies for Cards; what do we mean by 'in learning'
26. Confidentiality and data protection.

Appendix 4:

Analysis of Responses to the
User Questionnaire (April/ May 2001 and March 2000)

Note (1): 291 Questionnaires returned for the 2000 survey, a total of 640 questionnaires returned for 2001 including 256 from Bracknell: Bracknell data has been excluded from 2 tables because questions were inappropriate for this Project.

Note (2): Data from the 2 surveys should not be treated as comparable – see section 2.5 in the Main Report.

What do you plan to do next year?

Percentage

Legend:
- 2000
- 2001(excluding Bracknell)

Categories:
- 3a come back to same school/college/training co...
- 3b go to a sixth form colleg...
- 3c go to a FE colleg...
- 3d go to a HE college or universi...
- 3e get a job
- 3f go on a training programm...
- 3g do something els...
- 3h not sure

Values:
- 3a: 31.96 (2000), 65.44 (2001)
- 3b: 18.56 (2000), 2.14 (2001)
- 3c: 19.59 (2000), 1.53 (2001)
- 3d: 6.88 (2000), 10.7 (2001)
- 3e: 7.9 (2000), 6.72 (2001)
- 3f: 11.68 (2000), 5.81 (2001)
- 3g: 3.76 (2000), 4.28 (2001)
- 3h: 6.12 (2001)

When you leave school/college/training centre, how important do you think it will be to keep on learning new skills – either by going to college/university or getting a job with training?

Chart legend:
- 2001
- 2000

Category	2001	2000
4a essential, very important indeed	56.78	65.3
4b fairly important	34.65	26.12
4c not particularly important	1.89	3.44
4d not important at all	0.34	0.69
4e don't know	1.72	1.03

Y-axis: Percentage (0 to 70)
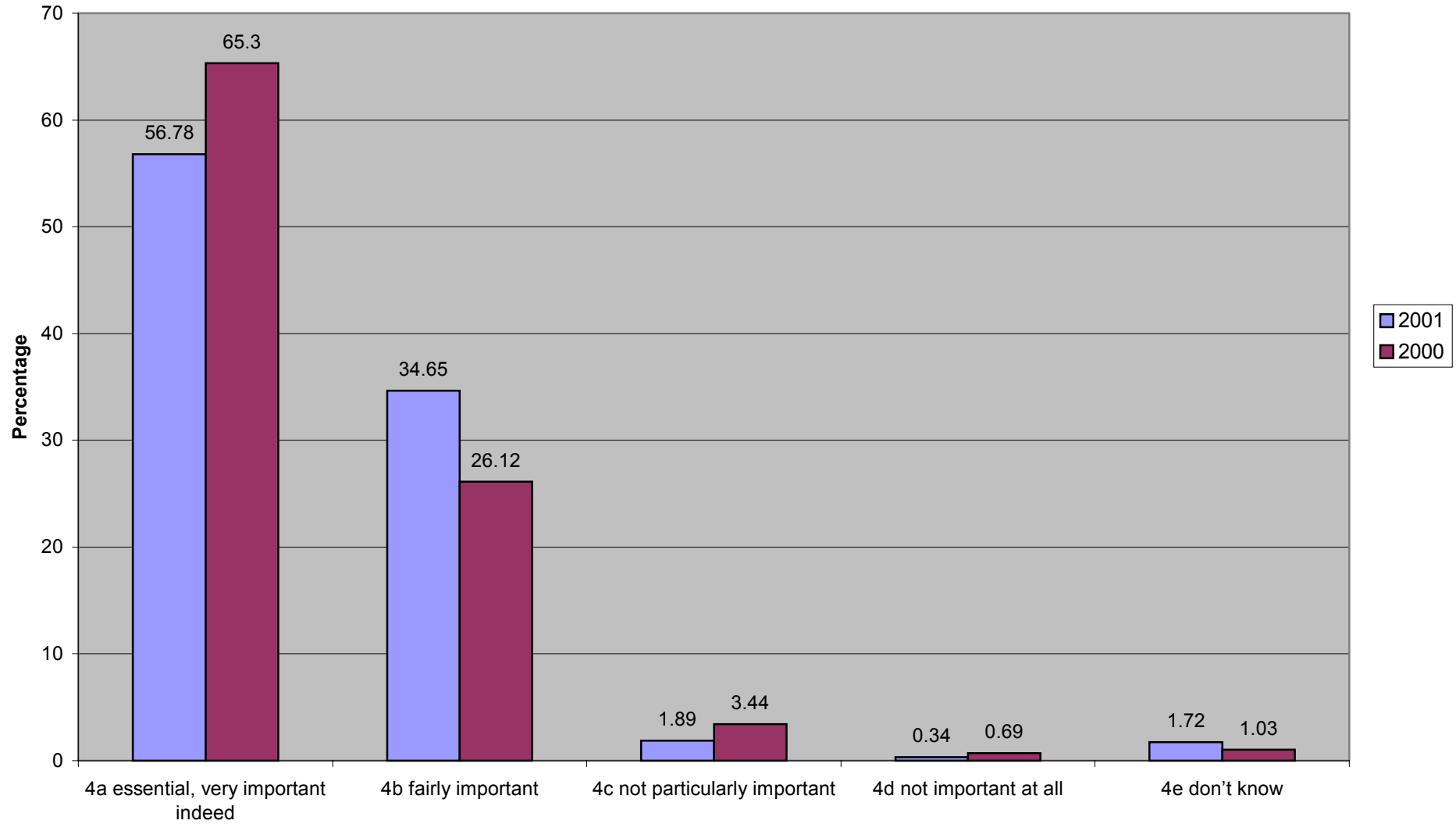
Would you say your plans for next year are:

	5a definite, you've made your mind up	5b fairly definite	5c not sure at all	5d still thinking about best option
2001	41.51	39.11	5.15	8.92
2000	53.61	28.2	6.53	7.9
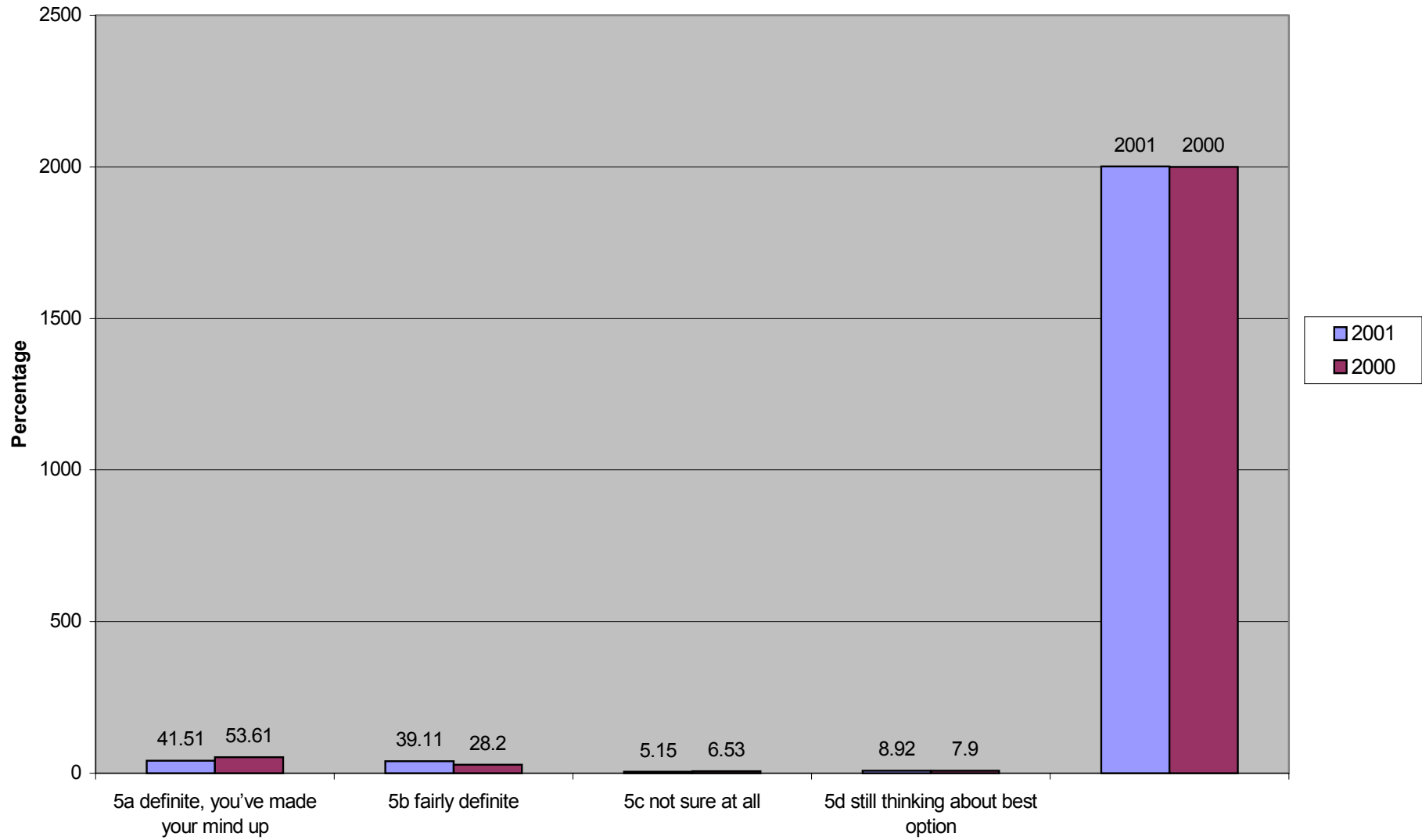
Have you had a meeting with your school or college Careers advisor in the last 6 months?

Percentage

Legend: 2001, 2000

	6a yes	6b no
2001	29.5	65.01
2000	73.54	22.68
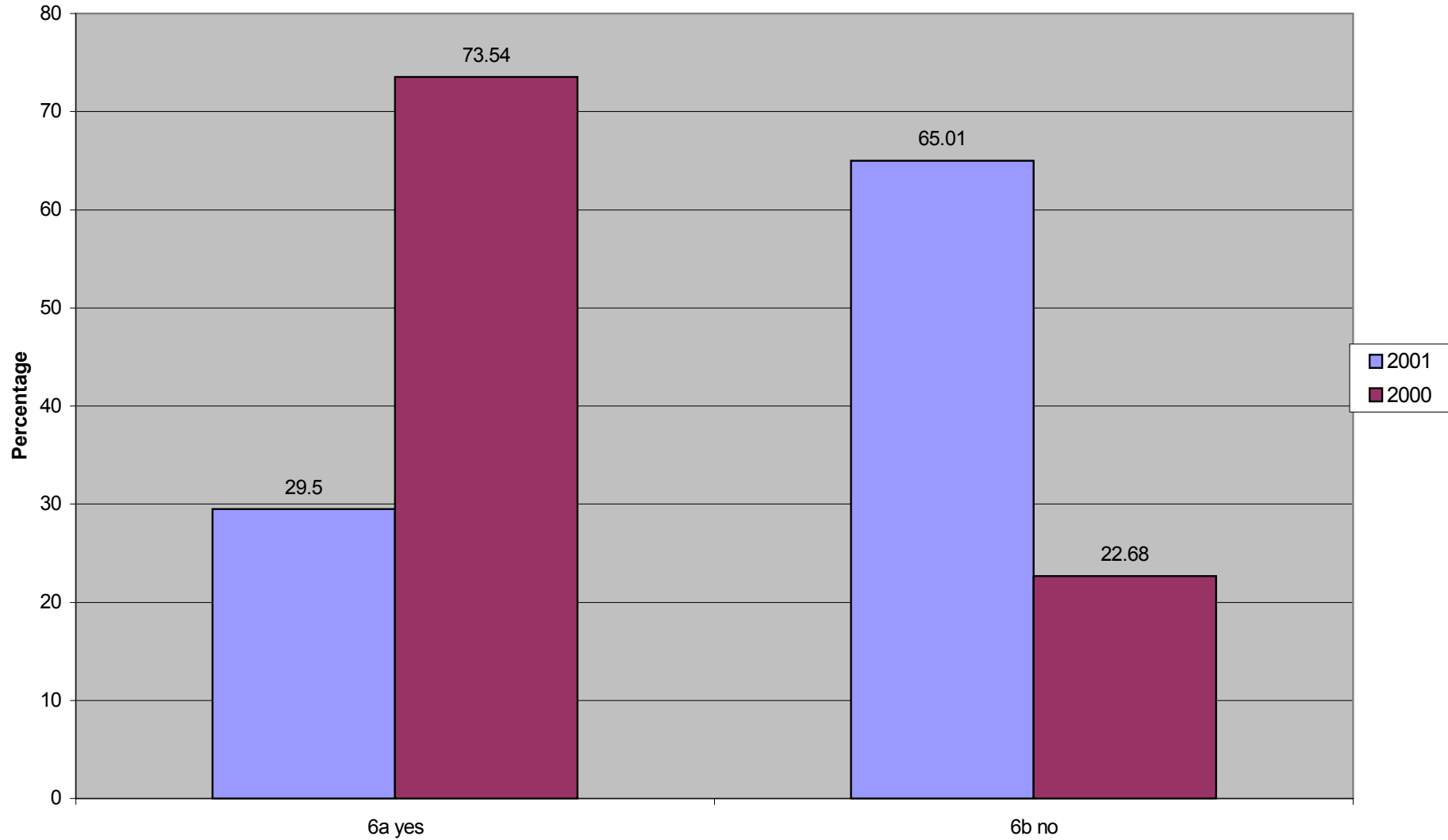
Have you had a meeting with a Careers service advisor in the last 6 months?

Percentage (y-axis, 0 to 90)

7a yes: 2000 = 38.83, 2001(excluding Bracknell) = 18.65
7b no: 2000 = 57.04, 2001(excluding Bracknell) = 78.89

Legend:
- 2000
- 2001(excluding Bracknell)
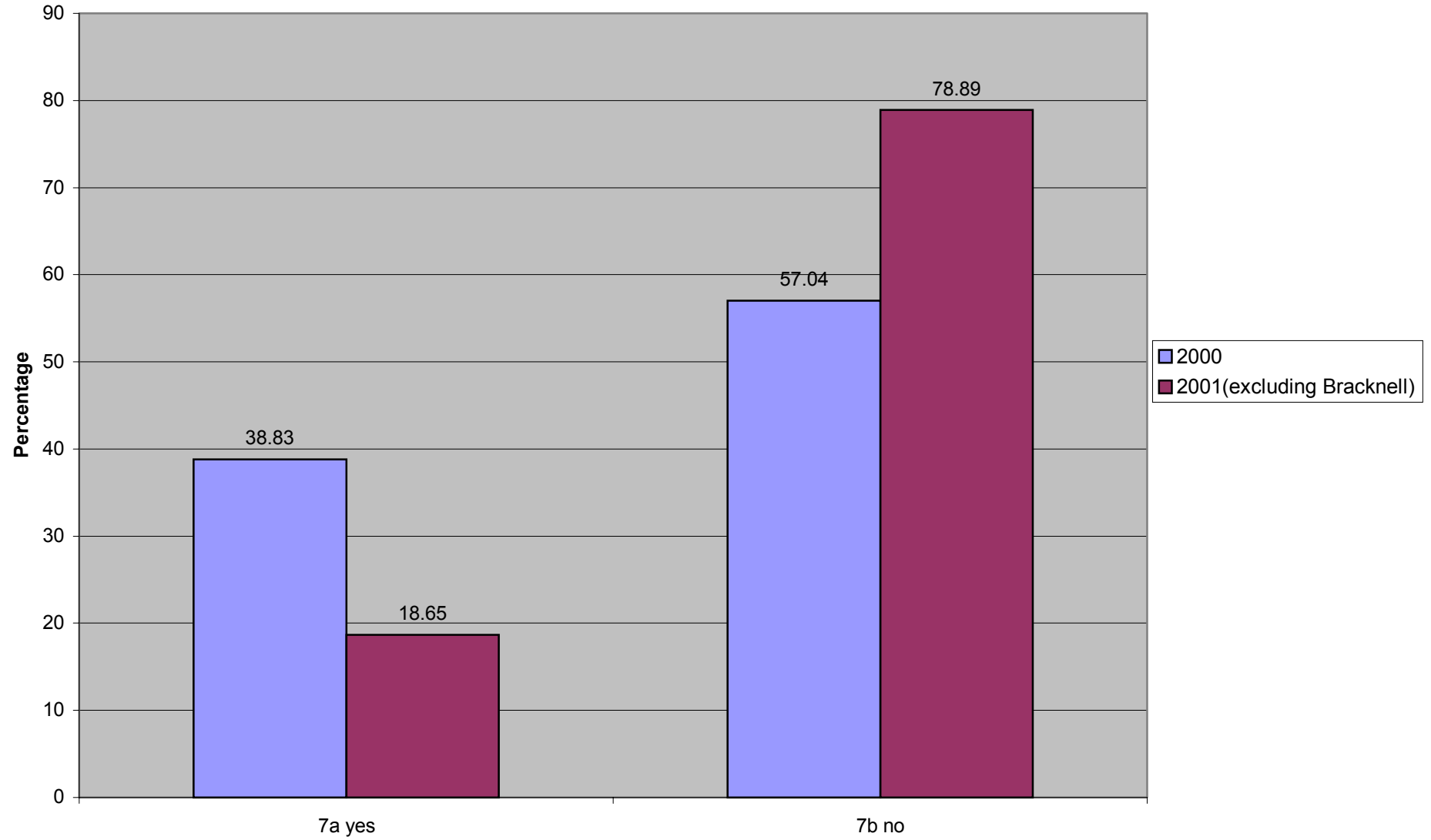
Overall, how helpful have you found the careers advice you have received?
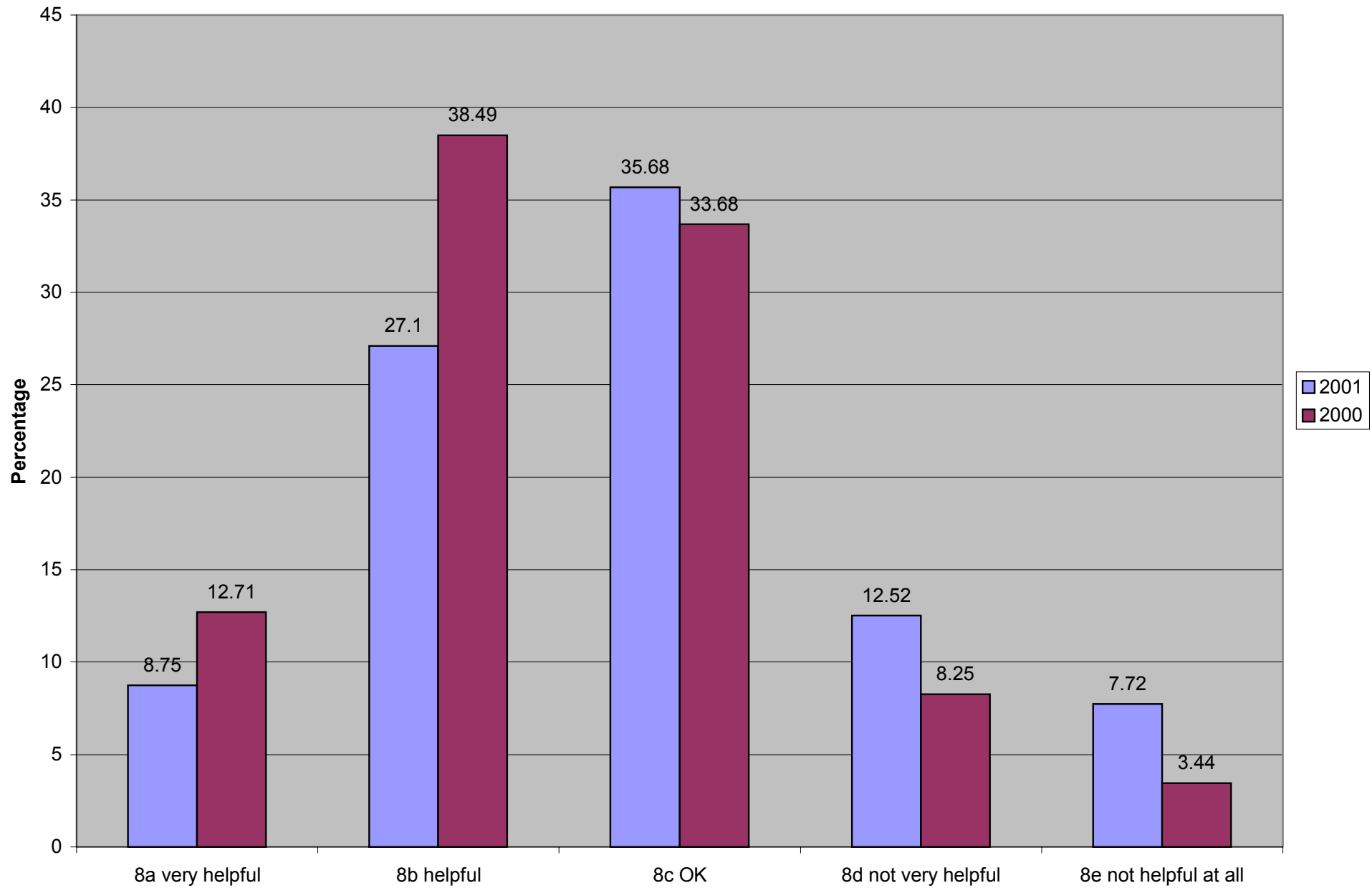
If you want advice on careers, do you know where to go for it?

	2001	2000
9a yes I'd go to the school/college careers advisor	74.96	67.35
9byes I'd go to the careers service advisor	13.04	21.31
9c yes I'd go somewhere else	3.26	4.47
9d I don't know who to contact	4.81	7.9
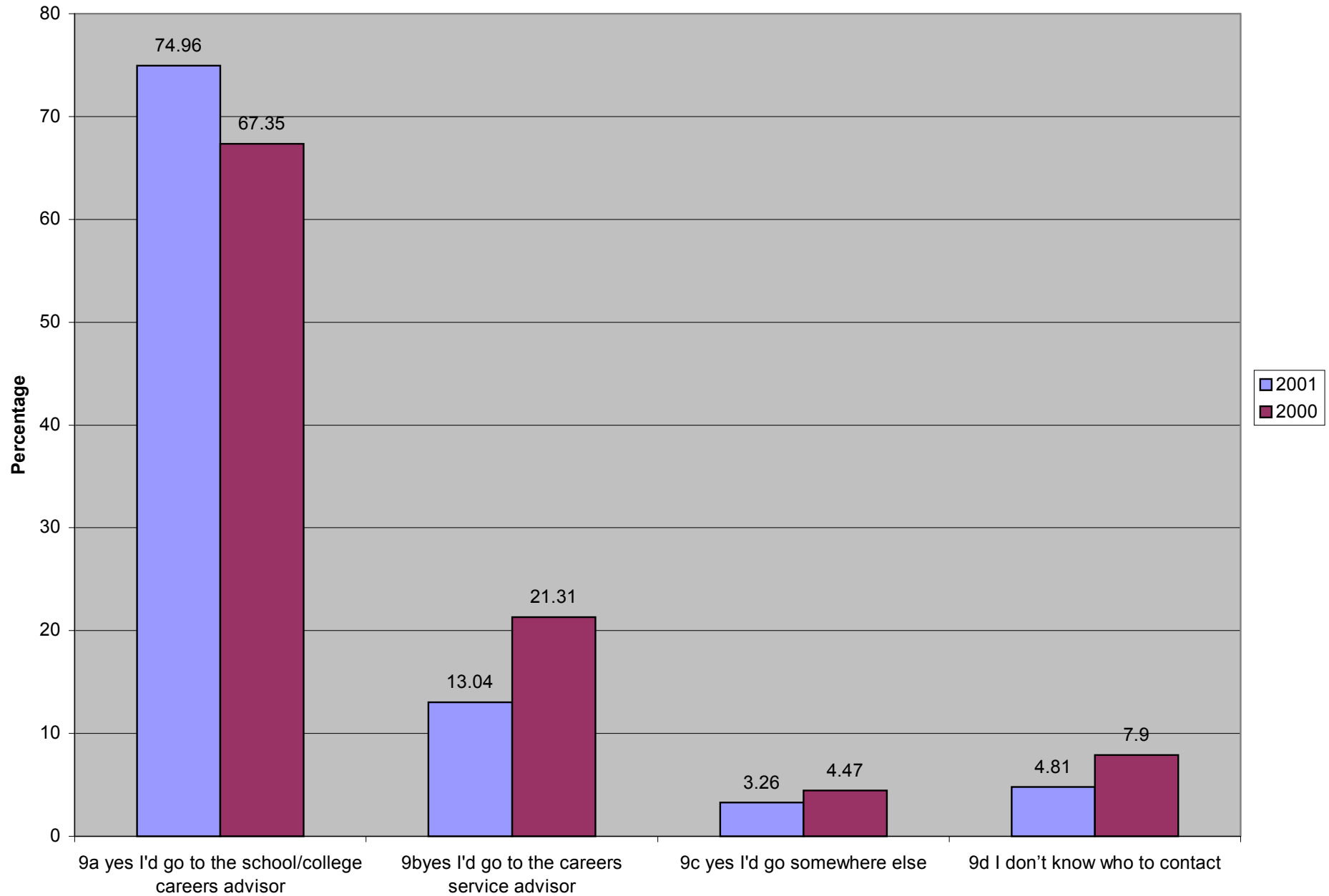
How likely are you to look for Careers advice over the next year or so?

Percentage

	2001	2000
10a I have definite plans to contact careers	22.82	17.18
10b I probably will contact careers	51.46	39.18
10c I probably won't contact careers	14.92	23.37
10d I'm very unlikely to contact careers	5.83	7.56

Was the learning card:

Y-axis: Percentage (0 to 70)

Legend:
- 2000
- 2001(excluding Bracknell)

Categories:
- 11a posted to you at home with full instructions
- 11b posted to you at home without much of an explanation
- 11c given out at school/college/training centre with a full explanation
- 11d given out at school/college/training centre without much of an explanation
- 11e given out in another way

Was the information you got with the learning card (either written or when it was explained):
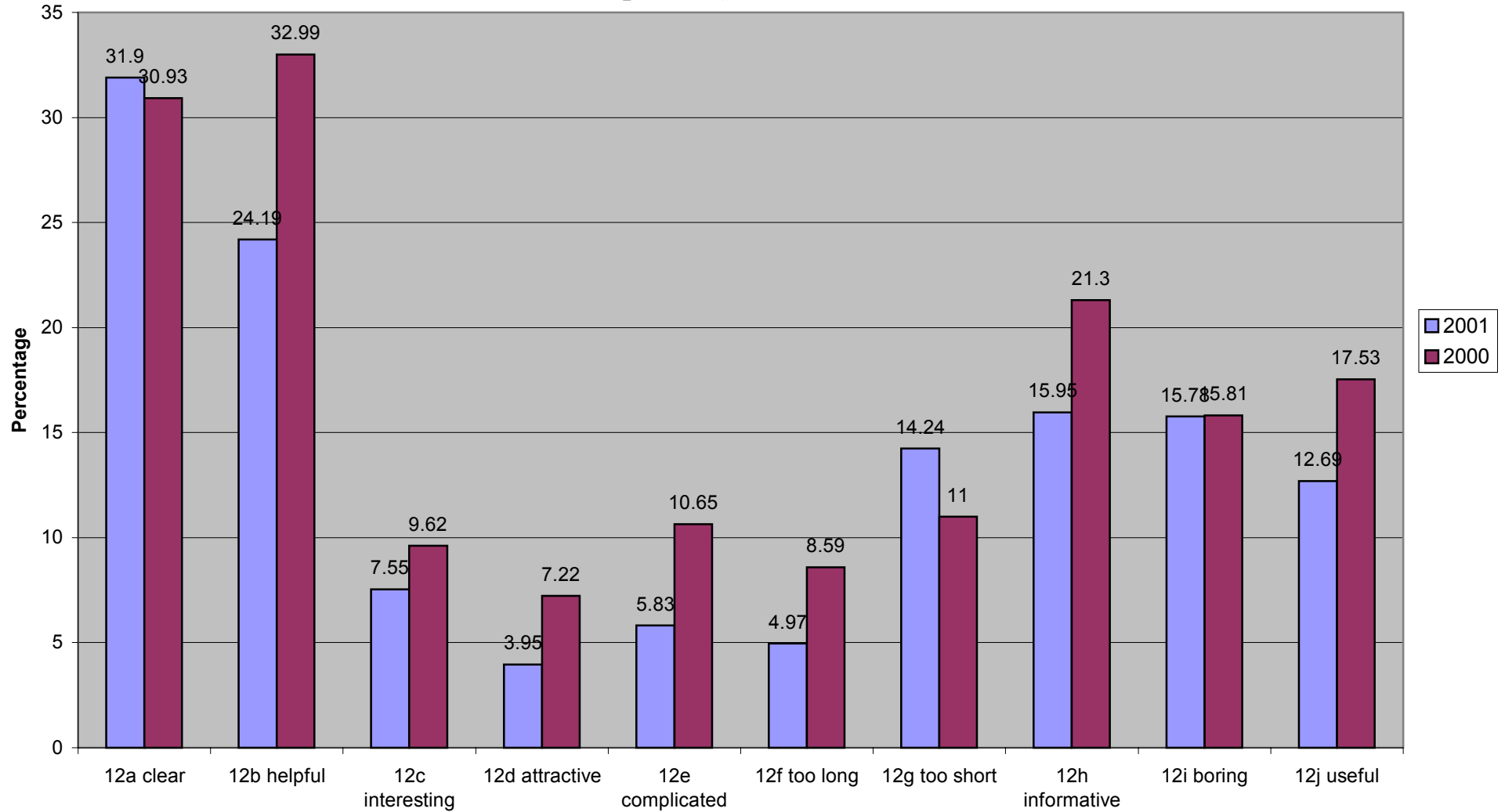
Do you think the design of the learning card is:

	13a attractive	13b interesting	13c ok	13d not very attractive/interesting	13e I don't like it at all
2001	5.49	11.66	53.68	16.12	7.38
2000	16.5	16.15	46.1	11	4.12
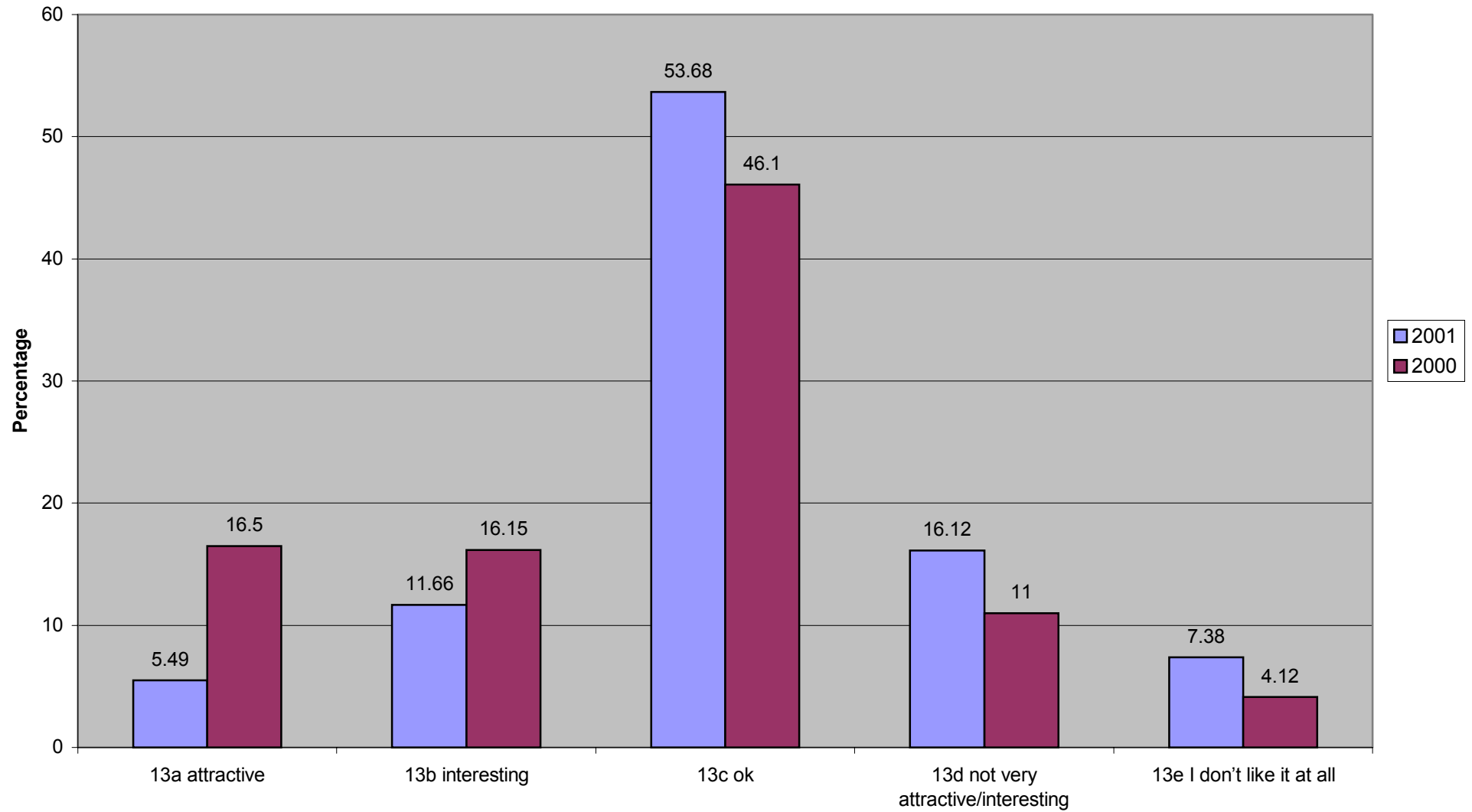
Which learning card features have you used already?

Percentage

Legend:
- 2000
- 2001(excluding Bracknell)

Feature	2000	2001(excluding Bracknell)
14a swiped it at your school/college/training centre	34.02	70.95
14b swiped it somewhere else	1.03	0.92
14c got a discount	2.41	9.17
14d used the national internet site	4.12	3.98
14e used the local internt site	4.81	5.5
14f contacted the careers service	2.41	2.75
14g used other features	2.41	4.13

Where is your learning card now?

Percentage (y-axis)

Legend: 2001, 2000

Category	2001	2000
15a I've got it with me now	72.04	53.95
15b it's at home	14.6	22.68
15c I've lost it	3.95	7.56
15d it's somewhere else	3.95	7.56

If rewards or discounts are available in your area do you think they are:

	2001	2000
17a attractive, definitely worth going for	20.58	30.93
17b ok, maybe worth going for	50.6	45.36
17c not very interesting or useful	10.29	7.9
17d useless a turn off	2.57	2.41
17e don't know	8.75	6.18

Percentage

If rewards or discounts are available in your area do you think they are:

Chart showing percentage responses for 2001 and 2000:

Category	2001	2000
17a attractive, definitly worth going for	20.58	30.93
17b ok, maybe worth going for	50.6	45.36
17c not very interesting or useful	10.29	7.9
17d useless a turn off	2.57	2.41
17e don't know	8.75	6.18

Y-axis: Percentage

Appendix 5:

Comments from First User Questionnaire – April 2000

Essex

Which Learning Card rewards have you used?	Which Learning Card discounts have you used?	What you like most about the Learning Card	What you like least about the Learning Card
None	None	Promise of better rewards with time. At last hardworkers are being noticed.	Having to go one local careers centre to get our rewards. I have to get the bus which costs money I'd rather use for something else.
None	None	Gives independence to your own learning	The lack of worthwhile benefits.
This! Internet	None yet. Save them till more interested	Get discounts	discounts for boring stuff I can't do till 17-18! Should have discounts on CDs or clothes.
None	None	The idea about getting a reward.	Nothing.
None yet – planning to	None yet – planning to	Extremely good idea for rewarding people for what they have done.	It has only been given to us at the end of Year II – preferred beginning of Year 10.
-	-	the rewards	the design
-	-	Able to get discounts	Don't really know how to claim or use the discounts
-	-	Looks like credit Card. Makes me look flash	Please see attached sheet!!! (only kidding)
None	None	Discounts (repeated comment)	Nothing
Not used yet	Not used yet	Discounts	Unsure what to use it on.
-	-	Getting discounts for doing something you'd do anyway	Rewards aren't what we want
N/A	N/A	Easy t o use (I've been told)	Nothing yet
nothing	nothing	discounts	So dam(sic) complicated about points and when you do get points it is worth pittance.
None	None	Discounts available	Don't know how many points I have got
None	None	Opportunity to get discounts	Only certain amount of discounts
None	None	The fact that points are an incentive to learn (rewards).	Possibility of losing it.
None yet	None Yet	It gives discounts on nearly everything	Nothing really
-	-	Handy	Waste of time, complicated.
None	None	encourages you to keep learning	N/A
None	None	Nothing	Ha Ha not funny at all!!!
-	-	Get discounts	A bit difficult to understand what its used for
N/A	N/A	Money off	Most things you get discounts are boring
None	None	None	It is pointless
None	None	You get free money	I haven't used it properly yet.
-	-	Chance to earn points	The scheme is too complicated
None	None	Nothing	Everything
None	None	You get points for doing what you usually do	The rewards are boring
-	-	Get money off of the things I want	Nothing
None	None	It makes you want to achieve more, work harder so you receive rewards.	Wasn't explained very well, don't know how/where to use it, difficult to use and receive points.
-	-	It helps pay for mobile phone vouchers	All the info you have to know about it.
-	-	Gives me discounts	It's green
n/a	n/a	Discounts	discount stores need more variety
None yet	None yet	Money off	Too much hassle
None	None	Nothing yet but of more rewards are available in my area, then I will like it better	Cannot use it in my area at present.
-	-	It's rewarding	Only use it at certain places.
None	None	Discounts	Too much effort to collect points

Points for attendance	-	I get something from learning	The small range of discounts
None	None	Encourages people to further their education	Nothing
None	None	I don't like it	see above
None yet	None yet	Discounts – money off during lessons	Nothing
None	None, I'm saving points	The rewards	The pack isn't too informative and left me a little confused.
N/A – haven't	N/A – haven't	-	Too much hassle
None so far	None so far	Getting points for doing normal things	I'm going to Writtle College and I'm not sure if I can obtain points.
-	-	The amount of things you can get from it	Too much trouble and bother to just put some points on it.
None	None	Nothing	Everything
None yet	None	The size of the Card	the colour of the Card
-	-	The possible discounts we can collect	How we have to collect points/discounts
None	None	Some rewards and discounts that I might use	Not many of the rewards and discounts appeal to me
None	McDonalds	discounts	only limited discounts
None	None	Rewards and discounts	I don't really understand any of it!
None	None	You'll get useful things back, free	It's not fully explained how to use it
None	None	it is a good idea, designed to help students	I don't know where to swipe it, how to get points and I hardly know anything about it
-	-	Discounts	The restrictions to the prizes and discounts available
-	-	It would be useful if I knew how to use it	Don't really know how to use it
-	-	Discounts	Design - 'Mik' should be on it
None	None	rewards for working hard	The fact it has to be swiped
None	None	The benefits and the opportunities	The limited driving lesson rewards with one company
-	-	Freebies	The idea you are put into a draw for the discounts
Not yet	not yet	It will enable me to get discounts on certain things so I will save money	I don't know where to go to swipe it so I couldn't collect points
None	None	Gives you money	-
None yet	None yet	it is easily portable and fairly useful	The system for redemption of points is quite complex, depending on which reward you want
-	WH Smith	-	-
-	-	It encourages you to think you are being rewarded for your hard work	-
none	None – 'cause the person in the travel agency says they don't accept it	Don't know yet! Haven't used it once!	I can't use it anywhere! No one accepts it (e.g. bus station)
n/a	n/a	you receive rewards	the rewards are not available in this area, or anything to do with the LC
None. Didn't know there were any	Didn't know there were any	?	It expires end of September this year.
None – tell me what they are!	None – tell me what they are!	Probably the web site if I could get to a computer with modem	I don't know how to use it and it expires by 09/2000
none	none	don't know	don't know as I don't really understand what it's for
none	none	It gives you discounts and rewards	nothing
-	-	-	the colour
none	none	err – shows that my school is trying to help?!	Ha! Funny … what I like least? Err … all of it!
none	none	it's an extra Card in your wallet	The short unclear explanation
none	none	the idea	We haven't received any newsletter or info on discounts since we got it.

BRADFORD

Which Learning Card rewards have you used?	Which Learning Card discounts have you used?	What you like most about the Learning Card	What you like least about the Learning Card
NONE	None	Don't know how to use it	The fact that I don't know what to do with it!
-	national express discount	All the discounts	-
none	none	discounts	nothing. it's all good
-	-	Easier way to gain access to the internet and all the discounts available	nothing!
none	none	you can get rewards and discounts with it	the design - it's too plain
none	none	I like the discounts and rewards but haven't had time to use them	-
none	none	-	My Learning Card never worked
-	-	You can use it for a number of things	I haven't got my pin number
None	None	Nothing	I've not used it at all. don't know anything about it.
None	None	Don't know	-
none so far	Virgin megastore	the advice and discounts we receive	the design of the Card
-	Burger King	it gets you a free burger! (food)	It takes so long to get into the website
-	Virgin Megastores	getting discounts	-
None – I need more info on how to gain rewards	None – I need more info on how to use discounts	The discounts are very good and the Card is attractive	It could have a wider range of discounts such as Top Shop, etc. and have more info on about how to use it and gain rewards/discounts
None – I don't know any	None – I don't know any	I don't like it cause I don't even know what its for	I would like an explanation what the Card is for. I don't even know what it's about
None – I haven't got a PIN number	None – I haven't got a PIN number	Can't use it until I have a PIN number	-
None	None	rewards	?
-	-	discounts	Overall it is quite good
None	None	get paid to study & discounts	advice
none	none	discounts	the fact that your not sure whether to use it in case the shop assistant doesn't know what you're talking about
I haven't used any	I haven't used any	I don't like anything about it	The discounts are useless & I can't find anywhere to accept it
None	-	Discounts at shops	-
-	I don't think I've used one	I haven't received it	-
None at the moment	none	the discounts	I don't know enough about it
none	none	-	My name on the Card is Christophe but my name is Christopher Williams
None	None	It's colourful	I don't know what to do with it
None	None	the discounts	the colour of the Card
-	-	It enables you to contact your careers advisor in a much quicker way	Not much at all

-	10% off at HMV	the website	-
I have not used it yet – I've not had it long	not used it yet	very attractive	I like it all
not any	not any	I haven't used it properly yet	I've got a computer at home but I can't use my Card cos there's no swipe. You should think about giving swipers out to students so they can use the Card at home.
Haven't used it yet	Same as before	Don't know yet, haven't used it	-
none	Virgin Stores	discounts	The little use or relevant uses it has
none	none	you can get a lot of information	-
none	none	unfortunately I didn't use my learning car because we leaved (sic) school before the Card was in uses but we still get the Card	-
None	none	N/a	I was given the Card but it did not work. My name was also wrong on it. I was given a Card but my pin number was wrong 2 times every time I swiped it nothing appeared. So to now I have not seen what the Learning Card has to offer.
-	10% off at Virgin	The discounts	-
none yet	None yet	easy to use	-
none	none	discounts on things	I had no information about what it was for
-	-	It has useful information	-
-	Virgin Megastores	discount	-
none	none	I haven't used it	Don't know
None. I wasn't aware of any rewards	None. I wasn't aware of any discounts	It is useful when I forgotten my key	The fact that it is totally useless
-	-	the fact that you can see what jobs are on offer	Nothing – it is really useful and it slips in your purse easily
None	None	easy accessible website	-
none	none	you can access information quicker and easier	nothing

HUMBERSIDE

Which Learning Card rewards have you used?	Which Learning Card discounts have you used?	What you like most about the Learning Card	What you like least about the Learning Card
Grimsby Leisure	None	Get in places cheaper	You can't get much off
none yet	None yet	Discounts	Nothing really
-	-	The fact that I have a small range of discounts available to me	Not enough offers or shop discounts
-	I've already answered that question	easy to use	it looks like the inside of my nose.
-	Free items of food	It is helpful	-
McDonalds, Intersport	see above	Easy, simple, quick	Nothing!
-	Swimming	Nothing at all	The colours
None	None	colourful	too plain
McDonalds	-	It is like a credit Card	The limited amount of discounts and shops available
-	McDonalds	Discounts	There isn't really a lot of things I can use on it (maybe in the future?)
-	McDonalds	Discounts	The discounts are too small
-	McDonalds	Discounts	-
-	cloths (sic)	You get money of cloths (sic)	-
-	Mcdonalds	Discount	colour
Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	We couldn't use them at school as we got them too late. There are not enough discounts.
-	clothes	discounts but there should be more shops to get the discount from e.g. Binns	nothing
-	-	discounts on goods	nothing
discounts?	?	Discounts	Not a great choice of shops available
None	McDonalds, Intersport	The discounts available	-
Nowhere	at the cinemas and at swimming	you get discounts	I don't like the colours
-	-	colour	-
none	none	offers discounts for students	I think a more wider selection of shops/more popular
-	McDonalds	Discounts	it only ables discounts at certain shops – usually the not so good ones!
None – yet	None – yet	discounts available	Wider range of discounts and rewards
-	W H Smith	Get discounts of products	Can't use it on PC programmes e.g. Marks & xx
None	None	Finally gets teenagers discounts and rewards in useful places i.e. WH Smiths	The design of the Card. Generally it is good, there is nothing particular I dislike.
Discount , Extreme Clothing Company	10% off Extreme Clothing Company	discounts	don't have discounts in places I shop regularly
-	-	Getting discounts off useful things	-
-	Swimming discounts	discounts – although they are limited	I see little point in it. There are few discounts and we got it too late to use the points system
-	Free burger at McDonalds	Getting a free burger when you buy an extra value meal	it gives you discounts at shops I don't go in

NOTTINGHAM

Which Learning Card rewards have you used?	Which Learning Card discounts have you used?	What you like most about the Learning Card	What you like least about the learning Card
None – they don't work	None	Discount	It doesn't work – bars don't accept it
None	None	Discounts	Ugly
None at all	None	Its ID. It has discounts	Too much hassle if you forget Card but attend. You are not registered.
-	-	the £5 on it	It is an annoying process, that hasn't wiped out the registers in any of my classes.
-	-	Can prove you've been here	-
None so far	No	-	You have to remember to swipe it
-	-	?	Breaks easily; ugly colour
-	-	How you will eventually be able to use it on the bus	Takes time to register, and you have to remember to do it at the beginning otherwise you'll be late
Jack and Sh?t and Jack's left town	-	-	Its pointless and a waste of time
None	None	Nothing	It's a waste of time & money
N/A	N/A	Not much	-
-	-	-	-
Spent points	Bowling	the £5 the council put on	-
None	None	Discount on sports	-
None	None	Getting rewards	It is the best thing I have in my life
-	-	The photo	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	Design and name – babyish
None	None	Earning discount is a great idea – it should be even better when more shops etc get involved.	It's a hassle and remembering is very difficult. BRING BACK REGISTERS!
None	None	Rewards	Nothing
-	-	You can use it for your bus fare	You don't gain points when you swipe the Card at school/college
None	None	Using on the bus to pay our bus fare	-
-	Bowling	Bus Pass	Clocking in everywhere you go
None	None	-	the Photo quality
None	None	I can use it for ID	It's hard to remember to clock in and out of lessons
-	-	The electronic registration	-
Free food @ Dawsons Bakery	-	Point Scheme	Not enough shops in town/in city take part
-	-	-	The picture
None	None	Nothing	The design and it wasn't very well explained
-	-	Earning city Card points	Having to use the Card
-	-	Free £5	Swiping
-	-	Discounts	Don't always remember to put it in the box
N/A	N/A	Easy to use and the £5 free	Swiping it- I often forget
None	None	You got £5 free	Having to put it in the register box
None	None	Not had chance to use to full potential	Forget that you have the Card and forget to swipe Card

	Bowling	Can prove you/ve attended for EMA	
-	-	City Card	-
-	-	-	-
A pint at Borwnes	Food at Alldays	Not much	It isn't accepted anywhere
N/A	N/A	earning Points	having to use it
Bonus City Card points at launch	None	-	I can't see what help it is to my education
None	None	Reward at the end of points	Can be a little pointless
-	-	THE DISCOUNTS	Having to swipe it through every lesson
None	None	easy to use	Annoying to use all the time
none	None	Easy to use	Not enough shops use it
-	-	Using it in shops and for getting money on it	Having to use it each lesson
None	None	It can be used as ID	-
-	Drinks discount, phone discounts	Its simplicity and the picture	The design is Old Skool
None	None	When people give me stress about ID I can flash it at them	It's a bore to keep swiping but I'm sure I'll get used to it
None	None	-	-
Not received my Card yet	Not received my Card yet	Not received my Card yet	The fact that I've not received it yet
-	-	-	cannot be used in a lot of the popular shops
-	-	It can be used as a bus pass	You have to always remember to swipe
Waterfront bar (1 pint of Stella Artois)	-	The gold clip thing	The limited no of places that have the system up and running to purchase goods with
-	-	Attendance check for EMA . Proof of attendance of college	-

NORTHUMBERLAND

Which Learning Card rewards have you used?	Which Learning Card discounts have you used?	What you like most about the Learning Card	What you like least about the learning Card
None	None	Discounts	-
None – yet	None yet	I can get discounts and rewards – makes me feel more grown up, too	Didn't get much info. Had to find the website out for myself
None	None	It enables me to get discounts	I don't think I'll use it much as i don't go to the current places that I can receive discount
none as yet	None as yet	-	Don't like the design of Card, too old fashioned
None	none	it may help with further education and you get money	A lot of people will abuse it

LEEDS

Which Learning Card rewards have you used?	Which Learning Card discounts have you used?	What you like most about the Learning Card	What you like least about the learning Card
can't use it	none	good because of attend	can't use it because it is for Salisbury
I don't know what they are!	ditto	-	-
-	-	nothing	colour & design be brighter
I'm not sure what rewards are available	I'm not sure what discounts are available	I find it a good way to swipe at college to record attendance	-
None – I have not been told what they are	None- I don't know where I am eligible to get discounts	The colours alright, and it makes your purse a bit more interesting	I don't know enough about how & where I can use it to benefit from it
none	none	don't know what it does	Don't know what to do with it
What are these	-	-	not used to find out

Appendix 6:

Comments from Second User Questionnaire

– April 2001

BRACKNELL COMMENTS

Which Edge Discounts have you used?	What you liked **most** about the Edge Connexions Card	What you liked **least** about the Edge Connexions Card
	Very useful	Silly picture
None, don't know them	having your age on 1+	The photo
None		The photo
None	Prizes	photograph
None	Don't know	Don't know
McDonalds, Ron Taylor Carpets, Sure Hire	Discounts	The photo of me
None	Discounts	The photograph
None		the photo
Don't know about any	Proof of ID	The styling, not enough info.
I don't know about any discounts	Being able to pay for things without cash and proof of ID	The things the points can be used for are uninteresting and too little. There's not enough information about them either
None yet	Prizes, discounts	Option to put small change in the machines would be much better
10% off Topshop	getting prizes	The picture and registering with it
None	Nothing	My photo!!
None	Don't know	don't know
None	Money off, identification Card	Picture and registration
None		The photographs! Horrible colour
None	discounts/prizes	Nothing
None	picture	My doesn't work (sic)
Topshop	Discounts in some places. chance to win prizes	Need to have discounts more places. Doesn't look too attractive. Not very nice pic of me on it.
None	The design	The photograph
None	Not a lot	The photo
None	Getting discounts	nothing
None	It motivates us to attend the school regularly	The photographs
Topshop discounts	Ability to save and collect points	Time it takes to gain extra points on the Card
	Getting points for discounts	My photo
None	I don't like it. I regret having to use it.	The name, appearance, discounts that mean nothing, no real benefit to the student
None	Helps you gain points which actually show your attendance	Not understanding how to use it on the outside
None	Use ID	picture of me
None so far	can offer prizes and is proof of age	Don't know
	Some discounts (NUS better)	Having to carry it around to get 2 pts a day!
	Gaining points	Yellowness – colour of Card
BB Muffins	Discounts	My photo
None	I haven't used it for anything yet.	I haven't used it for anything yet.
None at the moment	Discounts	Should be available for more places.
None, I forgot about them	Proof of age	The picture stretched!!
Apex Models	Point proze system	Crap brown design
None	Age, ID	Bad pic
B&B Coffee	Discounts	my photo!
None	Discount UCI voucher	My stretched photo!
Burger King/McDonalds	It beeps	The way your face is stretched
None	Paying for school meals	The disformed photo

Burger King	The discounts	Dodgy photo on the Card
None	The idea that eventually you will be able to simply come in and scan your Card then go to lessons	The fact that you cannot put small change on it
None	prize draws	the photos
None	Collecting the points	nothing
None	collecting points	nothing
None	Buying lunch, my picture	Sized Card information concerning Card, lack of time spent thinking through abut the Project
None	buying food	the appearance
None	registering with it	Design – boring colour
Free swim at Bracknell Sports Centre	Gives you free admission to sports facilities	The colour, its really unattractive, it should be really bright!
Haven't yet	My photo!!	The colour
Free swim at Bracknell Sports Centre	Gives you free admission to sports facilities	I don't like the picture and the colour should be bright!
McDonalds once		A complete waste of money – my English A level class needs to be cut in half to be effective yet we are spending millions on some stupid, hip new colour scheme to bribe people into coming to school, instead of supplying course that fit their needs. You are wasting my time – go away
Topshop/Mcdonalds	Age proof when 18	?
None	Get free sports facilities	The picture/design of the Card
BB's Muffins	You can laugh at other people's embarrassing photos	This questionnaire
McDonalds	Discounts	It breaks easily
None	Prizes	Stretching photos to make me embarrassed to use it
None	Prizes	Stretched pictures
McDonalds	Prize draws	The photos look stupid
None		Not enough information about it
	Eventually will be more convenient to register	forgetting it
		If you are away for a school trip you still lose points
Burger King once	Beeping noise apparently	The photos on the Card are distorted and make me look silly
Burger King	The beeping noise when you register	stretching the photo to make us all look silly
None	Can use it for ID	The ridiculous photo
None	Attendance points meaning rewards	the design
None	attendance points	the photo
		Machines sometimes do not work
None	Idea behind discounts	my photo
None	It rewards you	It doesn't do anything really
None	Proof of ID	Discounts
None	Discounts on clothes?	You have to spend a lot to get a little discount
None really interest me e.g Charity shop	quick registering	No decent discounts
None of them, they're not worth it, e.g. funeral	Quick registration	my picture
None	The attractive photograph	Remember to swipe in
None	Proof of ID; Prove age	the discounts
Discount on video hire at library	Don't know	pictures being re-sized and edited etc
None at present	discounts	colour, not easy to find

At cinema they thought it was NUS	Proof of age	No discounts in Cxx (illegible)
None	Easy	Does nothing
None	Its colour	Its range of discounts
None	N/A	Lack of useful discounts
None	Some useful discounts	Some poor discounts (funerals)
None	Its good for signing on	Lots of things
		That it can only be used in BFBC
	It's quicker than registering normally	very few uses other than registration
None	easy way to register	discounts only in Bracknell
	Its proof of ID	The amount of offers
None	Clothes discounts	Picture being changed on computer
None	easy way to register	discounts only in Bracknell
none		The picture and is easy to lose
	It smells good	Its not pink
None of them	Prize draws	unreliability
None	-	discounts are not very useful
Downshire Pitch and Putt	Technology of it	If you forget it you're busted
	Get money discounts	The design of the Card
None	Proof of age, rewards	photo
None	prizes	The colour and design is ugly
	for identification	discounts are not useful
None yet	Don't know	colour
None	Money off things	?
none	offers	Don't usually take up offers
	discounts	I forget it
Don't know what they are	nothing	the colour – the fact I don't know what its for
None	The noise it makes	No one takes it for ID
None	colour	not accepted as proof of ID
none	proof of age	not very many good discounts
I don't know what they are so – none!		
none yet	get discounts, proof of age	looks
BBs Café, Topshop	The above discounts	my photo!
None	vouchers for good attendance	didn't receive any information I haven't received any vouchers yet
None	The prize draws	The points should be more helpful, better prizes
None	it is also a proof of age Card	
BBs Muffins	collecting points for rewards	don't know enough about where I can use it
	points and prizes	remembering it , 'long' photo
cinema	discounts	?
10% off at BBs muffins	points mean prizes	don't know what rewards are and how to use them
	Prize draws	too many points needed to get rewards
None – saving my points	free stuff	my picture
none	its shape	I've no idea what it's all about, what it's for, or what you can do with it
None	the colour	the photo
none	nothing	photo
none	draw prizes	bad range of discounts
BBs coffee and muffins	prizes	discounts are nothing special
none	the fact it's an ID Card	my picture
none	ID, points to show attendance	design, not old about any offers and discounts
none	proof of age	the colour
none		it only gives points
none	ID, points	design

none	my picture	don't know what the prizes are
none	points means prizes	not practical for fire drills
None – oh yes, discounts in Topshop	discount in Topshop	my picture
none yet	free gear	
None	none	terrible pictures
none	good for ID, that's it really	don't think discounts are worth it
Most of them	discounts	
None	I haven't really used it	I don't know
BB Muffins	discount	My photo
None	discounts	the picture
none	discounts	the pictures! (Which are too close and don't meet my usual standards)
discount at BBs	discount at BBs	the photo
none	discounts are available	photo
None as yet	free cinema voucher	can't use it to get discounts in major High Street branches, restaurants
none	free swimming and cinema	If teachers are not there then getting points is difficult
None	the good photo	none
	the prizes	
none	nothing	inconvenient
none	nothing	everything
none	picture	age
none	quick way of registration	colour
none	proof of age	computer system
none, no opportunity	free gifts	not easy to register. Difficult. My photo
none as yet	nothing	my photo
none	easy registrations	
none	ID	nit of a hassle
none		the photo
none	quick and easy to register	Bad photo
	the discounts	unattractive
none	its easy to sign in	it's a pain if you lose it
none	it's a quick and fine effective way to register	it's a bribe to make us go to school, we shouldn't have to be bribed.
	funny stretched pictures	It has my real age on it
none	Don't know	No
None	Proof of age, discounts	
None	Discounts	My photo
None	Easier way to register	You have to go to Bracknell to use the discounts
None, don't know where they apply		remembering to swipe it in
None yet	Discounts I am going to get	remember it all the time
None	the discounts we get	Having to remember my Card
none	discounts	photo
none	certain discounts	not sure
	Hassle free registration	don't know
None because we don't know how to	free McDonalds	discounts, Card style, points too high
None because we don't know how to get them	free McDonalds when available	nothing
None	Discounts and funny stretched pictures	Takes up space in my wallet. It's a bribe to make us come to school
None	discounts	Funny stretched pictures
none	cinema discounts	photo
none so far		my photo
none	good ID	my photo
	swim and cinema discounts	
none	discounts, prizes	not that many discounts
none	prizes	not enough discounts
none	discounts on local facilities	you have to remember to bring it everyday

LEEDS

Which Connexions Card **rewards** have you used?	Which Connexions Card **discounts** have you used?	What you liked **most** about the Connexions Card	What you liked **least** about the Connexions Card
Careers advice on the internet	none, don't know about them	You can get helpful careers advice	When you are using the careers advice on the internet you shouldn't have to use your Card but just type in your Card no. instead so them you don't have to have the Card with you always
			No one has told us what it is used for or what reward/discounts are available
		easy to use	boring internet sites
none	none	advice	not very good
	on 'Letts' books	it is helpful	
			I have no idea what discounts and uses there are
none	none	Don't know	don't know
none	none	The availability of careers advice it gives you	I don't really know enough information and the benefits of it
n/a	n/a	good to have some incentive	not many attractive offers at all
I didn't know what to use it for	none	nothing really because I didn't know how to use it	because I don't know much about it. It should have been explained what it was
		Access to careers advice – helped me choose correct A levels to fulfil entry requirements for university degree course	Not enough swipe Cardholders in many public service facilities such as community internet centres, etc.
		You can use it (So I've been told when received it) for careers advice	Not knowing how to use it and not being told about discounts and rewards that you can receive
			Do not get info on discounts and computer info at college is useless
none	none	nothing	everything
None	internet access	free internet access, sometimes	I can never find it when I want it. Also, it is **green**
not yet received it	not yet received it	not yet received it	not yet received it
none	none	I never use it	
none	none	haven't used it	Don't know. I don't understand what it's for
none	none		I still am unsure what it is for! No one has told us what we do with it.
Swiped it in the computer at college	none	allows me to access careers information	nothing
None – Don't know what the rewards are	none		
n/a	n/a	n/a	That I have never been given one – should have had one @ Y11 previous school – Beckford Grammar School, Bingley Bradford

None – haven't been informed of any rewards	none – haven't been informed of any discounts	n/a. Haven't used it before	n/a same as above
	None, because they're out of my league, I can't afford them, or they finish too soon	its green	there isn't enough on offer – I tend to use my NUS more
		Access to business internet sites	Just another Card!
none because I don't know what they are.	None, don't know what they are.	It's good for swiping	It's green
none	none	Don't know	I don't know enough about it, just that I can swipe it at college
Go on to some useful careers services websites	none	you can go to very useful websites on advice, etc.	not may areas, you can use the car apart form school.
none	none	I don't know enough about it to decide what I like most least	
		Its probably got lots of advantages, I just don't know much about it	We do have machines to swipe them in, but you're only allowed on for 15 mins at a time so I never bothered
none	none	It takes up space in my wallet	I get it mixed up with my cashCard
		I haven't used it	
none! what are they!	None. What are they?	Not used it, so nothing! I don't know where to use it apart from college computers	The lack of info regarding discounts/rewards/where it's accepted.

NOTTINGHAM

Which Connexions Card **rewards** have you used?	Which Connexions Card **discounts** have you used?	What you liked **most** about the Connexions Card	What you liked **least** about the Connexions Card
		Letting teacher know that your present	graphic appearance
none	none	nothing	photo
None	None	get discounts on it soon	having to carry it everywhere
None	None	my photo	swiping it every lesson
		nothing	the photo of me on the back
		I can open my door with it	it has my picture on it
			Time consuming. Annoying when forgotten
none yet	none yet	it is easy and quick to use	remembering to carry it with me
none	none	nothing	swiping all of the time
			having to swipe each lesson
We can't get them	We don't get them	can be used as ID	the photograph
		easy to swipe in	having it with always (illegible)
None	None	swipe in and register easier	losing them
None	None	Its your own actions that count for your attendance	trying to remember it
none	none	being able to monitor my attendance and knowing I am marked up	forgetting to swipe in, getting it corrected
none	none	easier than registers	sometimes doesn't work
none	none	it is good when you swiped it	the picture
None	none	I can use it for schools or college	I can't use it for the buses
		If you are not signed it at the regular register you to be (illegible) to be on the Connexions Card	the graphics on the Card not very attractive
none	none	easy to use	sometimes doesn't work
none	none		pictures
			swiping every lesson
		saves time	colours and poor quality photo
none	none	nothing yet	having to swipe them. I get no benefit as of yet
		(illegible)	colour and photo
none	none	proof of ID	colour
none	none	it is accepted as ID and helps me to come to college more	my photo. Having to swipe every lesson
none	none	you don't have to register	the design
none	none	form of ID, small wallet size	photo
			presentation
		nothing	the presentation of it
			the layout of it
		It is easy to register	I have to swipe in a specific room, it is not very flexible.
none	none	the picture	nothing
none		it's quick and easy	keep taking it in and out of your wallet
		It's convenient (quick and easy)	It sometimes misreads the Card
		It's quick and easy to use	
		photograph	the colour
		nothing	swiping every lesson

BRADFORD

Which Connexions Card **rewards** have you used?	Which Connexions Card **discounts** have you used?	What you liked **most** about the Connexions Card	What you liked **least** about the Connexions Card
haven't used it yet	none yet	all the discounts	nothing
none yet	none yet	when you enter the pin no and the car no your name comes up also. Discounts	nothing!!
	cinemas	the discounts and you can get lots of information	nothing
	to get money off for cinema	the discounts. money off	you can't use it in a wide variety of food stores
None. I don't understand the Cards uses. Please could you send me information on the Cards uses	none	you can get discount at McDonalds and Allsports	That you don't have enough information with the Card
none	none	I haven't got the Card	nothing
McDonalds, Odeon cinema	Odeon Cinema	its easy to use	nothing really
Nothing yet but if I do I have to go to Bradford to use it	Nothing yet but will soon	I like that it can help you to get a job on the web and discounts	less verity on the shop to get discounts
not used	not used	to use internet for information and to contact careers	not sure
None – I don't know about any of the Learning Card rewards	None – I only know about the free drinks offer at selected burger bars	Being able to log on the careers internet site and email careers for any advice I need. This is better than talking 1-1 because I am shy.	I don't know more than what I have already said and so I don't know what to like least about the Learning Card
None – I am not fully aware of them	None – I only know about getting free drinks at burger bars	I can log on the careers internet and email careers for advice. I find this better than talking as I am a shy person	I don't know a lot about the Card – I only know about the emailing via the internet site and a few discounts that are available.
On CDs at Virgin Megastore	Virgin Megastore	It is to use it is just your Card	Too green
I have gone on the internet site	got in cheaper at the cinemas	the discounts and access to careers information	it should have more discounts and more people will use it.
	none yet	the discounts in shops	nothing
none	none	emailing the advisors through the internet	
		the attractiveness	having a password
none	none	easy to use ands gives you great opportunities	
none	none	it's got its' own website for you	
		I say the Learning Card is very helpful it has nearly all the information that you need	Every thing is good on the Learning Card

MERSEYSIDE

Which Connexions Card **rewards** have you used?	Which Connexions Card **discounts** have you used?	What you liked **most** about the Connexions Card	What you liked **least** about the Connexions Card
Manchester Giants Basketball	none	it's easy to use	I don't get discounts
Theatre	none	shows my age	
none	none	the picture and also with the day of birth it's a good use of ID	Having to carry it around everywhere and it's very annoying
Blood Brothers		it acts as a form of ID	my picture on it
Theatre tickets. Kodak camera	None, I didn't know there were any	Some rewards are OK	You have to have it each day, it's a pain
Blood Brothers. Kodak camera. Cinderella	none	It informs people how old I am. Chance to win prizes for attendance	
Joseph, Blood Brothers, Cinderella, Kodak camera, Moscow Ballet		Chance to be rewarded for attendance. Shows my age	
Books about taking my driving test	none	the way you can get discounts	
Kodak camera. Bowling tickets		rewards	My photo, no discounts
None	None	Easy to use	Lack of discounts
			I does not work as ID
Airfield tour, safari park, zoo, camera, driving roads(?)		easy to use	sometimes it doesn't work
none	none	that it is also proof of ID	There isn't anything I don't like about it
BSM Theory test books		rewards	
			They are a nuisance, You have to have it is every day. It's hard enough getting your books in.
		the rewards	
Airfield	none		lose them
Plays and cinema		Its proof of identity	Clock on machines
Liverpool trip, posters	Don't get discounts	rewards	No discounts
BSM		the rewards	the lack of discounts
none	none		
to go to watch a production	none		
		It is a form of identification	having to carry it around with me
none	none	none	none
none	none	my picture	easily breakable
Everton FC football ground, Emperor Theatre	n/a	carrying around with me and it is a proof of my age	n/a
none	none	fits in my bag	my picture
none	none	nothing because can't get rewards	Nout!
n/a	cinema	discount	using it
Goodison tour	none	it is a form of id	carrying it round with me
		it's a form of identification	carrying it around with me
n/a	n/a	rewards	swiping twice a day

none	none	it is easy to use	my photograph
none	none	it's handy	colours; I don't like the blue with lemon, it doesn't go well together
none	none	attractive rewards	you forget to remember to swipe it in twice a day
none	none	it's plastic and small	my photo
none	none	it is a great technological way to know I'm in school	I don't know why there's a number on the front
none	none		
none	none	my picture	picture is too small

ESSEX

Which Connexions Card rewards have you used?	Which Connexions Card discounts have you used?	What you liked most about the Connexions Card	What you liked least about the Connexions Card
None	None	easy to get points	I don't know where I can use my Card
		I haven't used it	
none	None		it is childish in design and the scheme is belittling. I have not registered it and don't plan to
None	I 'flashed' the Card at a hairdressers in order to get a student discount	Discount!! and free careers advice consultations	Having to carry it around
		discounts	swiping the Card
None. My college doesn't encourage it	as before		
none as yet	none as yet	I don't know much about the Card	I don't know much about the Card
none	none		it's pointless
None. Don't know how	None, don't know how		Don't give proper information on how to use it, or where to use it. Confusing
None	None	It fills my wallet	What does it do?
none	none	Seems like a good idea	There are more important things to worry about
		discounts	not many choices on discounts
		it's free	I have lost it and been unable to use it!
none	none	nothing	The discounts are in shops where hardly anyone goes. Not enough info on how to gain points. Not enough places to gain points
none	none	the concept is great. It's a good idea.	That you have to go to the careers centre to get points, as my college doesn't employ this scheme, and so I don't generally get the points. The main reason its too far to swipe.
None. Unsure how to receive them and haven't seen one helpful to me. I am unsure how many points I have.	None, unsure how to use it, how many points I have and haven't seen any discounts helpful to me.	Receiving points for attendance is good as more of my friends have stayed on at college and now attend well.	I can't get my points in the careers, etc. as my Card won't swipe and the equipment doesn't get used much. Unsure of points earned.
None	none	I haven't been explained what its all about. and have only used the national web site. so that's the best thing.	Not being given information on how and where I can use it.
None	None	Haven't used it but discounts are a good idea	Too much hassle for nothing. No-one at college knew much about it: lost interest.
None	None	Discounts given in shops, sport centres and restaurants	nothing
		Its handy to have	The way it looks
None	none	It encourages people to attend college if they know they could get something out of it.	I don't know how to use it or where to use it. I don't know where I can get discounts.
None	None	I do know how to get points at college – like where to swipe the Card. We have not been given any information about it at college. Therefore there is nothing much to use at the moment.	That there's nowhere to really swipe it

HUMBERSIDE

Which Connexions Card rewards have you used?	Which Connexions Card discounts have you used?	What you liked most about the Connexions Card	What you liked least about the Connexions Card
n/a	McDonalds, ice skating	more discounts	the look and colour
	McDonalds		looks horrible
McDonalds	McDonalds	discounts	swiping in
McDonalds	McDonalds	free burger at McDonalds	
	McDonalds	discounts	
		discounts	
none	McDonalds	rewards and discounts	
McDonalds	in a shop	discounts	not sure
	on food from McDonalds	the discounts you get	keep forgetting it
none	none	discounts	nothing
	McDonalds		
	McDonalds	free food	everything
	McDonalds	free food	don't like green
none	none	its green	it's got blue on it
none	none	discounts	
none	McDonalds	discounts	
free burgers at McDonalds	as above	n/a	n/a
none	none	free food	the colour, design and size
		free food	colour, design, features. the material it was made from
free hamburger		size	everything
none	none	the chip and discounts	
McDonalds		free cheeseburgers	colour
I have lost it			
None	none	nothing	carrying it about. It should be smaller
	McDonalds. W H Smiths	Nothing apart from free burgers	everything
none	none	don't know	don't know
	McDonalds	You get freebees and it encourages one to go	
	McDonalds	free McDonalds	
none	none	discounts	nothing
none	none	you can get discounts	don't know
no	none	don't know	don't know
n/a	n/a	discounts	n/a
n/a	n/a	messy to use. discounts	
none	none	discounts	nothing
		discounts and rewards	
n/a	n/a	more discounts being introduced	colour
none	none	discounts	swiping in and out
	McDonalds	more discounts	the look and colours
none	none	it is a good idea to get rewards for attending college	
None	McDonalds(burger offer)	it helps students who are not or a lot of money to get things that they want or need with discounts	it helps students save money
None	none	not sure	nothing
none	none	the colour	
	discounts at leisure centres	discounts	nothing
	leisure centre, McDonalds	you can get discount of things	you can only use it at not many shops

NORTHUMBERLAND

Which Learning Card rewards have you used	Which Learning Card discounts have you used	What you liked most about the Learning Card	What you liked least about the Learning Card
		It fits in my wallet	it does not work for registration
			It doesn't work
			Don't always work for registration
		The fact that discounts are available	not aware of where discounts are available
			It doesn't work
	Metroland		They don/t always work for registration
		Discounts	Doesn't work for registration, appearance
		It's small	It doesn't work for registration
		Easy to use	Sometimes doesn't work
		discounts	It doesn't work
n/a	n/a	Get discounts	it doesn't work. Points not added. Not enough points
None	None	Money off	
None	none	discounts and being paid	Too wide a gap between amount paid (£30 down to ES) Shouldn't be judged on parents wages
None yet	Warner Brothers cinema	You can receive discounts from lots of good places	Nothing
None	None	Nothing	It doesn't work for registration
		It's small	It doesn't work
			Doesn't work for registration
n/a	n/a	Discounts	It doesn't work for registration. It looks boring and unattractive
	Washington Superbowl	Discounts – bowling	It doesn't work for registration
None	None	They tell your real age	The design, it's too plain for what it is
			Useless. Always broken. Unsure of places accepting it.
		Nothing	Waste of time and money
None	None	you can get discounts	photo
None	None	Nothings, it's poor	Mostly the Card and the no use it has
	Got on bus for 50p	Cheap bus fares	
None	None	Little	It doesn't work for registration
		It fits right in my pocket	It doesn't work for registration
		Ease of registration	n/a
n/a	n/a	The picture of me	You can't use it
None	None	It can be used after 6pm and at weekends for discounts on buses	Don't know what useful discounts are available
		It is useful as a student Card	Its longer to swipe than to do a paper registration
None	None	Nothing	The fact they don't work
None		Fits in wallet	Time consuming
none	none	I don't like it	n/a
bus fares reduction			
none	none	money	It locked up!
None	none	easy to use	when they don't work
None	None	My picture on it! haha!	Stupid rewards, they're all poor
none	None	It takes up space in my wallet	ID not accepted and never swipes
none	none	none	nothing

none	none	The whole Card is very poor	It is a waste of time and money
none of them	none of them	getting points	
My one	no ones	Its got my picture on it	There's only one picture of me
		It's helpful for registering	Slows down registration
none	None	Um, er, I can't think of anything at the moment	We still have to use a conventional register. It doesn't let me register easily when I have an extra-curricular activity during registration, and the design is absolutely rubbish
None	none	none	everything – useless
None	None	Nothing	Takes too long to register
None	None	receiving points	The bother of it all
none	bus trips	cheap buses	its useless
Zero	Zero	It counts as ID	Without swearing? Yeah, right.
None	None	Nothing	The Card is general lacks the qualities which would make me like it
None	None	Ease of getting registered	It makes very little difference to school or holidays
none	None	It doesn't smell of cheese	It doesn't always work
Eh? Oh, all right, none	There's discounts??	It looks pretty .. I mean. It acts as ID	The rewards around here are crappy
none			
None	None	Nothing	Em … my photo
None yet	None yet	not sure	my photo
Never been told about any	n/a	Don't know – we haven't used them for anything apart from registration	Never been told how or where to use points – we therefore receive no benefits from them
None	none	it white	my picture
none	none		The discounts available (i.e. Kielder) aren't attractive and there isn't much point in using the Card when a written register is also taken
I haven't	I haven't	It's white and I suppose that makes it less easy to lose	The awful photograph
none	None	It's identification	It's ugly
		It's a form of ID	The chip (?)
n/a	n/a	Its small and flexible	Its colour
none	none	It like my photo on the front	
None	None	The discounts you can get	Carrying it around
none	None	discounts	picture
none	none	shape	information with Card
None	None	the way its set out	No much colour and the photo
n/a	n/'a	you get discounts	the bringing to school everyday
none	none	the way its set out	not colourful enough
		picture	not very interesting

none	none	nothing	the photograph of me
none	none	nothing	waste of time
none	none		
none(don't know of any)	none (don't know of any)	nothing	not a good incentive to attend school
none	none	used as ID	A hassle to remember
None	none		
None	None	The discounts and rewards available	If I forget the Card, I lose out on the points
None	none	gives you discounts	Hassle to use it everyday and I often forget it
None	none	none	all
none	none	the picture	the design
none	none	nothing	the photo
none	none	my picture	the connexions logo
none	none	nothing	I keep forgetting it and it's a hassle on a morning registering with it
Once for Arriva buses but all the drivers seem to think you can't use your Card on there at all	None – I don't really know anything about rewards and discounts available and how to get them	Nothing	Its useless – I haven't got a clue how I can use it to benefit me and no-one else has – no one will accept it. It's pointless! I get no money from it anyway
none	none	ability to get discounts	Hassle carrying it around
none	none		My picture being on it
None	none	I don't like it at all, it never works and it's useless.	Everything
	Arriva bus travel	the discounts	the registration system
Don't know how to get any	haven't		Slow, waste of time, hardly ever works
None, I don't know what any are	None. I don't know what they are and the once I tried to use it for busies the driver didn't recognise it	I can use it as ID	I don't know any rewards/discounts and the machine never works.
None. No one will accept it	None. No one will accept it	nothing	Having to bring it to school and get no money for it.
None	don't know what they are	none	not very attractive
none- don't know what they are	none		not very attractive
None	Bus fares. But many drivers don't know what they are	You can use it for identity	Many don't know what they are. You can not get discounts from cinemas which we were told we could
None	None	nothing at all	Everything, its pointless.