'Dumping Grounds' or a Meaningful Educational Experience?

- the involvement of Scotland's Colleges in the education of disengaged young people

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Abstract

The research examines the discourses surrounding disengaged young people, particularly those under the age of 16, and the role of Scotland's Colleges in making provision for them. Consideration is given to the voices of the young people themselves: how their college experiences compare to school and how they view themselves over this transition period. Consideration is also given to the policy in this area and how it has developed since the Beattie watershed of 1999. The debate surrounding the involvement of colleges in the provision of education for this group of young people touches on issues of social justice and the construction of children and young people, as well as throwing up questions about the roles and identity of Scotland's schools and colleges. Among the questions it raises about colleges, it raises issues of pedagogy and of the professional status of its teaching staff and offers recommendations about the lessons each sector might learn from the other . Ultimately, it proposes that Scotland's Colleges are uniquely placed to seek ascendancy in the post-school sector, welcoming and developing the role that they now play in the transition of young people to adulthood.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Compulsory and post-compulsory education and disengaged young people

The title of this thesis paraphrases a newspaper article (Fraser, 15/06/03) which suggested that Scotland's Colleges could become 'dumping grounds' for young people whom schools can no longer accommodate because of their behavioural problems. In 2002 and 2003, there was a flurry of Press articles, questioning both the ability of schools to contain and educate young people with behavioural problems (e.g. Munro, 29/11/02; Munro, 09/05/03) and the high incidence of exclusion of these same young people from mainstream school (e.g. Shaw, 13/06/03). Despite the absence of a formal statement from the Scottish Executive to this effect, it was clear from the press articles of the time that Scotland's colleges were being drawn into the debate, in an apparent expectation that they had both the capacity and the willingness to provide an alternative curriculum within a different kind of educational setting (e.g. Hook, 23/05/03; Hook 30/05/03; Fraser, 16/06/03; Munro, 06/06/03).

However, consider this statement from a Principal of one of Scotland's Colleges –

> *I came into college education, as did my staff, to teach adults who were starting out on their careers. We didn't come into teaching to look after disaffected 14-year-*

olds….Some schools were clearly using us as a dumping ground for disruptive pupils so they got them out of school….

Fraser, 2003

And this comment from a college lecturer –

I don't want this college to become a dumping ground for those kids school can't cope with…

Sproson, 2003, p.21

These comments articulate a fear that colleges would be irrevocably and negatively changed by the introduction of young people with behaviour problems, specifically young people who, by virtue of being in compulsory education, were seen as someone else's responsibility. The expression '*dumping grounds*' quickly became part of common parlance, being widely quoted in conjunction with such provision, expressing a concern that schools may simply renounce their responsibility for the more challenging young people, leaving colleges to shoulder the burden. As well as recurring in the national press, the expression has emerged in policy documents (e.g. Scottish Executive, 2004a) and reflects the concern of many within and outwith the college sector who view with alarm the introduction into college of disaffected young people who are still in compulsory education. This prospect would stand in sharp contradiction to the overwhelmingly voluntary and adult nature of Scotland's Colleges.

The phrase *'dumping grounds'* has become shorthand for these fears and a means of articulating them to the wider community. The language itself degrades both the institutions and the young people concerned, but its effects may be more powerful still. Anderson (2003) wrote about '*…positive effects that produce an existence through*

enunciation...' (Anderson, 2003, p.11) proposing that such a statement actually creates the very reality it strives to describe. So do colleges then become the repositories of those portrayed as the detritus of society, their only value being containment whilst schools continue with the real job of education?

Since 2003, policy changes have sought to establish an alternative curriculum that would increase the relevance of compulsory education for the less academically inclined pupils and we have seen such developments put in place, most notably for the 14+ age group. Some of the alternative provision has been provided by Scotland's Colleges with, in some cases, young people attending college as a full-time alternative to school. This rather begs the question of how, or in fact whether, colleges are able to provide a better educational environment for these young people. Without answers to such questions, colleges cannot respond to the accusation of 'dumping grounds'. In addition, there are questions to be asked about the relationship between young people and schools that makes such alternative provision necessary.

The persistent assumption evident within policy in relation to the educational provision for disaffected young people is the efficacy and relevance of vocational education. A more recent assumption concerns the ability of the college sector to deliver this (Cloonan and Turner, 2000). These assumptions may have little empirical support (although there is evidence to support the contribution vocational education makes as part of a

package of measures taken for such young people, e.g. Costley and Maguire, 2000; Kinder et al, 2000; Sproson, 2002) but they are pervasive.

This construction of vocational education and its provision within colleges in particular as a panacea for society's ills is the one promoted by policy makers, but it sits uncomfortably alongside the 'dumping ground' construction that has grown up with it.

Personal position

As a manager in one of Scotland's Colleges, I have had little option but to face these differing constructions and the expectations that accompany them and to question the essential nature of colleges and where we stand in relation to young people still in compulsory education. By 2002, it had become clear that colleges were being expected to play a role in their education and in response to this, my colleagues and I had developed and offered a 'taster' course for young people still in school. In consulting with the local schools, we quickly discovered that the pupils the schools wanted us to take on board were those who had been, or were on the verge of being, excluded from school for their behaviour or for persistent truancy.

Fortunately in our first year of running the course, the numbers we attracted were low. Even so, college staff were unprepared for the young people who arrived in college. They were both challenging and demanding and apparently quite unlike the students we were used to. We struggled through our first year and lost a member of staff along with the goodwill of

some others in the process. The small group of students became quickly known across the college (largely due to our efforts to secure 'taster' classes for them) and were often identified as the source of much mischievous behaviour in the college.

However, somewhere towards the end of the session, we realised that some things had changed. We had habitual truants attending college every day and in fact, remaining behind classes to take part in other college activities. We discovered that these students were often not the ones who were responsible for acts of indiscipline, although they often were blamed. With the value of hindsight, we realised, in that respect at least, the young people we had taken on were no different from our other students – some good, some bad. And although they had come into college loud and challenging, they quickly adapted and had in fact made major progress over the session.

In the second year, we felt we were better prepared. We built in more practical activities and 'tasters'; established a mentoring scheme with other students; adapted the timetable and put in place a lunchtime 'club'. Through self-selection, we had arrived at a staff team which was prepared to meet the challenge face on. The young people coming in were the same, but we had learned. Four years on this is still the case. The programme is further refined each year but the young people remain the same – they have disengaged with school: some are truants; some are bullies; some are bullied; some simply want to leave school. In the course of a year at

college, they start to make the transition to adulthood, re-engaging with education and making choices about their future.

In the early days of the course, my concern as a manager had been with how I would support staff in working with the young people. I had couched their development needs in problem-focussed terms – 'dealing with challenging behaviour' etc. but having encountered the work of Alan McLean (Principal Educational Psychologist and author of *The Motivated School:* McLean, 2003), I became more interested in solution-focussed approaches. My intention had been to conduct research into the efficacy of such approaches within college settings. Part of this would involve interviewing some of the young people themselves. It was in conducting such an interview as a pilot that I realised that what I needed to know was contained in the voices of the young people. They had the school and college experiences and they had their own views on what worked and what did not.

At the same time, I was a member of a Steering Group that was taking ahead one of the strands from the Beattie Committee report (Post-School Psychological Services). Consequently, I was very focussed on educational policy documents, especially those that were concerned with school/college partnership issues. From both of these interests, the voices of young people and the messages of policy documents, the theme of my research emerged – the discourses promulgated by educational and social policy juxtaposed with the discourses evident from the educational experiences of the young people themselves. In particular, I was concerned to challenge

any assertion that the value of college to these young people lay solely in its role as a provider of vocational education.

Over the course of the research and writing of this thesis, my interest in both these areas has not abated and I am now firmly convinced of the relevance of the college experience for under 16s; not in terms of its vocational relevance, but in terms of the transition experience it offers. By its very difference from school and its adult nature, it offers disengaged young people an opportunity to develop in a way that school, or even their absence from it, would have been unable to do.

The young people present school as an environment characterised by rules and restrictions and one must either abide and be constrained by this or find ways to challenge and override it, thereby falling victim to its sanctions. College, on the other hand, appears to the young people to offer an environment where they are free to make up their own minds about how to behave, about who they are and importantly, where they are going. Yet, within this environment, it becomes clear that they must develop self-discipline in order to attain their goals.

To analyse the narratives of the young people, I have demonstrated how the works of Foucault and Deleuze can lead us to a greater understanding of what is happening within these two spaces and how important the differences between them are. Deleuze offers an analysis of space and pedagogy that illuminates critical differences between schools and colleges, whilst Foucault offers ways of analysing discourses that illuminate the operation of power within our institutions.

The discourses implicit within policy documents are similarly analysed and they present a scenario dominated by medical-judicial discursive practices, wherein schools are agents of social control, responsible for identifying and treating those it defines as deviant. Such practices sit alongside discourses of child protection and managerialism.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Within the Literature Review, I begin by considering the language that has been used over the recent history of education to describe and ultimately define young people who challenge, reject or subvert the institutions of education, and show how these descriptions often become diagnoses that are used to circumscribe and exclude. The literature review also considers the nature of exclusion in both the senses that it is used in education – the exclusion of young people as a means of disciplining them and social exclusion, with its wider connotations. Since 2000, inclusion, with its roots firmly in human rights, has become a policy driver, but what does this really mean for disengaged young people? I then shift the focus from the young people themselves and the school system to Scotland's Colleges and consider their nature and the role they play in the delivery of vocational education. Consideration of colleges and vocational education would be incomplete without an examination of the role played by college staff. In many respects, they are being asked to deal with young people who have become disaffected with the secondary school system, yet their status is lower than teachers' and this is often attributed to their lack of professionalism, as evidenced by a lack of pre-entry qualifications and a professional body for teaching staff in the college sector. In the final section, I return to young people themselves and consider the limited

research in this area that has used the voices of young people; particularly what I propose is a general failure to engage with meaning. I have made several references to policy documents in the literature review chapters and these are included because of the role they play in shaping understanding. For example, some of the most illuminating writing on definitions of disengaged young people exists within policy documents (e.g. the Elton Committee Report, 1989). Moreover, it would have been difficult to circumvent policy documents when dealing with a topic of the currency of school/college collaboration.

Definitions – from 'delinquency' to 'disengagement'

The starting point must be to identify who these young people are, how they are defined and circumscribed and by whom. Why is it their destiny to be consigned to the 'dumping grounds' of tertiary education? Are children and young people so greatly changed that new ways must be found to deal with them and/or meet their needs?

'Lois', a teacher working for a youth project, attempted a description. Among their ranks, there are

> *…persistent truants, in trouble with the law, or excluded from their secondary school…*

> Garratt et al, 1997, p.55

Difficult young people, Lois proposed, are not cost effective in school: some have had very bad educational experiences and most find it difficult to conform to school demands, requiring individual attention and

support, and furthermore, they have a negative impact on the learning of others. However, it is the latter point in her quote that concerned 'Lois' most – the increasing number of young people excluded from school. This statistic has attracted widespread concern, although whether the increase is due to greater use of school exclusions as a means of disciplining young people who do not behave in school or whether this represents an actual increase in unacceptable behaviour has never been made clear. The press reports of 2003 quoted in the Introduction were prompted by government concern with increasing school exclusions and certainly they were clear enough – increased use of school exclusion was tangible proof of rising indiscipline in school.

Running contrary to national statistics that suggest offending among children and young people is falling (Scottish Executive, 2002a) reported incidences of violence within schools and against staff have increased (Scottish Executive, 2003a). Consequently, there is widespread acceptance of the proposition that schools, particularly secondaries[1], are facing rising indiscipline and even violence within the classroom. Sitting alongside the more serious, but very much rarer, incidents of violence against staff, there is a heightened awareness of low-level indiscipline –

> *…there are growing concerns regarding the level of indiscipline in our schools. These concerns range from the cumulative effect of low-level indiscipline displayed by routine inappropriate behaviour in classrooms, to the extremely*

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[1] Statistics appear to demonstrate that, despite fears to the contrary, the greatest incidence of 'violence and anti-social behaviour against local authority staff' occurs within primary schools. 30% of incidences occurred in secondary schools, against 37% in primary schools.
(Scottish Executive, 2003c)

disturbed behaviour exhibited by troubled young people…There is also concern over the increasing levels of indiscipline and anti-social behaviour witnessed outside the classrooms in corridors, playgrounds, dining areas, on school buses, and also in areas immediately adjacent to schools.

Scottish Executive, 2001a, p.5

The reasons proposed for this range from medical and psychological problems, to the impact of poor parenting and *'…social and economic challenges faced by families and communities…'* (Scottish Executive, 2001a, p.5), but generally the inference is that the cause, and therefore the cure, lies within the child.

Such a perspective exemplifies the within-child deficit approach that was, and arguably still is, more familiarly used to categorise and respond to children and young people with disabilities. The persistence and popularity of deficit theories and the remedies they conjure up may be attributable to their simplicity and the ease with which these can be assimilated by a concerned public. Feiler and Gibson (1999) proposed that we will struggle to overcome our tendency to label and stigmatise, simply because the alternatives are too complex. To paraphrase Feiler and Gibson, relating their arguments to young people whose behaviour poses difficulties in school, it is easier to entertain the notion that the reason why an individual child might misbehave and reject school discipline is because of a condition such as 'delinquency' or 'hyperactivity' ', rather than to systematically evaluate the myriad reasons why an individual child might be struggling (Feiler and Gibson, 1999, p.150). One need only consider the language surrounding the young people who are the subject of this paper alongside

the action taken to deal with the problems they pose within school to appreciate this process in action.

For example, one term that has gained credibility of a sort, in that the term is widely used and understood in professional circles, without the status of a diagnosis, is '*emotional and behavioural difficulties*' which

> *…forms in the minds of practitioners, professionals and administrators one of the principal groups of special needs…*
>
> Thomas and Loxley, 2001, p.47

Reindal (1995) would have identified this term as an example of the *bio-medical* or *deficit* approach which locates the problem within the child. Professor Cyril Burt defined delinquency in 1925 (Hurt, 1998) in terms not dissimilar to those used by the Department for Education and Employment almost 70 years later, in their guidance on the identification of emotional and behavioural difficulties, both stressing the normality but unacceptability of indiscipline i.e.

> *"Delinquency I regard … as nothing but an outstanding sample – dangerous and extreme, but none the less typical, of common childish naughtiness." Professor Cyril Burt*
>
> cited in Hurt, 1988, p.90

> *Emotional and behavioural difficulties lie on the continuum between behaviour which challenges teachers but is within normal, albeit unacceptable, bounds and that which is indicative of serious mental illness.*
>
> Department for Education and Employment, 1994

These definitions illustrate the main problems in attempting to identify emotional and behavioural difficulties. Firstly, the definitions refer to

behaviour, not to the young people themselves. Secondly, the definitions are norm-referenced, yet young people who are defined by such patterns of behaviour are not discernible from the norm (where is the cut-off point on the continuum, and is this in terms of extremity of behaviour, or frequency of incidence?). Thirdly, what constitutes '*unacceptable*', and furthermore, '*unacceptable'* to whom? One must assume that the matter of unacceptability is subjective, and that subjectivity is mitigated by professional judgement, which in turn is the corollary of professional training.

For some educational writers, emotional and behavioural difficulties are clearly discernible from the norm and a learning difficulty for which specialist help is required (e.g. Richards, 1999; Head and O'Neill, 1999). This lack of consistency becomes significant when considering the emphasis placed on identifying those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Identification provides a passport to specialists, services and support, what Clough and Corbett (2000) refer to as the *psycho-medical legacy* which stresses the importance of diagnosis and appropriate individual responses. Some writers, e.g. Arcelus et al (2000) argue that behavioural problems may be symptomatic of underlying neuro-biological conditions (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or mental health problems and the controversy surrounding the prescription of methylphenidate hydrochloride (more commonly known by its brand name, Ritalin) for some conditions is indicative of the debate around what is within the normal range of behaviour and what is not.

> *ADHD is actually not a disease at all, but merely the tail of a normal distribution of behaviours related to overactivity and lack of concentration. Character, it was once believed, was something that had to be shaped through self-discipline, struggle and a willingness to confront discomfort and wrong inclination: now we have a medical short-cut to the same result.*

> Professor Francis Fukuyama, member of the US President's Council on Bioethics

> Cited in Slater, 2005, p.20

However recent the debate on hyperactivity and behaviour may be, it remains the fact that young people whose behaviour challenges the institutions of society represent one of the earliest categories of *special needs* to have been distinguished. Hurt (1988) described how more than 200 years ago, society was concerned about children whose behaviour was unacceptable and who often resorted to illegal acts such as violence, begging, prostitution and theft. Little consideration was given then to the desperate straits of such children in an increasingly industrialised society and they were punished severely, with no differentiation between them and adult wrongdoers. The emergent special educational provision that developed in deprecation of such harsh treatment had a function to protect society from these children, but it recognised their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation, offering rehabilitation, including the skills to make an honest living.

While there is no evidence, then or now, that delinquency leads to a life of recidivism (Hurt, 1988), the notion of an '*underclass*' (MacDonald, 1997) suggests otherwise. The theory of an 'underclass' as expounded by Charles Murray (Lister et al, 1996) presents an extreme view of a culture of

chronic unemployment, poverty and dependency on state benefits that is self-perpetuating and inter-generational. In this view, there is an inexorable route from disaffection in school, to unemployment, to an adult life of exclusion, marginalisation and criminality which has an impact upon the next generation whose life chances are consequentially blighted. Whilst Murray's theory has been heavily criticised for conveying a *pathological image of people in poverty'* (Lister et al, 1996, p.10) and blaming the poor for their plight, other less extreme positions may draw support from studies such as that by Zeng-Yin Chen and Kaplan (2003) which lend some empirical support to deficit positions. They reported on a longitudinal study that suggested that early school failure at 13 years led to lower levels of mental health and higher rates of deviant behaviour in their 20s.

> *Early negative experiences set in motion a cascade of later disadvantages in the transition to adulthood, which, in turn, influence socio-economic attainment later in the life course.*

> Zeng-Yin Chen and Kaplan, 2003, p.117

The Beattie Committee Report (Scottish Executive, 1999) marked a watershed in this debate. The Committee had examined the transition of young people from school to work and the barriers many faced, with the consequences of persistent social exclusion. However, the Beattie Committee Report also marked a significant departure from the deficit approach that had characterised earlier works and underpinned the theory of the 'underclass'. The Committee, which took representations from many groups and individuals, including many excluded young people, identified

that exclusion was often a product of the things that had happened to the young people. As well as some having physical and learning disabilities, many had experienced family breakdown and homelessness, or alcohol or substance misuse. Here is an alternative view to the deficit approach; that resulting behaviour difficulties are normal reactive behaviours to adverse life experiences (Cooper, 1993; Gregg and Machin, 1998). Thus, what distinguishes the young people is not their behaviour but their life experiences and to an extent this is borne out by statistics that correlate school exclusions with such socio-economic factors as entitlement to free school meals (Scottish Executive, 2006a), although this assumes that adverse life circumstances are synonymous with being poor. Such a view is an example of the *social constructionist* perspective (Reindal, 1995)

The Beattie Committee also identified and popularised the expression the NEET[2] group, i.e. those young people *not in education, employment or training* and at risk from exclusion. The circumscription of the NEET group lent further gravitas to the fears of elective unemployment, recidivism and swelling the ranks of the 'underclass'. Whilst the Beattie Committee avoided making any projections about the numbers of young people who are disaffected and therefore candidates for the NEET group, the report made reference to statistics presented by Pearce and Hillman (1998), producing correlations between truancy, school exclusions, qualifications and unemployment on leaving school. Costley and Maguire

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[2] In 2007, the term NEET itself was declared to be stigmatising and has now been replaced in policy documents by referring to 'young people in need of more choices and more chances'. (MacLeod, 2007)

(2000) proposed that such young people make up 8% of the total, and the

Excluded Young People Strategy Action Team (1999) proposed a similar

figure, estimating between 5% and 10%. A more recent estimate has been

provided by the Department for Education and Skills (2005), which puts the

figure for 'long-term' NEET at 4%[3].

One explanation, considered throughout this paper, may have failed

to result in major changes in schools but may well underpin the involvement

of colleges in the education of these young people, is that schools

themselves are the catalysts of behaviour difficulties (Thomas and Loxley,

2001). This third perspective is what Oliver (1990) describes as the *social*

creationist view, which does not deny the existence of individual difficulties,

but views the problems as '*…located within the institutionalised practices of*

society…' (Oliver, 1990, p.82)

Shucksmith et al (2005) considered this in examining the links

between behaviour difficulties and mental health. The study was

commissioned by the Scottish Executive in the wake of its initiative, Better

Behaviour – Better Learning, and investigated the constructs of mental

health, self-esteem and well-being, taking the position that many behaviour

difficulties are symptomatic of poor mental health (as distinct from mental

illness). This more health-oriented approach may appear like a return to the

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[3] 'Long term' NEET is defined as those who have been out of education, employment or training for at least two out of the three years between 16 and 18 years old. For those who have been NEET for the three years, the percentage is 1%. The report concedes that the group is extremely diverse and many of the young people may be NEET for positive reasons. For example, included within the statistics are young people who are on 'gap' years before entering higher education, but the group also includes young single mothers. Department for Education and Skills, 2005b

within-child deficit approaches and the authors were aware of the dangers of contributing to this construction.

They cautioned –

While useful, a potential danger of such typologies is that they may focus the problem on the child and ignore the contexts in which the behaviour is occurring. In recent years there has been a drive in educational thinking to move from a 'child-deficit model' to a 'contextual model'. Concern has been expressed that the introduction of discourses originating within the health service may result in a resurgence of an individual oriented 'medical model'…In these cases a reflexive understanding of how the school, through its organisation and structures, contributes to or ameliorates such feelings is crucial in order to avoid a focus on within-child factors.

Shucksmith et al, 2005, p.4

Thus, as Oliver (1990) stressed in respect of disability, the difficulties experienced by individuals are not denied, but the role of contextual factors is critical both in understanding and in counteracting these. In this case, the role of schools in mental health is considered.

In answer to the question, 'How might the environment of the school itself create problems of mental wellbeing and indiscipline?' the literature review reveals a number of important answers. Schools that are poorly embedded in their communities and in which individual teachers have little understanding of the sorts of daily problems being experienced by pupils and their families create a poor basis for establishing a health promotion school. Poor levels of understanding in turn affect the ability of the school to communicate with the parent group. Low levels of interaction between parents and school do not support rapid identification and remediation of problems.

Shucksmith et al, 2005, p.vii

The researchers made the point that secondary schools in particular tend to be environments that are not conducive to mental health

and cited the need of the school to control and maintain order. Simply, the problems are related to the nature of schools themselves.

However, although there are discernible attempts within government reports to consider schools and their practices (e.g. Scottish Executive, 2002b) there is strong evidence that the '*powerful sub-text*' (Thomas and Loxley, 2001, p.47) that persists in locating the problem within the young person remains in the minds of policy makers and the public.

Thomas and Loxley propose that deviancy is a product of institutional practices and they expressed the view that the needs in the case of emotional and behavioural difficulties are in fact those of the school: the need for order in a large and complex institution. The rules and conformity imposed by adults on children within a school have no parallel in the adult world except prison (Goffman, 1961). Like prisons, schools often present similar patterns of petty rules and restrictions, offering converts the chance to gain some respite from these, whereas for miscreants, rules are likely to become more oppressive. The Elton Committee (1989), despite its overall deficit approach, did identify many practices within schools that compound, if not actually cause, indiscipline. Several of these practices correspond to features of institutions identified by Goffman (1961), including complex rule structures with little apparent relevance, mass movements of inmates, deindividualisation and insistence on uniformity in behaviour and appearance.

Where the institution fails to achieve order, the failure is redefined and attributed to failings of the inmates, thereby justifying interventions and

in turn, these can stigmatise and segregate individuals, sometimes by actual

physical separation (and this is certainly the '*dumping ground*' view of

college provision), sometimes by the practices adopted within schools to

ostensibly support and help, but in fact exclude young people from

mainstream activities (e.g. Feiler and Gibson, 1999). Thomas and Loxley

argue that when unacceptable behaviour in school is further redefined as

'*emotional need*' (Thomas and Loxley, 2001, p.51), it becomes subject to

treatment rather than sanctions and they make reference to Michel Foucault

(1977) and what he described as the '*medical-judicial discourse'*. Here,

changes over time in the judicial services have meant that judgements

based on an act have been replaced by more complex judgements based

on an individual's deviancy. Foucault made this distinction between the

'*delinquent'* and the '*offender'* –

> *The delinquent is also to be distinguished from the offender in that he is not only the author of his acts…, but is linked to his offence by a whole bundle of complex threads (instincts, drives, tendencies, character)…*

<div align="right">Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984, p.220</div>

Thomas and Loxley argue that, like prisons, schools present an

environment that is composed of practices that reinforce delinquency.

Unlike the idealised vision we are often presented, schools are not humane

environments within which bad behaviour can only be understood in terms

of deep-rooted psychological problems. Instead they create the problems of

indiscipline they experience yet respond to indiscipline by laying the blame

firmly at the feet of the young people (and their families and the culture that

shaped them). Like Foucault, Thomas and Loxley argue that such practices

are a manifestation of oppression and an unequal power balance, in this case, between adult and child.

Thomas and Loxley could have extended their argument to consider Foucault's proposal that through '*normalisation, classification*' and '*documentation*' (Foucault, 1977, p.192), those subject to the power of others are identified and made visible, pinning them down and turning them from a person into a *'case'*. Thus, within education, the need is created for descriptions that allow classification and enable the degree of individual surveillance that is the corollary of power (Allan, 1996). For those whose behaviour challenges the school system, the identification of emotional and behavioural difficulties and subsequent segregation can be better understood as surveillance, control and power.

However, terminology moves on, perhaps in an attempt to encapsulate a wider phenomenon. Emotional and behavioural difficulties, as we have seen, are difficult to distinguish from normal (but *unacceptable*, as we are reminded) behaviour. Schools are troubled by low level indiscipline and serious infringements are relatively rare (the Elton Committee, 1989; Scottish Executive, 2001a). Emotional and behaviour difficulties neither describes nor helps address this. A term increasingly used to describe young people who challenge the school system is '*disaffected'*, a term gaining in popularity as emotional and behavioural difficulties wanes. '*Disaffected'* suggests a wider range of problem behaviour and includes those who may feel that school is not providing for their needs. '*Disaffected'* also marks a deviation, if not a departure, from the

within-child deficit approach since it allows that disaffection may be reactive rather than pathological. In this way, it reflects more of a social constructivist perspective (Reindal, 1995) and it removes the problems of definition that characterised earlier policy in this area (e.g. the Elton Committee Report, 1989). However, whilst the meaning of disaffected makes reference to discontented, when applied to school pupils, the term acquires the further dimension of *'rejection of, or rebellion against authority'* (Hobbs, 1999, p.848), so much so that Piper and Piper (2000) express concern about the use of the term 'disaffected' and the stigmatising effects of language –

> *In the absence of hard and explicit criteria for its application, disaffection constitutes a label which is both too generalised to be useful and judgemental and disapproving enough to be damaging.*

Piper and Piper, 2000, p.81

Sproson (2004), writing about the role of colleges in working with those under school leaving age, simply refers to the young people as '*D2M*', or *'difficult to manage'*. By accident or design, he shifts the focus from the young person, to recognition that the problem may be one of containment by the educational establishment. This is more typical of a '*social creationist*' perspective (Reindal, 1995).

There is a clear dichotomy, or perhaps a trichotomy, since there are essentially three positions here – firstly, behaviour difficulties are regarded as the property of the young person, either as behaviour lying at the extreme of the continuum of what is normal and thereby warranting control

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and punishment, or as a learning difficulty and non-normative, but thereby meriting assessment, diagnosis and support. However, the Beattie Committee (Scottish Executive, 1999) and others have demonstrated how young people who are disaffected with school and in danger of social exclusion are in a sense victims of adverse circumstances. This second position is essentially 'interventionist' since the solutions lie in helping the young person to turn around their lives. Other critics of the deficit approach, however, view the terminology of the deficit approach as at best poor science and at worst, wholly subjective, manufactured for pragmatic reasons. The true cause of behavioural difficulties, they propose, lies in the institutional practices of school. This third position is echoed in writings on disability (e.g. Barton, 1988; Oliver, 1990). These divergent positions have clear implications for social inclusion. In the first, social inclusion is achieved by addressing the problems of the individual, either via reward and punishment, or treatment. In the second, social inclusion is achieved by intervening in the young person's life to provide support that will assist in overcoming disadvantage, and in the third, social inclusion is achieved by challenging the practices that segregate and exclude people.

Education and Outcomes

The practical implications of such perspectives were highlighted by Croll and Moses (2000) in their examination of how managers and senior policy makers view inclusion. Many held what Croll and Moses described as a 'weak' position, wherein the retention of segregated provision for

certain groups (and those with behaviour difficulties were singled out by respondents) is held to be necessary within the reality of inclusion in school. A 'strong' position, rejecting any such exclusion, was viewed as a utopian ideal, impossible to achieve in the real world because some young people have needs which are incompatible with the needs of the majority of their peers.

Macrae et al (2003) also considered 'strong' and 'weak' positions with regard to inclusion in school. They proposed that actual physical exclusion from school as a punishment was characteristic of a 'weak' position since it rarely sought to address any of the underlying difficulties a child may be experiencing. On the other hand, as in the Croll and Moses study, a strong position involves identifying and addressing the mechanisms by which a person becomes excluded. Moreover, a 'weak' position, whilst paying lip-service to policies, allows power differentials to be maintained, even reinforced –

> *Power to exclude gave a head teacher some power to select. Head teachers can permanently exclude the 'hard to teach' and the 'hard to reach', and this means they are indirectly selecting who they want to, and will, teach.*

Macrae et al, 2003, p.94

For disaffected young people in school, the term 'exclusion' has a double meaning. Described as 'in danger of exclusion' in government literature (e.g. Scottish Executive, 1999), disaffected young people can experience exclusion as a punishment, but also exclusion from society through unemployment and recidivism. In the first meaning, 'exclusion' is an

act deriving from the active infinitive 'to exclude'. In the second, 'exclusion'

describes a state, deriving from the passive infinitive, 'to be excluded'

characterised by '*…isolation and alienation from normal economic, social,*

political and cultural life…' (Milbourne, 2002, p.327)

We are led to believe that one leads inexorably to the other –

school exclusion to unemployment and thereby to social exclusion.

> *Thus, school exclusion is a multi-dimensional*
> *'problem' for Government: it is intimately connected with*
> *issues of law and order, criminality and social control. It*
> *connects with aspects of fiscal policy for, in human capital*
> *terms, an under-educated workforce will be less productive*
> *(and may be more expensive to support) and it also connects*
> *with issues of citizenship and human rights: the right to an*
> *adequate education and, concomitantly, the right to participate*
> *in social life.*

Macrae et al, 2003, p.91

They cite findings that exclusions from school are generally children

of families who may already be suffering the effects of being marginalised in

society, thus exclusion from school is '*…a further cost of being poor…'*

(Macrae et al, 2003, p.93). This invites speculation on the meaning of

inclusion and exclusion in society. Under the ministry of Peter Mandelson in

1997, the Government established the Social Exclusion Unit (interestingly,

not the Social *Inclusion* Unit), defining social exclusion as being something

more than poverty. Unemployment featured large in factors leading to

social exclusion, with the route out of exclusion being via paid employment

(Piper and Piper, 2000).

Alexiadou (2002) identified different discourses on social exclusion.

One holds that social exclusion is the product of structural inequalities and

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unemployment is therefore consequential, not causal, in economic efficiency. However, a different discourse is evident in government policy which focuses on school achievement and the NEET group. According to some writers (e.g. Tomlinson, in Clough and Corbett, 2000), the state decides who are uneconomic citizens and segregates those who will not be employed. This echoes Wolfensberger (1983) who wrote of *valued social roles,* of which employment is one, which are bestowed or denied as society deems fit. From a social creationist perspective (Oliver, 1990), successive governments have pathologised unemployment by abandoning full employment policies and job creation in favour of training and targeted intervention (Piper and Piper, 2000). Thus unemployment, like the behavioural problems that may have preceded it, has become an individual rather than a structural problem. The deficit discourse is once more ascendant and schools and colleges can be construed as the agents of a policy direction which seeks to raise the attainment and achievement of individuals.

Scotland's Colleges and 'Vocationalism'

Although presented as the route away from unemployment and social exclusion, traditional school-based education, despite its ultimate aims being fundamentally economic (Tomlinson, 2001) in terms of equipping people for life and work, is not vocational in nature. The institutions charged with the delivery of vocational education in Scotland are its colleges and universities. Colleges in particular are presented as vocational 'finishing

schools' whose role is to complete a young person's education and make him/her work-ready. In the search for alternatives to school for disaffected young people, the college sector, with its vocational aims, has increasingly been seen as offering the solution.

Earlier in this paper, the point was made that college staff may be reluctant to take on what is perceived to be a school responsibility, that of young people who are still under the compulsory school leaving age. Leaving aside recent government proposals to extend the school leaving age to 18 years (Learning and Skills Council National Office, 2005; Seith, 2007), what does college offer young people who have become disenchanted with school? The assumption is that it offers a vocational education that provides a route to a job, and that this in itself is sufficiently motivating for young people to become re-engaged in education –

> *Many secondary and special schools make good use of links with local colleges, to provide a curriculum which meets the needs of particular pupils. The explicit vocational nature of programmes and their clear links with employers are effective factors in motivating many pupils.*

HMIE, 2000, p.42

However, evidence suggests that other processes may be at work. A significant percentage of college students is under 18 years but the majority are adults, with the average age of a student being 34 in 2004/05 (Scottish Executive, 2006b). It is adults who dictate the prevailing culture and ethos in Scotland's Colleges. Accordingly, college is perceived as a different environment from school, with many features that differentiate the two institutions in the minds of young people, favouring colleges over

school: greater freedom; positive relationships with staff; learning support facilities; social relationships; recreational opportunities (Gallacher et al, 2000).

Furthermore, college provides the kind of environment recommended by the Elton Committee (1989), i.e. it is less formal, with a simple rule and sanction structure governing the behaviour of individual students; there are no mass movements between classes; there is no expectation of uniformity. Additionally, the curriculum is more practical with clear and explicit relevance to vocational areas; criterion-referenced, formative assessment and confidentiality tend to be features of college assessment. College in general provides access to good facilities within institutions that are well-regarded and seen as part of a valued, adult world. One could argue that colleges also present a world that is open and transparent to parents, unlike schools, that become less accessible to parents as their children progress through the system.

A study that looked specifically at the impact that college has on disaffected young people is that by Sproson (2003), who offers an evaluation of the college experience for young people (i.e. 14 plus) who have become disengaged from school. He makes it clear that he is offering a personal view, based largely upon his own experiences, and material from a number of sources, including comments from staff, students and parents.

Sproson entitles his article 'Solution or Smokescreen?' and questions the role played by Colleges in making provision for 'difficult to manage (D2M)' students (Sproson, 2003, p.21), whether they (colleges)

solve or obscure the problems that such young people present. Sproson describes a situation where inclusion has been reinterpreted to encompass a different type of exclusion from school. He explains how schools avoid excluding students by referring the young person to a college-based service. Sproson explains –

> *Whilst I genuinely believe that schools are committed to ensuring that all their students participate in appropriate high quality learning experiences, there is inevitably a degree of 'wanting rid' of the most D2M students…*

Sproson, 2003, p.19

Sproson poses questions about the relationship between the young people involved in his study and the schools from which they are referred. Clearly, the young people felt that the schools failed to treat them in appropriate ways but it is equally clear that the staff within the schools did not view the situation in this way, feeling at a loss to deal with problem behaviour from a minority of pupils. In his consideration of FE colleagues working with these students, comments ranged from positive and enthusiastic to negative and pessimistic.

Sproson (2003) believes that the young people gained from the experience of attending college, largely attributable to the fact that they experienced different, more positive, treatment than they had in school. He highlighted the relationship between teacher and student behaviour and commented on the curriculum, but conceded that ultimately young people who have not enjoyed school may thrive at college simply because they experience respect. Perhaps Sproson also offers the most valid

interpretation of inclusion – that inclusion is achieved when the young people concerned feel included.

A study by Kinder et al (2000) considered college provision for young people who had been excluded from school and reported that colleges had –

> *…a clear role to play in providing alternative learning experiences, and an alternative learning environment for excluded pupils.*
>
> Kinder et al, 2000, p.10

This study made only limited use of young people's testimony, concentrating on staff responses and giving consideration to the curriculum on offer within college. The study identified that the vocational aspect of college, offered via work placements, was an important component, but it was offered as part of a package that included core skills, personal and social education and leisure activities. They also identified the importance of the college *ethos*, of creating –

> *…a relaxed atmosphere, the flexibility to deal with personal problems when they arose and an emphasis on the development of effective personal relationships were also felt to be important aspects of the work.*
>
> Kinder et al, 2000, p.50

Within the study, the researchers made an important point about the status of any alternative provision –

> *…excluded youngsters were already likely to have extremely low self-esteem and feel rejected and, by placing them in 'dump' provision with poor facilities, these feelings of worthlessness were reinforced.*

Kinder et al, 2000, p.60

In considering the 'pupil effects', significant improvements were made by the young people in a range of areas, from informal achievement to the attainment of formal qualifications. In the behaviour domain, a range of improvements were noted that signified maturity and self-control, and perhaps as a direct consequence of this, relationships with adults (not always parents, however) improved. Again, it is important to note that this study made little use of student/pupil testimony so the opinions expressed were those of staff.

The literature on the shaping of Scotland's Colleges reveals a sector that has not attained a clear and unified identity. At one end of the spectrum covered by its curriculum, there is the interface with universities. The Dearing Inquiry, 1997, considered the college/university interface and the college role in widening access, recommending strengthening articulation to university via the provision of higher education courses. The merging of the college and university funding councils is evidence of the softening of the definition between the sectors. At the other end of the spectrum, there are the developments within the school/college interface. Writers (e.g. Halliday, 1999, p.587) caution against *academic drift'* in relation to universities and one must assume a similar danger exists in relation to schools.

Lecturers and 'Professionalism'

Despite the added value provided by Scotland's Colleges (in a recent review, the statement was made that '*the college sector turns £1 into an asset worth … £3.20',* Scottish Executive, 2006o, p.35), particularly in addressing the needs of young people disaffected with school, vocational education remains a poor relation. This is particularly evident within the debate around the professional status of its teachers. There is a conundrum within the writings on professionalism and the reality of educational practices. Writers (e.g. Robson, 1998) make a clear distinction between being a vocational specialist and a teacher. The vocational specialist demonstrates and instructs and is portrayed as having less of a professional identity or credibility than the professional teacher. Yet throughout recent history and educational policy, vocational education is persistently rated as more effective in securing positive outcomes for disaffected young people. Colleges are seen as successful because of their vocational nature (e.g. Kinder et al, 2000; Scottish Executive, 2006b).

It is possible that the explanation for the reduced professional identity and credibility proposed above lies, at least partially, in the training of teachers. College lecturers are not required to undertake pre-entry training, and training following appointment is not universally applied. In contrast, school teachers must complete a course of pre-entry training that is rigorously standardised and overseen by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). The Teaching Qualification (Further Education) or TQ(FE) provides post-entry professional training for college lecturers and

this is overseen by the Professional Development Forum, but this lacks the status of a professional body such as the GTCS and there is no requirement to register with any professional body (although lecturers can voluntarily register with the GTCS). The process of compulsory training and registration is partly what underpins teachers' claims of professionalism and the inability of college teaching staff to claim parity of esteem with reference to professional status may have a role to play in the reduced status accorded to vocational education.

The review of TQ(FE), alongside occupational standards and targets for college teaching staff achieving TQ(FE) (Scottish Executive, 2003n) is illustrative of the drive over the past decade to professionalise the college sector. However, the increasing involvement of college teaching staff with those still in compulsory education changed the scene somewhat and provided a platform from which the GTCS could apply pressure to the sector. It has been unequivocal in its position –

> *The Council would be completely opposed to the idea of children under 16 being taught by unregistered teachers/lecturers. That would be a regressive step for Scotland's education. We would run the risk of losing public confidence in the education system and it would raise the legitimate concern that this move would constitute a dilution of standards.*
>
> *GTCS Position Statement*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.23

In its use of the unsupported assertion that the public *has* confidence in the education system, the GTCS communicates its rejection of the college sector as it is, alongside its proposition that it is unacceptable for

children to be taught by people who are not qualified teachers (as it will only be qualified teachers who are registered). This appears to be not so much an argument about competence as one of child protection. By referring to *children,* the GTCS presents young people as vulnerable and in need of the protection offered by people who are trained and formally acknowledged to be *in loco parentis.* The construction of young people as children in need of protection, and the fears that accompany this, is one returned to often in policy documents, alongside calls for college staff to have clearance from Disclosure Scotland at the Enhanced level. This construction is examined later in the paper, within the review of policy documents.

There is more than a shade of the 'Emperor's New Clothes' about such a statement of public confidence, since the problem that is being addressed relates to a failure on the part of schools and their teachers to deal with disaffection. Nevertheless, there are qualified teachers in colleges and many who possess the TQ(FE) although vocational experts with recent or current experience are less likely to be among their number. These staff are key to the vocational nature of colleges and therefore, presumably, to any alternative curricular provision with a vocational bias. It would be capricious indeed to deny young people the very purveyors of the knowledge deemed to be of most benefit to them. Within the consultation on school/college partnerships, a warning note was sounded over losing the unique identity of Scotland's colleges conferred by its staff and simply creating '*a new type of school teacher*'. (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p.23).

Listening to Young People's Voices

The voices of the young people themselves have been quite muted in this debate. Although Sproson (2003) used interview material from students, there was very little use made of this source of evidence in the study by Kinder et al (2000). Where student comments have been used, they tend to focus more on the practicalities of attending college (e.g. Scottish Executive, 2004c) or other extrinsic features (e.g. Gallacher et al, 2000). There is little attempt made to take a more discursive approach or to consider the interaction between the interviewer and the young people who were the subjects of the studies. The assumptions that underpin these studies tend towards a more positivist position where '*the accounts …simply tell us what is going on inside their minds…' (*Alldred and Burman, 2005, p.181).

One of the most extensive and arguably most significant studies, since it features in the school/college partnership review, is that carried out by Carole Millar Research (Scottish Executive, 2004d). This research work is based on interviews and questionnaires administered to pupils in 26 schools who were undertaking a college course as part of their full-time study. The school pupils ranged from S2 to S6 and they attended courses ranging from full-time within college, to single courses delivered by college staff within school. The study considered the reactions of designated school staff and pupils to the college provision and considered in the main the practicalities in such arrangements, such as communication between the establishments, travel and timetabling.

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A major limitation of the study since it ignores the perspective of the major stakeholder, is that there was no input from the colleges themselves. It is also arguable that the diverse nature of the subject groups militates against meaningful results since the pupil experiences would have been very different. The experiences of pupils who receive tuition in school, or even college, once a week from a college lecturer cannot be compared with the experiences of those who are completing their compulsory education in a college setting full-time. The former remains a pupil within a school context – the latter is a college student and therefore reflecting on a different experience altogether.

Within the report there is little attempt to engage with meaning, taking comments very much at their face value as truly representative, with very little consideration given to features of the interview itself. The relationship between interviewer and interviewee is not recognised as significant, yet the responses may be coloured by this and by the attributions all parties make and the impressions they hope to create. Interviews are more than simple question and response –

> *Interviewer and interviewee actively construct some version of the world appropriate to what we take to be self-evident about the person to whom we are speaking and the context of the question.*

Silverman, 2001, p.86

Nevertheless, there are propositions offered that suggest a deeper interpretation, but a rather solipsistic one which indicates more about the interviewer/audience position. For example, within the study, there was

evidence from the comments of both pupils and teachers of the perception

that college was only for those pupils with behaviour problems. The

researchers concluded –

> *Whilst these comments might suggest that these pupils might well have thought that their school had dumped them in college, this was not the case and they were generally pleased to have been given this opportunity and felt they were benefiting from their college education.*

Scottish Executive, 2004d, p.36

There is nothing that substantiates '*this was not the* case' and the

possibility that the pupils did think they had been '*dumped'* could exist

alongside pleasure at the outcome and what it meant was not entertained at

all.

When it came to perceptions of college, the responses of pupils

were generally favourable and reflected the extrinsic differences between

college and school – the relationships with lecturers, the informality and the

freedom they experienced within college were important factors, as was the

voluntary nature. The researchers looked at the perceptions of college and

how these compared with perceptions of university, an exercise surely akin

to asking someone familiar with the domestic cat to compare this to a

giraffe. Not surprisingly, the college was seen as a poor relation in terms of

status, when compared to universities –

University was described by some as having high entrance requirements and a place where students wanted to go whereas college offered less kudos, and was seen more as a place to get away from school to or a place to get qualifications if you failed them at school.

Scottish Executive, 2004d, p.49

The fact that the pupils had accessed and experienced college but not university was not considered, although this is a salient point. University is an exotic and distant concept and quite unfamiliar to the young people.

The researchers identified institutional constraints in making college provision for school pupils.   School staff reported difficulties with sharing information and different work practices within the bodies involved and these could influence the handing over of relevant information (also Kinder et al, 2000).

The studies cited above, whilst limited in different dimensions, present a surprisingly consensual picture of college experiences, particularly in respect of disaffected or disengaged young people. Colleges are seen as beneficial in re-engaging young people, although the reasons for this are not as straightforward as might be assumed. While policy makers may portray colleges as providing a route out of exclusion via vocational training and employment, the positive perceptions of college appear to be more concerned with other defining characteristics – the relationships and the ethos – than with the actual courses. This enhanced view of college education is widespread amongst even the most disadvantaged learners. Hopwood and Hunter's study in 2006 (Scottish Executive, 2006c) into learning entitlements in post-compulsory education found that among young

people from the NEET group (including care leavers), holding mostly negative views of schooling, optimistic views of post-compulsory education and college in particular were common. It would be fair to say that Scotland's Colleges are generally well-regarded within their respective communities, and offer experiences in which people from all levels can participate. The role of 'student' as opposed to 'pupil' has the properties of a valued social role (Wolfensberger, 1983) and importantly, inclusion in college generally makes few demands on its students for conformity. However, conformity may then follow as a natural consequence of belonging to a valued institution (Piper and Piper, 2000; Zeng-yin Chen and Kaplan, 2003).

Further proof that contextual factors are more significant to learners than the vocational training can be found in the Scottish Executive study which revealed that many of the young people interviewed were unaware of whether or not they gained a qualification from the course they were undertaking (Scottish Executive, 2004d). The researchers did not explore whether vocationalism, which requires goal-directed activity, came as far down the agenda of the young people as this implies. Also, the school staff who featured in the studies recognised that the gains from college had more in common with personal and social, as opposed to vocational, development.

Conclusions

I began the Literature Review by considering the language used to describe and define disengaged young people, and also the nature of exclusion within education. What became apparent from the literature were the relationships between the different constructions of young people and the social and educational practices and views that accompanied these. The problem of young people who are disengaged from school and society (for the literature makes it very clear that the two are inextricably linked) is not new, and although the discourse surrounding them has changed over time, there is a persistence of the belief that the problem resides within the child. The recent developments in school/college collaboration do challenge this unwittingly, however, as a critical consideration of this area appears to illuminate institutional practices that play a major role in disaffection.

School/college collaboration led me into a consideration of Scotland's Colleges and the role they play in vocational education, along with the role of college staff who, whilst dealing directly with the challenges posed by disengaged young people, have found their professional status questioned as a consequence. Yet their voices have been relatively muted in the cacophony of debate surrounding this issue.

I also considered the limited research in this area that has focussed on the young people and what they have had to say. From the research that had been done, there had been little attempt to engage with meaning, focussing more on reactions to contextual factors. Rose and Shevlin (2004) considered the issue of empowering young people within their school education and had this to say about the failure to actually listen to what the young people had to say and what benefits might accrue to changing this situation –

> *…In too many instances an expression of a desire to listen to the voices of young people has been little more that a tokenistic gesture to appease the requirements of legislation or well-intentioned policies. Listening to the opinions of young people who have recently experienced the education systems which we have developed should at least enable us to reflect upon how future developments may afford greater opportunities to those who have been previously denied.*

Rose and Shevlin, 2004, p.160

The under-representation of the voices of the young people in particular, but also the college staff who work with them, provide the motivation for this research. In talking to young people who have experienced the move from an unsatisfactory school experience to college, and to some of the college staff who work with them, I hope to redress the balance somewhat.

The second part of the research is concerned with the discourse of the policy documents that have shaped this provision. Several policy documents have already been identified within the literature review and have proved illuminating records of the construction of both school and

college sectors, but also the young people who are the subject of the

perceived need for change. Such constructions are an important ingredient

in the documents which '*operate to influence public perception of a policy*

agenda' (Scott, 2000, p.39). A critical analysis of how these documents

seek to change practice is a vital component in understanding this complex

topic.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Issues relating to research methodology

The aim of this research is to examine the discourses surrounding disengaged young people still in compulsory education, alongside the educational experiences of the young people themselves, and the role of Scotland's Colleges in making provision for them. In particular, the intention is to challenge the often-quoted assertion that the value of college to these young people lies in its (motivational) role as effective purveyor of vocational education (e.g. HMIE, 2000). This necessitates consideration of a wider context, including secondary school provision, and of the social and cultural considerations that impinge on this area, such as recidivism, social exclusion and unemployment.

The study is concerned with the discursive practices of policy makers alongside those at the 'sharp end' – the young people and teaching staff who are the subjects of such policies. The study was conducted in two parts with the first being focussed on the young people themselves and their experiences of this transition period, alongside their encounters with the people who staff and inhabit their environments. This part was based on interviews carried out with young students who were attending college as part of their compulsory education; and college teaching staff, referred to hereafter as 'lecturers'. The term 'lecturers' is used rather than 'teachers'

purely to distinguish between college teaching staff and school teaching

staff (i.e. the 'teachers') and is not intended to imply any difference in

activity or stature. The second part of the study was concerned with policy,

as it is related in policy documents. This part consisted of an analysis of

policy documents generated by the Scottish Executive.

Both parts of the study analysed the data at two levels – the level of

'what' (i.e. identifying the discourses in use) and the level of 'how' (i.e. how

these discourses are promulgated and gain ascendancy). Table 1 below

illustrates the relationship, articulated in the research questions, between

the two parts of the study and the two levels of analysis.

Table 1 – Research Questions

Interviews with young people and staff	Policy Analysis
Level 1: What?	
What discourses are evident in the present voices of students and staff and the absent voices of parents that define and identify 'disaffected' young people? What discourses are evident in the present voices of students and staff and the absent voices of parents that define the nature and purpose of schools and colleges? What self-technologies are acknowledged in relation to young people and to colleges? What technologies of power are evident in the stories of the students and staff and by whom are they exercised? What knowledge (e.g. that of young people, college staff, parents etc.) is absent, subjugated or disqualified?	What discourses, reflected in policy, define and identify 'disaffected' young people? What discourses, reflected in policy, define the nature and purpose of schools and colleges? What self-technologies are identified in relation to young people and colleges? What technologies of power are evident in policy documents and by whom are they exercised? What knowledge is absent, subjugated or disqualified?
Level 2: How?	
How is the personal identity of young people constructed and how affected by the dominant discourses around 'young people' and 'disaffection'? How do the discourses defining schools and colleges impact upon young people? How are self-technologies perceived by staff and young people within colleges? How are technologies of power applied and to what purpose? By what means is knowledge ignored, subjugated or disqualified? How are relationships between different institutions (e.g. schools, colleges and the economy) constructed?	How has a discourse been established that defines and identifies 'disaffected' young people? How has a discourse been established that defines schools and colleges? How has the new discourse dealt with discourses of the past – have these been rejected or internalised? By what means are self-technologies promulgated in relation to young people and colleges? How are technologies of power applied and to what purpose? By what means is knowledge ignored, subjugated or disqualified? How are relationships between different institutions (e.g. schools, colleges and the economy) constructed and propagated?

(adapted from Anderson, 2003)

When Michel Foucault used the term 'discourse', he acknowledged its equivocal nature but stressed that he intended it to mean more than the descriptive language used in any *'system of formation'* (Foucault, 1972, p.121) and to embody its knowledge and the rules for its production. Such rules determine what can be admitted and what must be excluded from the body of knowledge and in so doing, discourse becomes a way of constructing and knowing about. Because of this, discourse allows the exercise of power at the level of practice, the level of –

> *…on-going subjugation. At the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc.'*
>
> Foucault, 1980, p.97

Thus, Foucault was referring to a system of power exercised through discursive practices that, rather than being imposed in a tyrannical way from above, sustains itself by operating in a seductive and capillary fashion. When applied to the theme of education and disengaged young people still in compulsory education, one can see that the discourses will be apparent in the emanations from the bodies of the state, certainly, but also in operations of its institutions – schools and colleges in this case – and in the interactions between staff and students.

Accordingly, I have taken a Foucauldian approach in this research, in order to analyse the discourses that prevail and are constructed and shared between institutions, policy makers and young people themselves. I have asked questions about the nature of the knowledge that circulates and whose view prevails, and also whose views are excluded in this

construction. Foucault wrote of the '*subjugated knowledges*' (Foucault, 1980, p.97) of those to whom the administrators of society's institutions refuse to listen and the young people of this study are prime examples of such voices, but so also are college staff. That is not to say that their voices are silent (or silenced) but rather that the subjugated knowledges that they possess are discounted. In fact, there is the possibility, articulated by Fielding (in Griffiths, 2003, p.85) that student voices in particular may be encouraged and utilised in such a way that supports the status quo and provides '*an additional mechanism of control*'.

Foucault (1972, p.45) wrote of '*surfaces of emergence*' of individual differences where normality is established and deviancy identified. Schools, in their dealings with young people, have attained this doubtful distinction. Schools are made known to us formally through reports of such government bodies as the HMIe or the press but rarely through the subjugated knowledge of the young people who have been their pupils.

Foucault also wrote of '*authorities of delimitation*' (Foucault,1972, p.46), the institutions who have acquired, either through establishment and consensus or self-promotion, the power to categorise deviance. The acts of categorisation and delimitation are acts of power and probably best seen in the policy documents that present the formally accepted knowledge of the state.

Where a positivist paradigm would proceed on the basis that there are fundamental truths to be uncovered as to why certain things may be the case, there is an underlying assumption in taking a Foucauldian perspective

that there is no 'true' position to be discovered. To Foucault, asking 'why?' was a futile exercise – motives are elusive and often *a posteriori*. Therefore disregarding any attempt to uncover intentions and focusing instead on what is happening and how discourses are perpetuated calls for a post-structuralist research paradigm and qualitative methods of enquiry. To Foucault, discourse represents an attempt to impose '*order on chaos'* (Ward, 1999, p.98).   Analysis of discourse will not reveal an underlying truth but is intended to illuminate the methods by which it is created and promoted.

Adopting a post-structuralist paradigm predisposes the use of discourse analysis and discourse is evident in both the written and spoken language, with no shortage of productions in the area of education. Education and compulsory education in particular is something which we all experience to a greater or lesser degree. As pupils, parents and educators, we absorb the legend that this underpins, in a critical way, every aspect of our individual and communal lives. Accordingly, it becomes, or we allow it to become, the territory of government, being too important to trust to individual responsibility. As Fairclough (2001) points out, such bureaucratic control is the price we pay for the benefits we derive from it. As the territory of government, compulsory education therefore becomes the product of discourse whose existence is wholly dependent upon the context of '*history, society and politics'* (Ward, 1999, p.109).

A post-structuralist paradigm also invites a qualitative approach in the gathering of data –

Qualitative research is a form of enquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them.

Anderson and Arsenault, 1998, p.119

The method of qualitative research employed in the first part of the study is the interview, adopting a semi-structured approach that created sufficient space for the interviewees to explore and describe their experiences of education. This is a highly subjective area and one in which the stories people tell are significant.

Silverman (2001) described an approach to interviewing where the interview itself becomes an active process in the construction of meaning.

Interviewers and interviewees are always actively engaged in constructing meaning. Rather than treat this as standing in the way of accurate depictions of 'facts' or experiences', how meaning is mutually constructed becomes the researcher's topic.

Silverman, 2001, p.87

This approach demands a conversational style where on being asked a question, interviewees can answer or elaborate as they chose. In turn, the researcher can seek clarification and/or summarise what was said and offer it for confirmation. There can be digressions, humour and less formal interactions. However, as Silverman states, an interview is more than a conversation – it is an active attempt to construct meaning.

Despite the conversational style of the interview, it was apparent from a pilot interview with a young person, where there was a low level of response, that more was needed to encourage communication. Subjugated knowledge is not only regarded as invalid by those in power but often also

by those who hold the knowledge and from a history of having their knowledge discounted as irrelevant or naïve, those without power are unlikely to be forthcoming with their stories on request. Eliciting the knowledge required some novel introduction as encouragement to overcome the barriers created by subjugation, and to 'prime' the interview. Therefore, the young people were asked to undertake a short preparatory exercise that then provided prompts for discussion. This involved selecting from 12 clip-art images (see Appendix 1) and gluing them into position under the headings of 'school' and 'college'. The interviewees were asked to select 2 or more images that '*best reflect how you feel about the school you recently attended and the college you are attending now'.*   I then began the interview by asking such questions as 'W*hy did you put that picture there?*'. This allowed the interview to proceed without becoming overly interrogative.

This use of artefacts in interviewing has often been used to good effect with younger children (e.g. Westcott and Littleton, 2005) although researchers strike a note of caution over assumptions of shared meaning. Here, however, there was no assumption of shared meaning and the pictures had almost the status of a projective device where the young person could then explain the significance of each picture under its appropriate heading, school or college. However, the clip-art pictures are probably better understood as 'signs' in the meaning intended by Deleuze (1994) where '*signs are merely symptoms of their interpreters'* (Bogue,

2004, p.332). Such signs become problems to be solved and thus the triggers of thought.

> *Only through a chance encounter with an unsettling sign can thought be jolted from its routine patterns, and only through such an encounter will the object of thought cease to be arbitrarily selected and attain the necessity of something that itself chooses thought, that constrains thought and sets it in motion.*

<p style="text-align:center">Bogue, 2004, p.329</p>

Consider the process that a young person had to engage in and the decisions he/she had to make in this study. For each of the 12 pictures, the young person had to decide what particular meaning and significance each picture had; what feelings and/or memories it evoked; whether it related to school or college; and whether these feelings or memories were sufficiently significant (or safe, since the young person may also have deliberately chosen to omit an image because the thoughts it evoked were too painful or intense to share) to warrant the inclusion of the image in the interview. However, even conscious omissions play a part since the thought will have been set in motion and may still emerge in the discussion. Significantly, the selection, which then impacted on the direction and content of the interview, was under the control of the young person and this was important when considering power relations. As a representative of college staff, with the power differentials this implied, it would have been easy for me to have directed the content of the interviews, so if the narratives of the young people were to have meaning, whatever method I chose had to empower them. I have dealt with this in greater detail below.

The reality was that most of the young people interviewed selected around 4 images and balanced these (2 for school, 2 for college). A few selected the minimum of 2 pictures and some selected 6 or 7. None selected all 12 pictures. The sets of signs selected varied from individual to individual and each appeared to have triggered a unique train of thought. The following excerpts demonstrate how this worked. Owen described what the pictures he selected meant to him –

> *…and the guy shoutin'. He's a teacher kind o' guy, I thought. And the college is like – get guid marks 'n' that; passing your assessments 'n' dae studying. An' that's for the bus stops – for like – when you're waiting at the bus stops. I have to dae that every day!*

<p style="text-align:center">Owen</p>

Owen had opened up thoughts of teachers shouting; achievement at college; and the practicalities of attending college compared to school. Each of these was probed further in the interview.

Similarly with Stewart –

> *I put that – I put the next one because I felt like I was getting treated like a baby, a bairn, like I wisnae learning any new things. It was just going over the same stuff and it was like really boring.*

<p style="text-align:center">Stewart</p>

The theme of being treated like an adult and maturity were returned to in the interview.

And Janice –

> *The guy haudin' that thing – it's like a certificate, an exam, and he's passed it with an 'A'. That honestly reminds me of college, than bein' in school, because you can get mair*

certificates and qualifications at college than you can at school
'coz there's mair stuff oot there for you to dae…

Janice

Janice and I returned to the theme she introduced of college opening up opportunities to her – for a career, self esteem, and the esteem of others.

On the other hand, the pictures offered the young person a way of closing down a topic and retaining control. Here is how Hannah used this to good effect –

That's basically where you learn to count.
Uhu – so that's early counting.
Yeah
…OK, what about the next one?
That's usually where all the bullying happened.
Was there a lot of bullying at your school?
Aye
At secondary school, yeah?
Uhu.
Who did the bullying?
Everybody. Everybody just bullied each other.
Really? Did you get bullied?
No
Did you bully?
No
So everybody except you?
Uhu

Hannah

Yet Hannah returned to this theme of her own volition later in the interview.

They [teachers] *just kept on moanin' an' moanin' and pulled me up for the slightest wee thing….If I was laughin', walkin' along the corridor, you'd get pulled up and into trouble for it.*

Hannah

I did not think that the device of artefacts was required with staff interviewees because reticence in responding had not emerged as an issue. The lecturers as educators were skilled users of language to express and convey feelings and the 'signs' for them would have been embedded within the language of the interview itself, particularly within the introduction which raised *'young people under 16 years who are disaffected with school'.*

An issue that would have been encountered in adopting a more positivist paradigm concerns the difficulty in removing the researcher presence (Holliday, 2002) from the interviews. In such a paradigm, researcher objectivity is important but difficult to achieve in an interview situation and arguably impossible where the interview itself is dependent upon the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. As the researcher, I was operating in an area with which I was very familiar, not simply as a knowledgeable bystander, but one in which I played an active part. To remove my presence would have imposed artificiality because of my interest and knowledge of the area. However, accepting my presence meant I could become a '*resource'* to be *'capitalised upon'* (Holliday, 2002, p.145) where my presence allowed me privileged access to a complex area and also to play a facilitation role in interviewing the staff and young people who participated.

A significant issue is that of power and this pointed up several ethical considerations. Clearly, interviewees should participate on a voluntary basis and be free to discontinue their involvement at any point in the interview should they wish to do so. However, this is more complex than first appears.   The tenet of informed consent can be complicated by how free the interviewees might have felt to withdraw or refuse to take part. Young people with recent experiences within compulsory education may have been predisposed to feel under undue pressure to participate (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). The young people in the study were in the interesting situation in college of being treated and expected to behave as adults whilst still being of an age where they could be considered as children, particularly in their relationships with adults in authority positions. Hill (2005, p.64) identified the '*relevant differences between children and adults'* as being those related to ability and power. The use of artefacts described above helped to mitigate the effects of both in that they reduced the dependence on language-based transmission of ideas and provided another medium for expression, and they also put young people in control of what was discussed by giving them the choice in selecting pictures to which they ascribed the meaning.

Edwards and Stokoe (2004, p.500) proposed that '*ways of talking'* are *'action-oriented'* (complaining, justifying etc.) and this has significance for the interviews, since the action-orientation in being interviewed by me will be markedly different from talking to parents or peers. This makes it necessary that my contribution is regarded as part of the discourse.

Students – and staff to an extent – may volunteer to take part in the expectation that they '*may be helped*' (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998, p.20) and there may have been implicit assumptions that I would be able to 'fix' any complaints they had. Conversely, they may have felt that they could not be 'honest' with someone in a position of authority, real or perceived.

As a college manager, there were clearly issues regarding my position, not the least of which was the possibility of vested interests and any impact these may have had on such researcher activity as asking questions, recording interviews, sampling data and interpreting it. Most writers on the subject, including Holliday (2002) and Hill (2005) above, propose that the solution lies in reflexivity, in identifying hidden assumptions, correcting bias and ensuring transparency. Also, ensuring that the research allows the participants' voices to be heard is arguably more important and outweighs the impact of any such misconceptions arising from my position (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998).

Research procedures

(i) Interviews with young people and staff

The interviewees were selected from two colleges. I had originally intended to interview 4 members of staff and 20 students, based on an assumption of a 'reasonable' number for the purposes of analysis. However, the richness of the data obtained, along with its unanimity,

allowed me to revise the figure downwards and in the event, 14 students were interviewed along with 3 staff. In the student interviews, most of the young people were boys (11 out of 14), reflecting the make-up of disaffected young people, where boys greatly outnumber girls throughout schooling (Thomas and Loxley, 2001; Scottish Executive, 2005a and 2006a). The criteria for inclusion in the interviews were that the young person was or had been attending college full-time as an alternative to school. As there were discrete classes of such students, all the students of these classes were notified and the only selection process that operated thereafter was self-selection. It was explained to the students by a member of staff that I was undertaking research into young people under 16 in college and wanted to interview them about their college experiences and how these compared to school. The students were also given a letter that reiterated this and asked them if they wished to take part. Those who came forward voluntarily and were available on relevant days were interviewed. With regard to staff interviews, two members of staff (one from each participating college) were asked to participate on the basis that each had extensive involvement with the groups of students and had responsibility in ensuring provision for them. A lecturer who taught the students regularly was also asked to participate. (One member of staff was known to me prior to the study.)

Two colleges were included in this study for three reasons. The first addressed an ethical concern, since using two colleges rather than one allowed scope for disguising the identity of individual students and staff.

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Secondly, the involvement of a second college moderated the impact of my position as a manager in one college. The final reason relates to the nature of the phenomenon itself. Colleges are not a homogeneous group and, despite a unity of purpose, each has its own unique identity. I felt that two colleges would provide sufficient data to identify any broad commonalities in relation to under-16s in college. The intention is not to make claims of generalisability – such claims are proscribed by the post-structuralist paradigm in any case – but to explore the area with a view to arriving at a greater understanding of the processes at work.

(ii) Ethical Concerns

As well as explaining the voluntary nature of participation in writing and again verbally, I was also prepared to seek the consent of parents, should this have been required. Letters seeking consent were prepared for parents/guardians, although these were not needed as the study took place later in the academic session by which time the young people involved had turned 16.

Debriefing the young people was done immediately after the interview, giving them the opportunity to withdraw any statement or clarify anything although none chose to amend their interview in any way. There was no opportunity for further dissemination to the students, however, due to the limited period that these students were in college education. Staff who were interviewed have been given verbal feedback on the findings and

been given a copy of the staff interview section and there will be further dissemination to the colleges which took part.

Deception was not part of the research design, but in the interests of brevity and the research design, I did not consider it feasible to provide an explanation to students and/or their parents regarding 'disaffection' or 'disengaged''. Furthermore, the self-identity of the young people was an important part of this investigation and this could have been jeopardised by introducing a concept which was unfamiliar or regarded as pejorative. For this reason also, there was no further refinement of the subject group – 'disaffection' was not a criterion for selection, although most of the young people who did take part in the study could have been so-described.

Interviewees in such a research situation have a right to expect anonymity and confidentiality and these were assured by changing names and personal details and not identifying either staff or students through association with either college. This anonymising extended to the selection of text for illustration. Additionally, records were maintained with the utmost confidentiality, transcriptions were hand-written and copies securely kept.

Finally, I anticipated that within the interviews, I may be made privy to additional information, where the interviewee felt that it was important to enhance my understanding, or made an inadvertent disclosure. It was impossible to reach any firm conclusions at the outset about how to deal with such data as it could come in many forms and in varying degrees of relevance or innocuousness. I decided to proceed on the basis that I would meet all legal requirements relating to disclosures but would decide on a

case by case basis how to deal with any others. There were several

disclosures of personal information that fell within what I would consider to

be the parameters of acceptability and relevance – for example, one young

person disclosed having attended a Behaviour Unit at school; another

disclosed being a young carer. These I regarded as important from a

contextual perspective, but not important in understanding the individuals,

especially since this implies revealing *causes* and such a search for a

fundamental truth is explicitly ruled out under a post-structuralist paradigm.

Accordingly, the disclosures are presented as contextual and not individual

illustration.

(iii) Interviewing Young People

Norwich and Kelly (2004) provide a framework for semi-structured

interviews designed to elicit student views on provision, self-perception and

labels, headings that accorded well with the research questions identified

and this guided the final selection of interview topics i.e.

1. *Perspectives on provision*
   - *Awareness of course and provision*
   - *Making the decision (to attend college rather than school)*
   - *Comparing college to school*
   - *Evaluation of college*
2. *Self perception*
   - *Purpose behind attending college and not school*
   - *Personal future*
3. *Labels*
   - *Impressions of others – parents; pals; lecturers etc.*

The questions used were open and conversational, asking for examples and their thoughts on issues raised e.g.

- *What have you been doing today? What went well?*
- *Why do you think your Guidance Teacher/parent etc. suggested that you come to college? What did you think of that?*
- *How do you think your lecturers see you? What do you think they would say if I asked them?*

The atmosphere was deliberately informal, taking place in a small interview room set aside for that purpose and there were no interruptions. The interviewees seemed generally relaxed and answered voluntarily.

Each interview took approximately 20 minutes, although there was no deadline set. The length of each interview was largely determined by the young person and how he/she interacted with the interviewer. None exceeded 30 minutes, however and none was shorter than 15 minutes. The interviews were taped in their entirety and then were transcribed. In transcribing the interviews, the dialect of the young people, the idioms that they used along with hesitations, laughter etc. were all recorded.

(iv) Interviewing Staff

The interviews with staff were conducted in a similar manner, although without the use of artefacts and covering grounds more relevant to their position, including their perceptions of greater school/college collaboration and the implications for the college, the staff and the young people. They were asked to draw on their experiences of working with such

groups of students (i.e. young people still in compulsory education but attending college full-time as an alternative to school) -

1. *Description and evaluation of the provision*
   - *The young people for whom the course is intended*
   - *Good aspects of the course*
   - *Bad aspects*
   - *Identifying and measuring success and/or failure*
   - *Evaluation of provision*
2. *Opinions on policy changes*
   - *Benefits (of school/college collaboration)*
   - *Reservations*
3. *Aspects of colleges that distinguish them from schools.*

Similar arrangements were made with regard to interviewing staff (e.g. small room, no interruptions etc.) and the format was equally informal and conversational, seeking examples and opinions as appropriate. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes and, in the same manner as the student interviews, the interviews were taped in their entirety and then were transcribed.

(v) Policy Review

In the second part of the study I reviewed policy documents of relevance to this area. Evaluation of policy documents has tended to proceed on the basis of how far the policy has met its, largely quantitative, aims (Fendler, 1998). However, I was less concerned with the actual policy than the methods by which the policy messages were conveyed – particularly through the constructions of young people generally and

disengaged young people in particular; of education and its institutions, particularly colleges and schools; and of the wider society. The analysis of discourse from such formal sources alongside the informal interview sources presented an opportunity to consider the relationship between actual practices and discourse (Fairclough, 2001) and the means by which this is used to promote social order.

If, as Humes (1999) proposes, policy is always value driven by beliefs about how things should be, then policy documents will provide the key to these beliefs and to the underpinning ideological framework. Examination of policy documents should also illuminate the links between ideology and action although the links may not be direct and overt. Scott (2000) argues that while policy makers may seek to portray policy making as consultative and logical, the reality is far from this and policy is ultimately directive and centrally controlled, reflecting power differentials and fundamentally the product of human nature. Scott described it as the *'serendipitous and muddled nature of the policy process'* and educational policy as *'fragmented and multi-directional'* (Scott, 2000, p.22). In such a model, policy is clearly not a linear process but is capable of being influenced and changed, even as it is implemented. However the conclusions may have been reached originally, their logic can be reappraised several times over and still, at the end of the day, be subjected to selective and subversive processes in how policy is implemented.

Moreover, the perception of corporatism within policy-making can encourage further subversion as concerned bodies seek to protect their own

interests and those of their stakeholders. Flynn (1993) suggested that institutions may come to regard themselves as repositories of political and social values that contrast with those of government. They may follow policies that conflict to a greater or lesser degree with government authorities because they feel that the interests of their services users are thus better served. Mackay (2002) described the ability of schools to resist change in this manner, developing only those policies that are seen to be in the interests of their pupils.

With such complex, obscure and even occult motivation, the arguments that Scott presents strike a chord with the earlier points made in this chapter, that attempting to arrive at some fundamental truth is a fruitless exercise. Indeed, policy itself may be the '*attempts to impose order on chaos'* (Ward, 1999, p.98) referred to above. If so, then the substance of policy is discourse and the questions that should be addressed are the 'what?' questions in relation to the discourses established and promulgated by policy and policy makers, and the 'how?' questions in relation to the means by which this is achieved. The key discourses that will be examined are those that relate to the construction of colleges (and in regard to this, those that relate to schools) and those that relate to the construction of young people, particularly disaffected young people.

The issue of young people in education whose behaviour challenges authority has been the subject of much policy in the UK throughout and prior to the 20th Century and beyond. However, the government policy for 'inclusion' is far more recent and with regard to this

group of young people, it can be dated in Scotland to the publication of the Beattie Committee report at the end of 1999. Because this imposed a new set of constraints on an education system that had previously been able to exclude difficult young people, it is appropriate to consider how discourse at policy level has developed since then. Also, education is a devolved matter, so although there was UK policy documentation that had an impact on provision in Scotland, it can be assumed that this filtered through into policy emanating from the Scottish Executive. Accordingly, the criteria for policy documents were that –

- They entered the public domain between January 2000 and December 2006;

- They relate to 'disaffection' and/or inclusion/exclusion of young people within education and the wider society (including youth crime and/or youth unemployment), or relate to school/college collaboration;

- They have been issued under the auspices of the Scottish Executive.

What became obvious within the identification of key documents was how many have been produced since the Beattie watershed. Although in relative terms, this is but a small sample of the policy documents issued by the Scottish Executive over this period, each year from 2000 has seen an increase, and in total there are over 80 documents with 12 major policy initiatives relating to or with significance for education i.e.

- Beattie Committee Report – Implementing Inclusiveness, 1999

- Ambitious, Excellent Schools, 2000

- Better Behaviour – Better Learning, 2001

- Scotland's Action Programme to Reduce Youth Crime, 2002

- Determined to Succeed, 2002

- It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright, 2002

- Moving Forward! Additional Support for Learning, 2003

- A Curriculum for Excellence, 2004

- Ambitious Excellent Schools, 2004

- Lifelong Partners - Scotland's Schools and Colleges Building the Foundations of a Lifelong Learning Society, 2005

- Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges, 2006

- Making a Difference: A new law to support parents, 2006

Interspersed between these documents are the related consultations, research papers, statistical reports, guidance circulars etc. – well described by Scott as

> *The mosaic which makes up the ideological apparatus deployed by government to convince practitioners of the worthiness of its policies.*

Scott, 2000, p.29

(vi) Data Selection

A critical point relates to how the large amount of data generated by the interviews and by the policy search was handled and reduced to something that could be analysed in a meaningful way. What became clear in the initial survey was that there are a great many policy documents in this area, even when the parameters are as narrow as above. Similarly, in transcribing the interviews, a 20 minute interview could generate over 12 pages of transcript. Much of the text in policy documents was of limited relevance, as were parts of the interview transcripts. Dealing with such a large amount of data and selecting the most relevant sections required a 'handling' strategy, particularly one that, if not actually removing the impact of selectivity, at least made the process more transparent and therefore more likely to expose bias. I felt it appropriate to 'borrow' from the procedures for developing grounded theory (Flick, 2002). Whilst the intention is <u>not</u> to develop grounded theory, the procedures of data preparation allowed for deep analysis of textual information, for categories to emerge *in vivo* and for relationships between sets of data to be identified. In the stage which Flick describes as 'open coding' the text is examined line by line and expressed as concepts which can then be grouped into categories and used to identify the most relevant areas for sampling. In the second stage, which Flick refers to as 'axial coding', the categories are refined by selecting those most relevant to the research questions and clarifying the relationships between the categories.

Within both these stages, much use was made of mind-maps where, in the initial 'open coding' stage, they recorded an individual's responses. The mind-maps presented here are those for Nicola and Victor, displaying the main themes that emerged from a line-by-line examination of their interviews. A mind map was produced for each of the young people interviewed.

Mind map — Nicola (central node)

COLLEGE
- culture
  - lecturers
    - less formal
    - first name terms
    - know them as people
    - sharing personal information
  - adult
  - voluntary
  - social
  - aimed at work
- work
  - personal responsibility
  - vocational
  - first steps to work
  - repetitive
  - minor irritations
  - not always taking account of prior achievement

SCHOOL
- culture
  - compulsory
  - academic
  - complex & rigid
  - truancy
  - not interested in work
- teachers
  - moan & complain
  - driven by exams
  - don't share personal stories
- work
  - academic
  - 'highest' university exams
  - General of career

IDENTITY
- School
  - chatty
  - hard-working
  - studious
- College
  - quiet
  - hard-working
  - personal challenge
  - lots of friends
- Future?
  - clear vocational goal
  - not sure of next step
  - move from college to ...

Victor

COLLEGE
- Work
  - Control
    - Self control
      - greater autonomy
      - discipline of workplace
    - Sanctions
      - personal consequences
      - permanent
      - own business
      - confidential
  - Work
    - fun
    - vocational
    - relevant to workplace
    - productive
  - lecturers
    - share personal experiences
    - equal – as adults
    - encourage interaction
    - judgements may be negative but not harsh

SCHOOL
- Sanctions
  - public
  - short-term
  - exclusion
  - humiliation
  - parental involvement
- Control by teachers
  - told what to do
  - restrictive
  - keeping quiet (not talking)
  - specialist support
  - discouraged interaction
  - made subjective judgements
- Work
  - academic
  - irrelevant
  - prescriptive
- teachers

IDENTITY
- School
  - truant
  - reactive
  - angry
  - humiliated
  - always in trouble
  - class clown
- College
  - never in trouble
  - learning new skills
  - enhanced status with peers
  - improved relationship with parents
- future?
  - get a job
  - earn money
  - explore new options
  - return to study

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In the second stage, the 'axial coding' stage, the individual responses were brought together under common themes. Mind-maps were produced for culture; function; teachers/lecturers; and control, for both schools and colleges. Below are the mind-maps recording the themes of 'School Culture' and 'College Culture'.
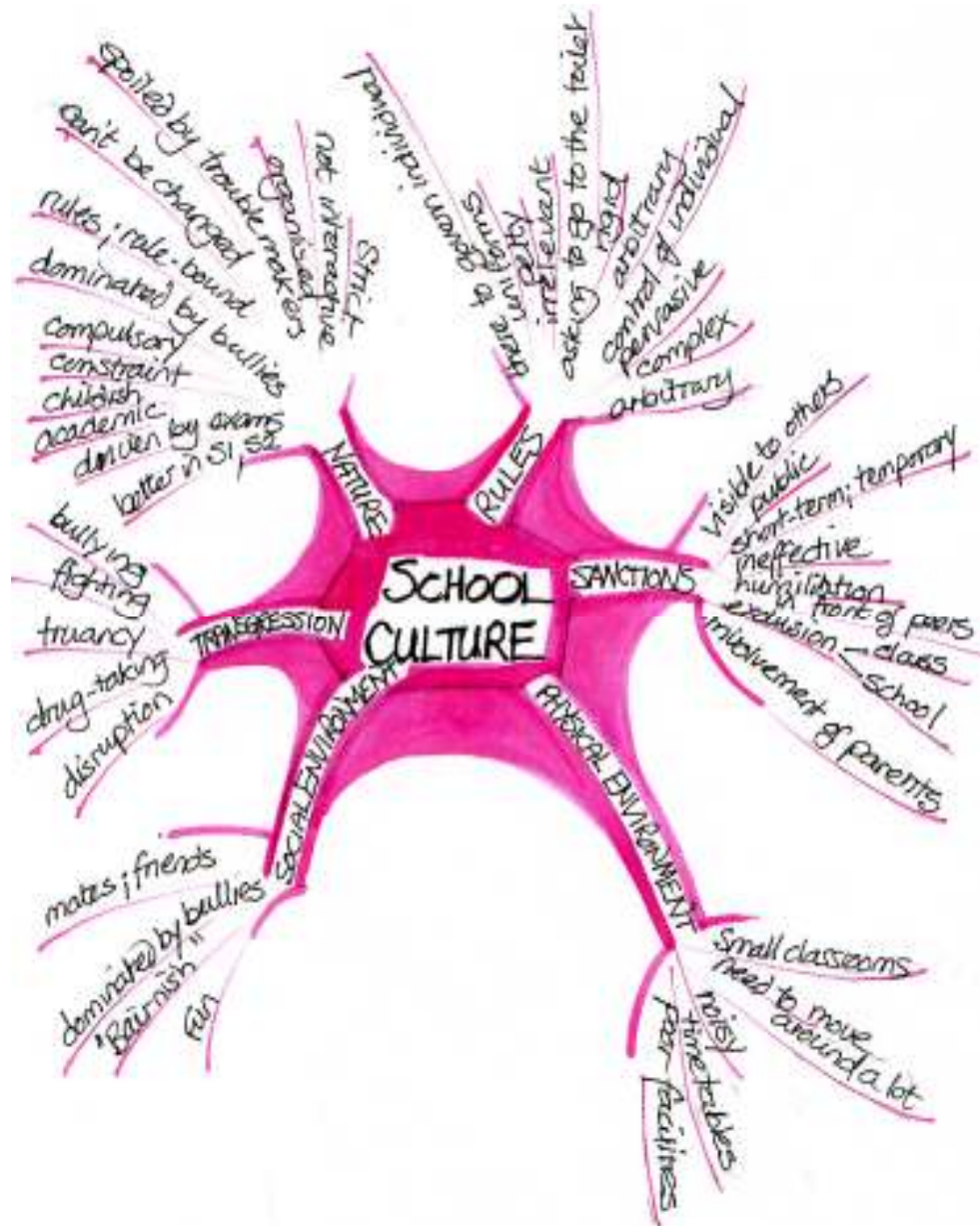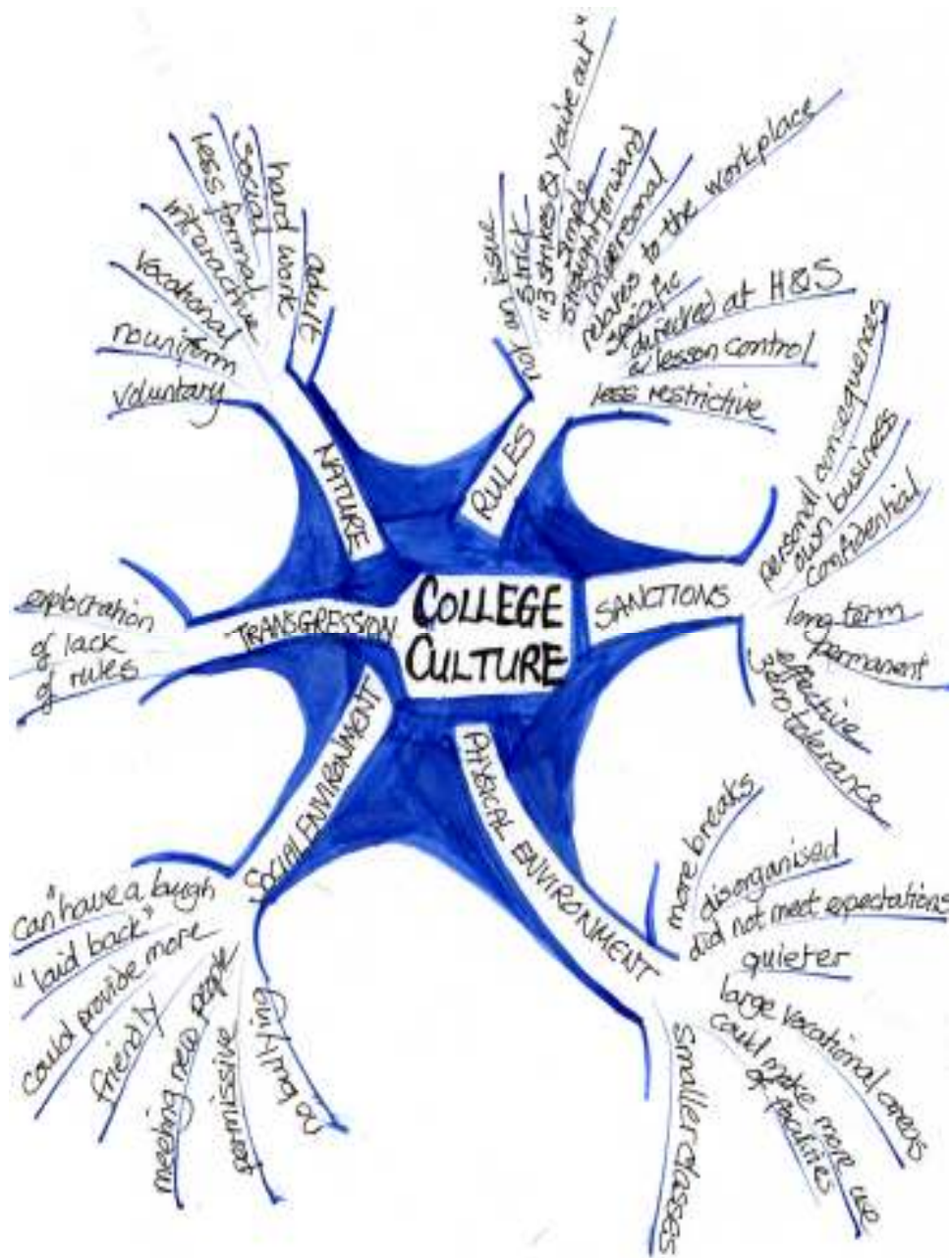
Within the second stage there was an element of '*free association*' (Alldred and Burman, 2005, p.187) in making connections and identifying concepts and relationships. Alldred and Burman proposed a 12-stage model in analysing such data and their steps from 4 onwards are contained within the 'axial coding' stage, in that it deals with identifying and describing relationships, subject positions, values and, of course, discourses.

The third stage of grounded theory is the theory-production stage, not relevant in this case since the aim is not the production of theory which presupposes some underlying fundamental 'truth', but rather to increase the understanding of how discourse operates in this area. As Foucault pointed out, such examination enables us to identify how and where the forms of power-knowledge are situated and thereby confront the logic (Foucault, cited in Rabinow, 1994) that is the fabrication of modernism.

(vii) Analysis

Analysis, like the data gathering that preceded it, takes a post-structuralist approach and the notion that the reality is constructed between the interviewer and interviewee is continued through into the analysis –

> *Data analysis is not the development of an accurate representation of the data, as the positivist approach assumes, but a creative interaction between the conscious/unconscious researcher and the decontextualised data which is assumed to represent reality, or at least, reality as interpreted by the interviewee.*

Scheurich (1997)

Cited in Alldred and Burman, 2005, p.183

The analysis of both interviews and policy documents proceeds on two levels. At a level which is purely descriptive, the study aims to identify and clarify the discourses that are operating there and clearly, given the lateral connections to such concerns as recidivism and youth unemployment, the discourses are wider than educational. The study also

attempts to provide an explanation of the 'how', both at an institutional level and an individual level.

The analytical approach I adopted was heavily influenced by Michel Foucault in the first instance. This approach was particularly valuable since as well as offering specific strategies, Foucault offers a basis from which to proceed, proposing that discourse is always accompanied by conflict between those who control it (in this case, policy makers and educationalists) and those who are constrained by it (including staff and young people). Foucault presents us with an indissoluble pairing within a power dynamic – those who control and suppress and those oppressed by them, who, denied representation, engage in subversion.

In proposing the mechanisms by which oppression is applied and resisted, Foucault offers the concept of 'governmentality' in explaining how power operates within our institutions. Describing governmentality as being concerned with *'the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self'* (Foucault, 1988, cited in Allan 1999, p.25), Foucault confronts us, on the one hand, with the technologies of power that are all-pervasive and operate at the micro-level – *'a synaptic regime of power'* (Foucault, 1980, p.39) and these seek to objectify the individual and make him/her a subject for study. The *technologies of self* are the counter-balance to these, employed by the individual in order to define themselves within this regime. The *technologies of power* and the *technologies of self* can be heard in the stories told by the young people in this study and the

actions they exemplify, both their own and those of their teachers and lecturers.

Another approach that proved useful in the analysis of discourse was that of Deleuze (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), specifically the analogies posed in the concepts of *smooth* and *striated* space. This theoretical approach proved particularly illuminating in analysing the contrasts between schools and colleges produced within the discourses, in respect of the young people of this study. It was also valuable in understanding the actions and reactions of the inhabitants (the young people and the staff) within the respective spaces. Deleuze and Guattari also present us with an indissoluble pairing and ongoing dynamic, since the smooth and striated spaces, although fundamentally in opposition –

> *…exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space.*

Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.524

Within this, Deleuze offers a means to analyse the pedagogy of colleges and the role of the college lecturer (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Deleuze, 1994).

(viii) The Discourses

I conclude the Methodology Chapter with an overview of the discourses dominant in this field. The Literature Review has revealed various perspectives on the issues, each of which are themselves examples

of wider discourses that are more or less acceptable, depending upon the context within which they emerge. They are fundamental in understanding these contexts for they are part of its '*regime of truth*' (Foucault in Rabinow, 1984, p.73) and determine what can and cannot be said and by whom.

Perhaps the most striking example of discourse in this context is what Foucault (1977) describes as the medical-judicial discourse. Foucault noted that society has altered how it has dealt with criminality and now differentiates between perpetrators to identify, through predisposing characteristics, those most likely to offend, taking remedial action intended to protect society. Society's responses to delinquency over the past 200 years illustrate this well.

Foucault (1977) describes the development of the medical-judicial discourse, through the relationship between medicine (psychiatry) and the judiciary and the efforts to distinguish the abnormal from the normal –

> *…Toward the end of the 19th century the great idea of criminology and penal theory was the scandalous idea, in terms of penal theory, of **dangerousness**. The idea of **dangerousness** meant that the individual must be considered by society at the level of his potentialities, and not at the level of his action; not at the level of the actual violations of an actual law, but **at the level of the behavioural potentialities** they represented.*

(original emphasis)

Foucault in Faubion, 2000, p.57

This discourse has been dominant in policy making in youth justice, but also education, where behaviour difficulties are constructed as the product of either an underlying pathology or adverse circumstances of which

the young person is seen to be a victim. Such a construction is intended to be predictive, to identify abnormal individuals, forestalling their criminality and predisposing them to a normal life and inclusion in society - what Foucault described as '*a certain significant generality* [that] *moved between the least irregularity and the greatest crime'* (Foucault, 1977, p.*299*). Within our society, we readily accept that there are professionals who can identify such abnormalities in young people and who can then treat them in some way that will militate against their '*dangerousness*' and prevent the greater crime. For the more extreme cases, such treatment may mean segregation. For others, it may be medicinal, social or educational, in the expectation that early intervention will protect society from their future actions. The medical-judicial discourse is circumscribed by the proposition that the problem resides within the individual, as in the within-child deficit approach, and therefore any remedial action must be similarly focused on the individual. The discourse is also evident in the social-constructionist perspective exemplified by the Beattie Committee report (Scottish Executive, 1999) where the individual is constructed as the victim of adverse circumstances, but nevertheless, the focus remains on the child.

Foucault recognised education as one of the major institutions for the exercise of control and its task was training young people to become tractable citizens. Therefore, in the operation of schools and colleges and their management of space, we should see evidence of how it discharges this task and be able to compare and contrast the two institutions. Foucault proposed *technologies of power* and *technologies of self* as providing the

means to analyse the operation of power in the simplest of transactions.

Such power, exercised at a local level by teachers, college staff, parents

and the young people themselves, exemplifies what Foucault called

capillary power –

> *In modern society there has been a proliferation of bureaucracies which operate to extend supervision, through surveillance, throughout society … which make individuals more tractable to more management through inculcating discipline...*

> Hughes and Sharrock, 1997, p.186

In consideration of the operation of power at an institutional level,

there is the *'corporate discourse'* (Allan, 1999, p.10) of policy makers and

managers. Behaviour problems within schools have become critical within

the inclusion debate, reflecting the concern with resources now devoted to

maintaining children and young people with additional support needs in

mainstream school. This quote from the Times Educational Supplement

describes the concerns of the corporate discourse –

> *While promoting inclusion in one breath…ministers are pushing their standards agenda in the next.*

> *In today's market economy, that has to be the priority for schools. And it discourages them from opening their doors to pupils who may prove difficult to contain.*

> *Steve Haines, education and policy officer for the Disability Rights Commission, believes it will be virtually impossible for schools to become truly inclusive while they remain under intense pressure to focus on improvement and exam results.*

> Abrams, 2004, p.18

Young people whose behaviour poses difficulties within the classroom have become in a very literal sense 'unmanageable' – there are insufficient resources available to support them.

In considering the institutions, schools and colleges, other discourses emerge. There is the vocational discourse, wherein unemployment, and therefore social exclusion, is constructed as a consequence of poor skills and/or education. This discourse has gained in ascendancy since government abandoned policies of full employment in the late 20th century (Piper and Piper, 2000) and is closely related to the medical-judicial discourse above, because of its focus on the individual, both in attributing cause and suggesting remedial action. Colleges and schools are presented as key players within this construction, through their role in providing preparation for work.

> *The implication is that education should adapt*
> *accordingly by teaching the motivation and desire to work in*
> *order to prepare students for successful employment.*

Fendler, 1998, p.52

The alternative discourse here presents unemployment and social exclusion as products of government policy and the institutions of society (e.g. Alexiadou, 2002). Wolfensberger's proposed *social role valorisation* is an example of such a construction as is the *social creationist* perspective of Michael Oliver. The structures, policies and procedures within education are institutional derivations that create barriers that stigmatise and exclude. Their identification and removal, the focus of recent legislation such as the

Additional Support for Learning Act (2003), recognises these barriers, if not always their origins.

There is a further discourse apparent in considering young people in education – that of protection. This discourse constructs children and young people as in need of protection, including from themselves, and this is often promulgated by professionals in education and care. Here *'children'* (words have great significance here) are constructed as needing protection by the state, the community and the family, probably in that order. This protection can mean denying them rights in the process (for example choice, or the right to have a say in their own care) and imposing such surveillance as would be considered unacceptable if imposed on adults. This construction of young people underlies attempts to influence the length of childhood and presumably the period of adult control, most recently evidenced in proposals to extend the period young people must spend in compulsory education –

> *…the whole concept of childhood could be said to be a man-made phenomenon. Thus childhood may be lengthened and prolonged at some periods of history, and abbreviated at others, according to adult perceptions, need and expectations.*

Tucker, 1977, p.26

Chapter 4

Results – Interviews: Young People

The next two chapters are devoted to interviews with the young people and staff. In this chapter on young people, I begin with an introduction to the interviewees followed by a presentation of the themes that emerged from the interviews. This is repeated for staff. In Chapter 9, I present an analysis of the student and staff interviews together, considering the discourses emerging and how these are promulgated.

The Young People

The interviews were conducted at two of Scotland's Colleges over a period of 9 months with fourteen young people who had attended college full-time as part of their compulsory education. All were enrolled on one of 5 different college courses specifically established within the colleges for such young people.

Within the interviews, I was privy to a great deal of personal information of more or less relevance to the research. Of particular relevance, however, were the details of the life circumstances of the young people that possibly contributed to the difficulties they experienced as adolescents at school and would certainly contribute to the medical-judicial discourse.

For example –

- At least three of the young people had learning difficulties of one sort or another.

- One young person with learning difficulties had attended a Behaviour Support Unit full-time whilst at school.

- One was supported at school by a full-time auxiliary provided to address behaviour difficulties in class.

- One young person was a carer for a parent in difficult circumstances, resulting in victimisation, taunting and other overt forms of bullying from peers at school.

- One young person disclosed a possible a mental health problem that contributed to behaviour problems.

- One young person was pregnant, a factor which may have featured in her decision not to return to school for her final year.

- One young person had been in residential care for most of the adolescent years and this had come to an end because of the young person's age.

In the interests of anonymity, the names of the young people given below are not their real names and the pen-pictures are intended to give an overall impression of the interview and its contents from the interviewer's perspective, not of the young person him/herself.

Who Are They?

<u>Danny</u>

Danny provided the longest interview and had a great deal to say about both school, which he disliked and felt was very restrictive –

It's like bein' caged in a' the time. Locked in.

and college, which had not really lived up to his expectations –

[I] *thought it would have been a lot better than what it's been.*

Danny was the only interviewee who gave any indication that I could 'fix' things and was critical of several practical things in college, viewing school as better organised, but nevertheless, he was enjoying the college experience, the practical work and being treated like an adult. His school career seemed to have been turbulent and he freely admitted truancy and unacceptable behaviour, although college was his own choice, as he stressed to me –

A couple o' people in school got telt they were going to college because they werenae allowed to stay at school because of their behaviour. But I just went and asked if I could go to college and they said 'It's up tae yersel'!

College was a '*fresh start'* to Danny and he saw chances for his future now that he felt would have been denied to him at school (he outlined 3 different possible futures to me) He commented on what the impact of college had been on him –

This year's really changed me. That's what happens, eh?

<u>Francis</u>

Francis was seriously spoken and described having had a difficult time in secondary school where he had been bullied by a particular group of pupils – although he never used the word 'bully' once in his interview, saying '*hitting me*' or '*disturbing me*' instead. This is how he described his experiences –

> *…well, I was getting a lot of trouble at school and I just – well – wasn't like the best in class because I was always in detention and stuff because there was a lot of people who didn't like me…*

This had resulted in other difficulties such as truancy and problems with his parents, but also in class where he had displayed anger and frustration, often towards teachers who seemed unaware of what was happening to him. He attended college at the suggestion of his Guidance Teacher who appeared to have made several suggestions to him to relieve the bullying. He was enjoying his college course although he found some bits of it frustrating. He suggested in his interview that he would have preferred another course but rejected that in favour of a more practical option that he thought would lead to a job. Francis thought that his teachers at school would have seen him as troublesome but his college lecturers would see him as hard-working. His parents would also comment on the change, he thought –

> *Like – I've matured a lot as well. I can see that.*

Francis also thought he got on with people better at college and had made new friends.

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George

George gave one of the shortest interviews, although thorough in his answers. He saw his course as a route to a long-standing ambition and had come to college, having seen the opportunity presented to someone else and enquiring about it. His impression of school was of its restrictions, lack of choice and lack of recognition of individual effort –

> *Well, in school, you're kindae made to do things.*
> *In college you can pick things that you want to do.*
>
> *In school, you kindae feel that you're handcuffed*
> *to a job 'n' to what you're to do. In college, you're more*
> *free to do what you want.*
>
> *…at college, you get certificates for what you've*
> *achieved and you can go straight into work.*

In college, he felt that he was recognised for himself and his efforts. He got on well with all the lecturers at college, he said and reckoned that he had matured from his time at school. This maturity has been evident to the pals he maintained contact with from school –

> *They* [his pals] *think I've matured a bit from school.*
> *I used to muck about quite a lot. In college, I just don't do*
> *that.*

Henry

Henry was very entertaining and good-natured in his answers. He liked *'having a laugh'* (he used the expression 6 times in his interview) –

> *…I find it easier to work hard on something I'm*
> *doing – like if – well, I can have a laugh at the same time.*

His behaviour at school seems to have been extremely disruptive, however, and he also seems to have been a persistent truant, choosing to work rather than attend school, even although he was under the school leaving age. His Guidance Teacher played a key role in encouraging him to come to college and was so pleased with the outcome that she asked Henry to go into school and speak to other pupils. Being at college has raised his profile with his pals and he now has an older group of friends. His mother clearly had concerns that college appears to have allayed –

> *She* [his mother] *thinks it's good that I'm doing something that I want to do instead of leaving school and just hanging about in the house doing nothing.*

Hannah

Hannah was the least talkative of the interviewees, choosing to close down certain topics through such strategies such as monosyllabic replies or simply agreeing with the question, or not answering at all. However, she did open up at points and elaborated on how she felt about school and college. In school, she felt that she had been the victim of teachers who bullied her –

> *They* [teachers] *just pick on certain folk a' the time… They just kept moanin' an' moanin' and pulled me up for the slightest wee thing.*

This had coloured her school experience, but she was not enjoying the college course, finding it difficult, and she pointed out that this course had not been her first choice. Nevertheless, coming to

college had been a strategy to avoid returning to school, which she

disliked intensely, and she had engaged with her Mum's support –

> *My Mum says it would be better than school*
> *because – it's just that I had been put through a really bad*
> *time at school wi' the teachers.*

Janice

Janice was one of the longer interviews and was enthusiastic

about college which she clearly enjoyed, describing her class work in

great detail. College to her represented a challenge and a new start

> *The new experience, I think…the thought of doing*
> *something new that I've not done, ken? So I just came to*
> *college.*

The social dimension of college life was important to her –

> *…just meeting new people, ken? You dinnae ken*
> *when you walk past them if its 'hiya' or – ye get to ken*
> *everybody, like.*

Secondary school, in contrast, had not been a pleasant

experience for her and she had gone from being a victim of bullies to

being aggressive and a persistent truant. College offered a route to a

career that would give her satisfaction, self esteem and status in the

eyes of *others* –

> *I like the idea that it* [her career choice] *means*
> *something to somebody else… I just want to make a*
> *difference to everybody.*

Martin

Martin was enjoying his college course because it fitted in with

what he wanted to do, a point he made several times within his

interview. He hated school, he said, particularly because he felt he

was treated like a child and that the environment was very restrictive.

He offered suggestions for how school could have been improved for

him and although he says he was a hard working pupil, he found things

difficult to learn there –

> *In school, you're always getting told off for talking, having a laugh with your friends 'n' that. But you can work and have a laugh with your friends at the same time.*

He liked the practical aspect of learning at college and the fact

that he could *'have a laugh'* at the same time. (Martin used this

expression 8 times within his interview). He gave the impression of a

hard-working student in college. He said of his parents –

> *…I think they think it's better coz at college, I'm doing more of what I want to do. I hated school and I'm enjoying this.*

Nick

Nick appeared to have come to college with little choice in the

matter and he freely admitted that this had been down to *'always*

getting into trouble', although he later suggested that this was due to

being distracted by others –

> *…there were loads o' wee dafties at our school. They just disrupted the class every time you went in.*

Nick reckoned that his bad behaviour was down to

fighting but also being bullied. He gave the impression that he

had been an enthusiastic student earlier in his school career but this had been spoiled by others –

>   *I done guid in my classes, but – people put the teacher aff. First an' second year wiz a' right but then it was just when people started growing up and getting worse.*

He was keen to redress the situation and his college performance had been good so far.   He had high aspirations (including going to university) and college had presented him with the means to realise these.

Nicola

Nicola was one of the longer interviews and she came across as confident and someone who had made a positive choice to attend college in order to get a job. Attending college had not been an easy choice as she confronted practical difficulties getting to college and these were making her think that she may not continue, although she was doing well on her course – as she had done at school. Another obstacle she had to overcome was reluctance on the part of school staff to support her move to college –

>   *… they* [guidance teachers] *didn't stop you but they tried to convince you that you could stay on at school and be able to get Highers and what not.*

She saw school as a route to Highers and university, which was not what she wanted to do. College, on the other hand, was –

>   *…to learn just to go out to work, really, like the next step.*

Nicola thought that college had made her more grown-up, but also more remote from her friends who were still at school –

> *I don't like going out at night an' they're all talking about school 'n' that. I don't know what they're talking about. 'Oh, so-and-so was fightin' today' or whatever happened.*

Owen

Owen was enthusiastic about his college course and said that not only did it fit in perfectly with his interests but also his career aspirations. Owen's enthusiasm for college was such that he strongly resented lack of effort on the part of others, especially when this affected him and his progress –

> *…the thing I dinnae like is, like, you see you get some folk, like they're used to bein' in the classroom 'n' they like messin' aboot wi' the computers, eh?...I like bein' in the workshop but they'll say, they've no' got their overalls…so we're going to have to go back into a classroom an' dae stuff…*

He admitted he did not like school much and although he seems to have been hard-working pupil, he found learning difficult. Owen's parents had been positive about college and recognised that he had matured –

> *…I think my Mum – she thinks I'm mair responsible 'n' that, 'n' mature since I left school…*

Robert

Robert's interview was short and he was not forthright in his answers, often not remembering what had happened, or simply

choosing to agree with me rather than elaborate. He stated he had difficulties learning at school and this, coupled with sporadic bullying he experienced appeared to have made school problematic for him –

> *When I was at the high school, I got bullied by a prefect, eh? I got flung through the doors and pinned against the wa'.*

But his biggest complaint about school was being treated like a child –

> *At … school, they treat you like wee weans…*

something that did not happen at college where he was treated *'like an adult'* and the consequences of this, he thought, were seen in his behaviour –

> *My behaviour at school wisnae good but my behaviour here's been better.*

Steven

Steven was obviously enjoying his course and coming to college had been voluntary because he felt that school was no longer helping him meet his vocational objectives.

> *I want to be a ----, so, I wanted this course.*

Steven had done fairly well at school and had collected several Standard Grades, but he no longer liked the school environment which he felt was restrictive and noisy –

> *Teachers shoutin' a' the time…they'd always be like 'moanie' or in a mood because of somebody else.*

He also felt that he was judged more on his behaviour in school than in college although his behaviour did not appear to have been extreme –

…cheeky; never does his homework; always late…

College was less restrictive and certain things (e.g. uniforms) that would have caused him trouble at school were regarded with tolerance – he particularly highlighted being able to take a break for a smoke. This tolerance meant he was no longer the object of negative attention and this had an impact on his home life –

> … [parents] *are actually quite happy about me bein' in college coz it means I'm no' getting' into trouble wi' the school nae mair.*

Stewart

Stewart admitted that he had *'hated every minute'* of school and he particularly resented its restrictions and lack of choice. He reckoned he had always had difficulties at school, related to truancy mainly, but also refusing to do work. He thought he was recommended college because the school wanted *'rid'* of him but he had no regrets about making the change.

I'm lovin' every second I'm no' there!

In his interview, he described the assistance he has had from staff in college to deal with the moods that he thought gave rise to his truancy and negative behaviour. He said the difference had been noticed at home –

> *…well, my Mum especially says there is a big difference wi' me coz I am nae – I am nae doon a' the time and like – no wantin' t'dae stuff. Like, I'm a bit mair cooperative in the hoose.*

Victor

Victor gave very full answers that revealed someone who had displayed aggressive behaviour in school but felt that this was justified by how he had been treated. He described how he had been talked down to and humiliated by one teacher in particular and punished in front of his classmates. He had responded in class by clowning around, or with anger, or with truancy –

> *I didnae like gettin' shouted at, made to look a fool in front of everyone.*

> *A couple of them* [teachers] *would say 'Aye, he's a good student' coz I liked their class, but a couple of them would say 'I never want to hear of him again in my life' – probably.*

He contrasted this with college where he reckons he gets on with all his lecturers and that this helps his learning. The biggest impact appeared to have been in his relationship with his parents who seem to have shared in his punishments at school –

> *They were chuffed wi' me going to college, like – they loved it! They thought the same as K – it'd be a lot better for me.*

The interviews with the young people were transcribed in full, recording hesitations, colloquialisms, silences etc. but inevitably, there were decisions made about what to focus on and common themes were identified

and reproduced below with illustrations from the interviews. I was privileged to be a party to the full interviews and to share the young people's experiences – I have not attempted to correct or to explain away anything they said. What they have chosen to tell me may contain inaccuracies and/or inconsistencies, but the interviews are none the less valid for that, for what is important is the manner of the telling and the stories they have given that construct a greater truth about the operation of our institutions.

Comparing College and School

The young people were asked how their college experiences compared with school and spoke a lot about school, as a consequence. In their perceptions, the two institutions were very different. For most of the young people, college was the antithesis of school – adult where school is childish; informal where school is formal; vocational where school is academic and so on. The three main characteristics that emerged as defining college stood in sharp contrast to schools. First, college is voluntary; second, it is connected to the world of work, offering both qualifications and a direct route in; and third, and this probably encapsulates the first two characteristics, it is adult –

…I was never at school. Ken how I was never at school? Because I <u>had</u> to be at school. Now, because I've got the choice no' to go, I'm here. You see what I mean? …I choose to come here. But you <u>have to</u> go to school.

(Original emphasis)

Janice

…when you're at college, you're doing something that you want to do. Coz, if you were at school, people that skived off – but that's because they didn't want to be there. When you're at college, you're doing something you want to do…you're here coz you want to be. You don't have to come to college.

Nicola

Well, at college, you get certificates for what you've achieved and you can go straight into work but at school, you only got certificates for – if you've got top marks in test or if you've been good.

George

…I feel like here I'm getting better grades and that I'm doing better than I was in school because – well – you get treated better and more like an adult than you did in school.

Stewart

I didn't really enjoy school that much because I felt you were being treated like a child rather than an adult…In the college, I enjoyed it much mair because you found you were achieving something. Treat you more like an adult as well. I enjoy it much more.

Martin

The young people were unanimous in their rejection of school and for most of them, at least latterly, school had not been enjoyable. Their reactions to school varied from irrelevance, as with Nicola who *'didn't want to stay on and do Highers'*, to Stewart who *'hated every second'*. Even although most had friends still at school and Francis, who had come to college to escape bullying, had wistfully expressed *'I do kind of miss school because…it was quite fun'*, school had become a place that they were glad to leave behind.

That this had not always been the case was proposed by Nick who had enjoyed S1 and S2. He thought that school, not he, had changed and become stricter in attempting to deal with trouble-makers –

…First and second year wiz a' right but then – it was just when people started growing up and getting worse.

Nick

Another factor on which there was unanimity is summed up in a few words by Danny –

It's just what school's like, eh? You've got to sit still and listen to them and behave at school, eh? It's because you're under 16 and you're meant to be there. You cannae no' be there. So – there's nothing you can really dae aboot it.

Danny

Danny articulated what most of the interviewees expressed in different ways – school is defined by its compulsory nature. The young people had no other option but to attend school – and yet the majority truanted from school. They were exercising a choice that they had not been granted and which they knew carried consequences inevitably involving their parents. Being required by law to ensure the education of their children, parents were notified of any failures to attend (or behave) and this carried consequences for them as well. Some parents had received letters home or had been summoned to the school and one can empathise with Victor's mother (below) who was surely punished for Victor's truancy. The young people recognised the negative impact that such school contact had on their parents and on their relationships with them –

> *…I was like coming home a lot as well, like – after – like, I would get into trouble for that.*

Francis

> [Parents] *Actually quite happy about me bein' in college – coz it means I'm no' getting into trouble wi' the school nae mair…they've had some letters hame.*

Steven

> [Mum] *She's been – she's been up tae* [Education Headquarters] *as well about the teachers in the school, about what they done.*

Hannah

> *…like ye got chucked out for a week then have to go back in. In school, I got done with that a' the time. My Mam was reg'ly goin' down to school.*

Victor

Pedagogies of School and College

There were differences in relation to how the young people felt they were taught which could be loosely described as 'pedagogies'. College work emerged as more practical and their preference for this was explicit, whereas school work was described as more 'academic'. Danny offered the following advice –

> *…I think it's a guid idea to make us dae mair practical stuff because students oor age, just left school arenae really – didnae really like school, so practical stuff, they're mair into it. Instead o' sitting doon wi' a piece o' paper and pen and writing a' day. That's mair practical than writing.*

Danny

Workshop space at college was not seen as greatly different from school but its use was, particularly being given a measure of responsibility –

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Well, like here, you're allowed to use all the machines but at school you had to like, wait. But here, you're just free to go along and just do your stuff.

Francis

…probably being able to use our own equipment …instead of having to borrow the college's.

Nicola

Computer-aided learning and computer access received favourable comment by some; one young person praising the more sophisticated computers available within the workshops.

Achievement at school, most felt, was judged by exam success, particularly success in Higher examinations, rather than success after school (e.g. getting a job). One interviewee felt that because she was not interested in pursuing Highers, school teachers lost interest in her –

…when you leave school, they [teachers] *don't really bother about you (in work]. It's just like another pupil.*

Nicola

Steven, who had achieved a particularly high grade in a practical subject, stated that teachers would not have found this noteworthy.

Dinnae think that would have mattered! No' to school teachers, anyway.

Steven

George pointed out that success was often measured in normative terms – being better than others in the class and expressed belief that it was also contingent upon behaviour –

Well, at college, you get certification for what you've achieved…but at school, you can only get certificates for – if you've got top marks in a test or if you've been good

George

In terms of achievement at college, a few commented on assessment and how this could be difficult, although some expressed the opposite opinion, commenting that it was simply testing what had been covered. One young person identified that assessment at college was based on bettering previous performance and not, as in school, on competing against others. Continuous assessment, certification and early success were important features as well.

Some had found school work hard, with little support to assist them. Owen found himself making the same mistakes repeatedly, rather than learning from them, in contrast to college where making mistakes was regarded as part of the learning process.

…Like if you get something wrong – like, normally at school or something, you keep on daen' things wrong – you cannae learn half o' it. But at college …they imply as much as to say 'it's a guid thing tae forget, coz you willnae forget that again.

Owen

The approach taken by teachers and lecturers within classes was important. Schoolwork was frequently described as boring and repetitive, whilst most college work was seen as a challenge that involved hard work – but it was also described as productive, interesting and fun –

…well, I find it easier to work hard on something I'm doing…if…I can have a laugh at the same time – talk to my friends n' do my work.

Henry

What was considered 'boring' at college was class-based work, particularly if it involved writing. When it came to core skills, several young people admitted that these were not their strong subjects and could be boring or childish, depending on who was teaching them.

The Purpose of School and College

College was clearly seen as being there to help achieve vocational aims – it could open up choices in selecting a career and provide the means to realise these. However, this also presented the young people with a yardstick against which they could measure actual college provision. Work in class had to be seen as relevant to the adult world of work, otherwise it was pointless and the interviewees were quick to criticise such aspects of college. Danny was particularly critical of anything that he saw as irrelevant.

Maist o' the writing parts are a bit bairnish…maist o' the stuff we do, we've done in Primary school…I dinnae see the reason why we dae it…Trying to make something new out of it and we've already done it. But when they introduce us to new stuff – that's what they should get us to dae, but they're no daen it…I thought it would be mair like harder.

Meant to be expressin' ourselves and looking for work and getting' a bit experience afore we go an' get oorselves a job, y'know? No playin' games.

Alongside stressing choices that college offered, many young people described the compulsory nature of some of the work. For example,

they could choose the task they wanted to undertake, but had to carry it out in certain specified ways, often for reasons of health and safety. This was particularly evident in practical and workshop areas (e.g. use of kitchen knives) but they appeared happy to accept this because of its relevance to the workplace.

Schools appeared to have a totally different role. Some described schools as providing a foundation for education but most expressed the view that it was about exams, qualifications and access to university. They described this orientation in many different ways, but often as tedious, boring and irrelevant to them. Relevance meant work and employment; exams were part of a different culture altogether.

> *They* [school pals] *just want tae try an' get an apprenticeship instead o' going to school and daen maths and English and becomin' an academic.*
>
> *I just sort of felt if I had stayed in school, it would have been a waste of time. I didnae like it. I widnae have made any progress.*
>
> Victor
>
> *My friend and me didn't want to stay on and do Highers.*
>
> *They* [teachers] *didn't stop you* [coming to college] *but they tried to convince you that you could stay at school and be able to get Highers…and I didn't want to go to university anyway, so…*
>
> Nicola

Control, Rules and Sanctions

The issue of control in college was loosely bound up with the notion of being treated like an adult. What was clear from interviews was that control in college is self-control and where people chose not to comply, such as young people '*forgetting*' to bring in overalls or going home instead of attending classes, this was seen as individual choice.   The young people felt they had more freedom and autonomy but they were expected to respond to this in an adult way. If they failed to do this, then they forfeited their place at college –

> *College isnae as strict as school… it's completely different frae school…I think it's like mair grownup – you feel mair mature and responsible at college.*

> Janice

> *I used to muck about quite a lot. In college, I just don't do that…Just because – I'd suffer the consequences here!*

> George

> *…There's a lot mair folk, like, goin' away 'n' kippin' aff, but maist o' the folk just stay here 'n' that…because maist o' the folk in the cless dinnae dae it. They dinnae want to follow them 'n' that. But at school, like, they'll follow their mates – to get drunk 'n' take a' the drugs 'n' that. Here, it's like nane o' that.*

> Owen

In contrast, control in school was established via a structure of rules and restrictions which were often seen as petty and pervasive, extending well beyond the classroom into the lives of the young people. The agents of this control were teachers in the main, but some young people identified that

control was also exercised by bullies who appeared to have a disproportionate effect on the school culture.

The pervasiveness of rules in school left little room for autonomy; many young people used images and language of constraint (being '*in a cage'* or being *'in jail'*) in describing this. They described a lack of choice in activities in the classroom, in particular. For some, attending college had been one example of this lack of choice, since they had not been allowed to return to school and this autonomy deficit was considered as being treated like children, but was also reflected in relationship with teachers –

> *…at school, they don't really treat you like an adult –*
> *still treat you like a small child*

Henry

> *…I didn't really enjoy school that much because I felt*
> *you were being treated more like a child rather than an adult.*

Martin

The restrictive nature of school can be partly attributed to school rules which were seen as neither fair nor necessary in contrast to the health and safety rules in workshops in college. The rules at college were seen by the young people as simple, straightforward and directed at control in specific environments e.g. the classroom or workshop, ensuring an appropriate environment for learning, rather than the control of individuals. The ubiquitous mobile phone provided an example here. In college, students were not allowed to have their mobile phones on in class but, unlike in school, could outwith class. The relevance of rules was

understood and they were seen as beneficial in a way that school rules were
not –

> *The rules are guid because ye get folk, if they come in drunk, that's them right oot…or like, you're using drugs – you see folk using drugs at school…but it's like less here…If they took drugs? They'd get chucked oot!*

Owen

> *- rules aren't that bad. They're just – quite easy to get on with. It's just 'mobiles off'. Most things you can't do in class but when you're out, you're free to do them…In school you aren't allowed to have your mobile on at all.*

Francis

> *Just the normal anes* [rules] *like – swearing at teachers, throwin' stuff in the classes n'that.*

Steven

> *Most things you can't do in class but when you're out, you're free to do them*

Francis

However, the acceptance of college rules evident above

was not extended to school rules. Some young people felt

resentment that the rules in school were there to control their

behaviour generally and them as individuals. For example, some

questioned the need to wear school uniforms but being forbidden to

wear a cap, or why mobile phones were forbidden in school, not

merely in classrooms.

> *…if you never had to wear such a boring uniform…you didnae need to wear those troosers and shoes and they wee jaikets ye get*

Stewart

*…But school's still really strict about a lot of things –
that are usually sometimes pretty small as well…Like having
your phone in class and getting excluded from class for doing
stuff like that…*

Henry

*…They're more making you be obedient than
enjoying yourself.*

Martin

Not surprisingly, the consequences for the young people who broke the rules also differed between school and college. The voluntary nature of college contributed greatly to this, since the college could simply terminate the young person's place, an option not available to schools. In school, the consequences of disobedience were seen as short-term, but public (including involving parents). The consequences of disobedience in college were recognised as being severe and personal – banned from the college and being unable to pursue the qualifications needed to enter the career of their choice. Several young people spoke about this and expressed the impact this would have on them e.g. –

*You can't hope to get an apprenticeship if you're
banned from here*

Francis

While most felt that college was less strict than school, they recognised that infringement of the rules that were there carried possibly long-lasting and drastic consequences, as Steven and Francis both explained to me –

You'd get a 'strike[4]*. Once you've got three 'strikes', you'd get chucked oot. N'then you'd have a meeting t'see if you're allowed back in or not.*

Steven

Well, at school, you would get detention or get a chance you'd get suspended. But here, you've got three chances. If you do something, you get 'strikes', then if you get three strikes, then you're …(out?)…for two years.

Francis

Importantly, to Victor at least, once turning 16 the procedure

became confidential and therefore personal.

I like the fact that everything in college now is confidential. Say you want to stay off ae day 'n' go hame. You can just go hame. They cannae tell your Mum and Dad – cannae send a letter tae them. They can only dae it if it was like 100% absence but that's all.

Victor

However, a couple of young people expressed the view that making

such choices also meant scope to exploit this apparent lack of rules and

more informal environment.

Well, there was a couple of people taking advantage of getting to go out the class for a break an' no' coming back.

Stewart

In contrast to the 'three strikes' approach, school rules were

enforced by a hierarchy of sanctions, from being shouted at to being

excluded from class to being excluded from school, all mainly short-term

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[4] A 'strike' was a formal recognition of a breach of college discipline. Except in the case of a serious breach of discipline (e.g. drug dealing) when a student would be immediately suspended, the student would be given a verbal, written or final written warning. The third breach might result in expulsion from college. Those under school leaving age might receive two warnings in a row and on the third breach of college discipline, be returned to school. The young people in my interviews had interpreted the policy as 'three strikes and you're out'.

and visible to others. This visibility brought with it humiliation and censure.

Sometimes this humiliation was conscious with intended consequences,

and Victor, who coped with school by being the class clown, found himself

the object of this –

> *I didnae like gettin' shouted at – made to look a fool in*
> *front of everyone…whenever I got into trouble wi' a teacher,*
> *he'd make sure I was in front of the class.*

Victor

For Martin, this meant experiencing physical symptoms that

inhibited his learning –

> *I suppose at school, if you're sitting down and you get*
> *told off, you're always sick in the back o' yer heid…*

Martin

However, even when humiliation was not deliberate, it was often

still a feature of the sanctions applied. One such sanction was school

exclusion. Victor who described this to me clearly regarded the return to

school and the class as a greater punishment than the actual exclusion,

because of the exposure that it implied. In this way, the punishment was

'worse' than the permanent exclusion he would have experienced from

college –

> *Ye cannae get excluded fae college! Three warnings*
> *and you're out! That's it – never goin' back. Ye cannae – like*
> *ye got chucked out for a week then have to go back in*

Victor

However, humiliation and exposure was not simply related to

punishment. It was also in other ways –

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If you needed the toilet or that. It was like 'no'; they said 'no' if you said 'excuse me, can I go to the toilet?'…

Stewart

Dinnae let you go to the toilet or nothing.

Robert

Like in college 'n' a', you dinnae have to ask to go to the toilet. If you need the toilet, you need the toilet. In school, they dinnae understand that – they just say 'No, you're no' gaun.'

Danny

Experiencing such powerlessness and being treated as a '*bairn'* was a recurrent theme within the interviews. All of the young people commented on, or complained about, the restrictive nature of school and many used the language of restraint to describe the school environment –

I just felt like I couldn't do anything – like, I felt I <u>had </u>to be there. I couldn't move out of there, 'coz the teachers were like 'get back to your seat; where are you going? …It feels like you are chained to your table and cannae move.

(original emphasis)

Stewart

…still treat you like a young child. If you like, you don't have enough space at school – it's like that…

Henry

I picked that one for school coz it's like you're in jail. Certain times to dae everything – you get told what to dae. Everything like that – I didnae like that.

Victor

One phenomenon that was a feature of school but not college was bullying, which, according to the young people, simply did not arise at college. However, many commented on the impact of bullies and

troublemakers who operated like a pervasive 'fifth column' within school. As well as Francis whose life was made a misery by bullies, Robert, Janice and Nick all related tales of having been bullied. Several others had witnessed bullying, which they said was widespread at school –

> *..say like your mate or something got bullied by – you saw it a' the time at school. It was like in PE or something. There would be a wee gang an' there would be somebody by their sel', like that.*

Owen

> *…Everybody just bullied each other.*

Hannah

> *At the school, there was a lot of bullying. But here – it's like naebody gets bullied.*

Steven

All the interviewees expressed a rather fatalistic acceptance of bullying as part of the school culture and sometimes reinforced by the behaviour of teachers (e.g. Victor and Hannah).

None of the young people I interviewed disclosed having done anything at college that would have constituted a breach of college discipline. For most, the subject did not arise and where it did, the young people were emphatic that they had not incurred any penalties, stressing that college reports would record good attendance and behaviour –

> *Yeah, well, I'm no' one of the badder people on the course so most of them would be – but I get on with all the lecturers.*

George

…probably 'does his work but has a laugh as well; carries on a bit'.

Henry

They'd [lecturers] *probably tell you I'm one o' the best behaved boys they've had on this course…And I attend a' the time as well, so they'd probably tell you I'm a good student.*

Danny

As far as misbehaving at school was concerned, most young people admitted to nothing more than truancy. A couple acknowledged fighting with others or causing disruption in class but generally attributed this to provocation by others (including teachers). However, around half the young people conceded that they attended college because their behaviour would have made it difficult for them to return to school e.g. –

Well, basically, I got kicked out of school. I got sent here 'coz I had to – well, you could leave school when you're 15, eh, as long as you continue in full-time education. That's aboot it…

I done a' my prelims – I think I passed them, eh? Then I got kicked out of school. I didnae get to sit my exams.

Nick

…I wasn't really behaving at school so I didn't want to stay on anyway. My tutor gave me a slip for the college coz I was told about it by her.

Henry

…somedays I wouldnae even go to school. And then I'd get into trouble for that. So he [teacher] *just goes 'Right, here's this chance. So go for it and we'll finally get rid o' ye!'*

Stewart

He [teacher] *was in the Behaviour Support Unit. He said to me 'You want to go to college?' I said Aye.*

Robert

…I was at a – her [Guidance Teacher] *room every day, coz of getting troubles. She was always looking for opportunities for me …*

Francis

Truancy was one misdemeanour that most of the young people had committed at school and some were persistent truants. However, when asked about truancy from the college, it was pointed out to me that there was *'no point'* because college was voluntary. On the other hand, truancy seemed endemic in school and to happen in response to a rejection of the restrictions of school or as a reaction to an intolerable situation. Henry admitted that he had rarely attended school in his last year, preferring instead to take up unofficial employment which he felt was more relevant to his needs. Stewart simply chose not to attend because he disliked school so much. Francis frequently walked out of school to escape bullies –

…after the prelims, I was working in --- instead of going to school…'Coz I didn't want to go

Henry

…I didnae like school so I was trying to be out o' school as much as I could – like some days, I wouldnae even go to school…

Stewart

…I would walk through the corridor and that group of people would just come down and like start disturbing me – start hitting me and stuff and I'd just come home afterwards.

Francis

Relationships between Staff and Young People at School and College

In the area of relationships with staff, the contrast could not be more stark. Lecturers in college were portrayed as friendly and approachable not as authority figures –

> *So – you actually call lecturers by their first name…although they're still our tutors, they – like it's just like talking to your friend and …they talk to you more about – like they tell you a' about what they do 'n' stuff. Like, teachers don't really share things like that with you. You get to know them better as well, because they're telling you things like that.*

Nicola

> *Your lecturer is more of a – sort of – friend than just a teacher…you know them more, than just like a teacher*

Francis

> *The tutors here treat us like adults…You can sit and have an actual proper talk wi' the tutor – ask him what he's been up tae, what he's daen…But if you tried to talk to a teacher like that at school, they'd just tell you to go and sit down.*

Victor

> *The teachers are better here* [College] *than school…teachers here treat you like adults. At High School, they treat you like wee weans…They respect you.*

Robert

What comes through is a sense of equality between lecturers and the young people. They inhabit the same space and the young people recognise that lecturers are *'real'* through the anecdotes they tell and the personal information they share with their students. In terms of what attracted most comment, the most important aspect was the relationships lecturers established with the young people. They liked the first-name terms

with lecturers and they used these freely in describing classes to me. They liked that fact that the lecturers conversed with them and most agreed there was less formality in the relationships. Two described lecturers as being '*more like a friend*' –

> *…they're sounder wi' you…you dinnae ha'e to call them 'Mrs this' and 'Mr that'. You just call them by their first names…I think it's better, because you're pure mair o' an adult.*

Danny

In terms of disposition, lecturers were described as being more permissive and less serious about work, to the point where they enjoyed '*having a laugh*'. Some also described them as understanding. However, one young person saw them as no different to teachers and still '*moaned all the time*' and picked on individuals. A few other interviewees stressed that lecturers were not all alike – some could be unreasonable and made little effort to develop relationships with students. Danny felt that some lecturers were less conscientious than teachers and he was particularly critical of lecturers who failed to turn up to take classes.

> *I just think this college is a disgrace. They can't get anyone to stay in a class…folk just werenae turnin' up to take classes.*

Danny

However, the young people felt they would be judged fairly by lecturers and were at pains to stress the difference in their own behaviour –

*Well, I've already got a review and…it's a' right.
There's quite good things in it…working well in classes and I've
been attending, stuff like that.*

Nick

In contrast, there was little evidence of any kind of relationship between teachers at school and the young people interviewed. They appeared to inhabit two distinctly separate universes, aware of each others' existence but with little in common. Teachers were often portrayed as having little interest in the young people as individuals, concerned solely with maintaining discipline, where they experienced only limited success. They appeared fairly ineffectual, particularly when it came to stopping bullying or dealing with troublemakers, although their efforts to do this appeared to take up most of their time –

*I didn't get on with a lot of the teachers 'coz they didn't
know what was happening in the school…and I was just going
off at them*

Francis

*It's just that there were loads o' wee dafties at our
school. They just disrupted the class every time you went in…I
wanted to dae guid at school, ken? But you just get the people
that distracted the teacher – a' the time…I just sat and watched
them a' bein' bamheids…*

*I think it's just when there are too many people in the
class and everybody's needin' help…an' the teacher cannae
deal wi' it.*

Nick

With regard to disposition, teachers were characterised by one state – anger; and one mode of behaviour – complaining. Sometimes, this was manifested in unfair treatment and they were seen as partial and unjust,

meting out punishments that were undeserved. As Stewart said, they were always shouting -

> *The teachers shoutin' all the time! Like, constantly.
> The teachers would be shoutin' about noise, about people
> movin', just daen anything – if you were no' daen what you were
> supposed to be daen. Just constantly getting shouted at.*

Stewart

> *I didnae like gettin' shouted at. Made to look a fool in
> front of everyone…*
>
> *…at school, you're just told to put your head down
> and dae your work. Be quiet.*

Victor

> *…they* [parents] *kent the teachers didnae like me at
> school, eh?*
>
> *…Well, I used to get bullied at school and I once went
> and told one of the head teachers and ken what they done?
> They kicked me out o' school because I took out a complaint!*

Nick

> *…half the teachers bully you – pick on you for
> nothin'…you get treated like prisoners… Dinnae let you oot
> the class efter school.*

Robert

A few young people spoke to me of one teacher with whom they had good relations and it was evident from how several of them had arrived at college that somewhere along the route, they had had the assistance of a supportive adult, generally a Guidance Teacher.

> *…My Tutor gave me a slip for the college coz I was
> told about it by her.*

…the last time I spoke to her [Tutor] *she said I was –*
she wanted me to go into school to do a talk because I was
doing well for myself.

Henry

Nick and others recognised that teachers were themselves under pressure at school and that this contributed to the difficulties they felt teachers experienced in maintaining discipline. Very few of the young people made any reference to being taught by teachers (although some referred to finding it difficult to learn generally) and it appeared that they saw the role of teachers as supporting the school in maintaining discipline rather than them as learners.

Clearly, to the young people, school and college are very different places that have different goals, different procedures to achieve these and very different staff. As I will make clear in the analysis in Chapter 9, these may have the appearance of simple variations but they are symptomatic of deeper differences, and it is within these more fundamental aspects that the relevance of college over school to these young people lies.

Chapter 5

Results – Interviews: Staff

Three members of staff were interviewed, all with considerable hands-on experience in teaching under-16s in college, as well as responsibility for organising courses and school liaison. To preserve their anonymity, the staff are referred to consistently as K, L and M and female (not all are female, however) and not identified with either college.

As one would expect, given their different perspectives, the themes that emerged from their interviews were different, although not completely, from the young people. Consequently, the headings below differ.

The main areas they spoke about in relation to their work were

(i)   *The college itself, both as the individual institution they worked in and as representative of the sector as a whole – what functions it serves; what it offers young people who are still at school; how it manages such young people within its environment.*

(ii)   *The staff within the college and their involvement in and attitudes to working with under-16s in college.*

(iii)   *The pedagogy that underpins working with young people in college.*

(iv)   *The young people concerned – who they are and how they relate to college and to the staff.*

(v)   *Schools, specifically the school with whom they have partnership arrangements – what they are in relation to the young people; what their relationships are with colleges; what schools and colleges could learn from each other.*

All three were aware of my position within my college, but also of the purpose of the interview and the nature of my research and seemed relaxed about discussing the issue with me, although there was a tendency to talk in general terms about their experiences. L, in particular, found it difficult to give me specific examples of students who had benefited from the provision, preferring to offer generalities – '*It might be difficult to pick out one person but – in general terms…'.* She frequently used phrases such as '*generally speaking'* or *'most young people'*.   However, I deliberately asked questions that sought specific examples in an attempt to counter this and all three interviewees did offer specific examples on prompting.

The language they used reflected their formal knowledge as teachers and generally colloquialisms were avoided. It was probably this, rather than any lack of candour on the part of the interviewees, that betrayed their sensitivity to the interview context. The phrase '*dumping ground'* was used once, by one interviewee who struggled self-consciously for words to describe the school attitude to college provision

> *…well, I'm going to be quoted – but it was a dumping ground for some difficult pupils…*

The Adult World of College

To all three respondents, college was posited as being a different institution from school – in its aims, expectations and methods, and with more in common with the world of work. All three stressed that it was fundamentally an *adult* environment and therefore designed to meet adult

needs and this dictated the expected standard of behaviour, relationships between lecturers and young people and the nature of college work.   This theme was revisited several times by the respondents.

M presented college as an '*adult environment'* and was emphatic that this must be preserved and nurtured, for all learners at the college, including the young people. She emphasised what she saw as the college's responsibility to maintain this ethos, with the rewards for honouring this commitment being recruitment, with applicants who made more *'informed choices',* and a raised profile *'out in the wider community'* –

> *Our emphasis has to be on 16 plus students and we can't – we have to be careful that we don't ruin the ethos – you know – because the bread and butter is our 16 plus students…When you walk about, you are aware that you are in an adult environment. And I think that's also important for the young person because we don't want to become a school, because the whole point is to give them an experience away from school…it's got to be different from school.*

M

Nor should maintaining this adult ethos be something that colleges take for granted. As K pointed out, most of the college's students are adults and expected to come into an adult environment to study. Large numbers of students under 16 would change this and K spoke of the importance of maintaining the correct balance, not just for the adult students but for the young people themselves, who expected this more mature environment.

> *…you don't want young people turning it into almost like being back at school again, because you're trying to sell them that you're going to give them an adult experience in a college setting – which it won't be if you've got a lot of young people around.*

K

L presented college as not simply different from school, it was *'completely'* or *'very'* different and these differences she also attributed to the college's adult environment. The adult world, the *'real world'* as L frequently called it, is a world of work and college offers an environment that has much in common with it -

> *…the fact that we're treating them like adults. It's an adult environment. It's real work – I mean, what we do is exactly the same as they do in industry…the facilities are the same; what we are teaching them is the same…The only difference is we're taking it from a slightly more basic stage.*

L

L viewed college as facilitating the transition into the world of work by providing qualifications that have currency with employers and she felt that was why the young people attended college –

> *…further education is looked at as a place that people come to get qualifications if they want to do a job*

L

K and M echoed L's sentiment, that college is inextricably linked to the world of work and stated that most of the young people they have had on programmes have benefited and progressed to further study or employment. They described what might have been the future of certain

young people described as 'typical' of students on the course, conjuring up

the spectre of unemployment and social exclusion –

> *…at home all the time and do nothing…would get into*
> *a cycle of getting into bother again because he's nothing else*
> *to keep him interested.*

K

> *…getting in and out of bother, being excluded, being*
> *readmitted to school. I think they would have left school and just*
> *drifted.*

M

However, because of its adult environment, college was not

appropriate for all young people. The three interviewees each identified

reasons why it might be inappropriate for some and there was a consensus

that a degree of maturity – or a lack of immaturity – was necessary for

success –

> *There are – the ones we have had to send back or*
> *have voted – there are occasionally ones that don't come - em*
> *– one or two of them are almost scared off by it, perhaps, I*
> *think – I get that impression.*

L

> *They're maybe just not quite* [ready] *– especially the*
> *3rd years – they're not quite mature enough to cope with the*
> *different environment in college. They're not quite able to*
> *handle the added environment and the freedom that they're*
> *given.*

> *I think everybody's entitled to apply but we have to*
> *make sure we're picking young people that we think are able*
> *to cope with the demands of college.*

M

> *…we told him he's not ready for college and college is not*
> *ready for him! ...because he wasn't mature at all. And most of them,*

when they come into an adult environment, they do mature and do settle down a bit…

K

The respondents agreed that the young people *'have maybe not had the greatest experiences at school'* (M) and recognised that they brought these experiences with them to college. So how did college respond to the behaviour challenges such young people could present? An important dimension of this *'adult world'* is its elective nature – it is intended for those who *want* to engage in what it offers, in sharp contrast to the compulsory nature of school. The interviewees described discipline in college as predicated on this voluntary nature – there was no requirement for the young people to attend and failure to conform to the expectations of college was regarded as unwillingness to be there.

Consequently, the disciplinary procedure itself was short, severe and with long-lasting consequences – factors that could be disproportionately harsh for young people in a state of transition. Using a specific example of a young person returned to school, K described how his exposure to the college disciplinary procedure would ultimately have robbed him of the opportunity to return to college once he reached statutory leaving age. Once the full gamut of the college disciplinary procedure had been run, there were no second chances, at least not for the foreseeable future. In serious breaches of discipline, the young people are excluded permanently from college –

If a student misbehaves, they are asked to leave the college…they're exactly the same, from my perspective – that

if they misbehave, they just don't get back in the class…and it's not as if they have a second chance really.

L

Contrary to what the young people expressed, the *'adult environment'* extended beyond the classroom to the wider college context and this set standards and raised the expectations of behaviour for the young people. L cited the example one pupil who would probably be returned to school because of a failure to behave travelling to and from college.

However, the threshold for action on misdemeanours is different from schools and incidents are often viewed differently e.g. –

I think as well, in a college, we accept more in behaviour than a school does…students will swear in our classes. I'm not saying that's right – we do say 'Watch your language!' But in school, unfortunately, if a student tells a member of staff to "f*** off because I can't be bothered with you", they can actually be excluded for that. We would normally say "Look, go out the room – chill out". We've got an auxiliary who'd go out with them, calm them down…and come back up to class.

K

K viewed the practical arrangements in college, timetabling and so on, as critical and the impact of getting these wrong could have long-lasting consequences on behaviour. According to K, the students required stability, with support to help them through this difficult phase and related examples to show how this was the case. Bad behaviour often resulted from poor organisation within the college*.*

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The respondents were asked what they thought college offered young people who were still at school.   According to them, college served several different functions. It was a means to an end in providing the facility whereby young people could make the transition from school to work. However, for some, it was also a place of safety and freedom from problems that may have beset them when they were in school, including bullying, but also their own reputation. In this sense, it was also seen a place of second chances and perhaps related to this, it was also a place where self-esteem and confidence were nurtured.

K used the language of opportunity to describe the impact that she felt college had made on the lives of the young people –

> *Then, they like the fact that they've been given a **second chance** – that a lot of the things that happened to them at school doesn't get brought into the college as well…if they've had some behavioural problems at school, we would tend not to cast it up in college, so it would be a **new start** for everybody. So from that point of view, it's a **fresh start**, a **chance** to make a difference for themselves as well – em – and a **chance** to get some additional qualifications that they possibly wouldn't have got at school.*

(my emphasis)

K

College may have given the young people choices and opportunities they would not otherwise have had, but for many, it had also provided a sanctuary from their school experiences. This freedom from their previous histories included the facility to turn their backs on adverse school reports and opinions. And if they lost contact with friends, as K said, they were also removed from bullies and others with an adverse influence over

them, something less likely if the young person simply moved to a new school. Just coming and going within a different time frame meant that there was less contact with old friends and enemies alike –

> *A lot of the ones we have had in here have actually been at 3 different schools because they have been bullied. Coz it's not just at school – it's in the neighbourhood as well. It's when they leave the neighbourhood to come to college – they're not seen about so much because they're later finishing so they're getting home at a different time. They're not walking home at the same time as everybody else because the bus has just dropped them off.*

K

The freedom that college represented featured large in their thinking, according to the staff, and they described how the young people took some time to settle down into college routine. L summed this up –

> *The first wee while here, they're a bit high on the fact that they're away from school and doing something different.*

L

College fostered a sense of achievement that may have been lacking in the school experiences of the young people. The college also recognised the need to build self-esteem and accordingly recognised achievement through events that celebrated progress. This happened independently of formal assessment for qualifications and was intended to boost the morale of the young people and enhance their image with parents, who were made particularly welcome, and staff from the schools they had attended. Both colleges placed considerable emphasis on *'distance travelled'* and success for the college, according to M, was seen in terms of retention and the young person *'staying the course'*.

Getting the 'Right' Staff

All three agreed that the young person's success of at college was contingent upon the staff on the programme. K used the expression, *'right staff'*, four times in her interview and being the *'right staff'* meant being willing to take on this challenge and responsibility –

> *... if you don't have the right staff working with the young people, then it causes problems, which we have encountered in the past. It's staff who want to work with the group…it can totally make or break the course, if you've got the wrong person.*

K

M viewed the role of college staff as critical in the success of the programme and stressed their willingness to undertake this work as a key factor – not all the college staff were enthusiastic but those who were made it work and M stated that the college was *'fortunate'* to have staff who *'relate really well to young people'*. However, she recognised that teaching under 16s was not universally accepted as part of the role of lecturer, both in her use of the word *'fortunate'* and below –

> *I know in some colleges, there's resistance to – you know, 'I'm an FE lecturer, I don't want to teach school pupils.' Whereas the lecturers we have are fantastic and they all have the ability to relate really well to young people.*

M

L had been doing school-college work for a while and felt she had insight into the importance of staff in the success of these courses. Again,

staff had to be willing and L felt strongly that the commitment should be voluntary.

> *Some staff have come here to teach people who'll sit and listen to them for 3 hours and that's not going to happen with these school kids. No way! So I think you have to be careful with your staff. Choose your staff …make sure the staff want to do it…*
>
> L

Pedagogy

Without specifically mentioning pedagogy, L constructed a picture of the successful college teacher of under-16s – a skilled pedagogue who built positive relationships with learners; was able to move between exposition, demonstration, coaching and assessment in an effective manner; and was very '*hands on'*, whilst recognising the very individual needs of her learners –

> … [not] *trying to do too much with them. Or too much…classroom-style work…standing and talking to them for too long – they just lose interest very quickly…so the way I do it is a very short – you're input is very short and then you practise that piece…*
>
> L

Core skills had often been a challenge for the young people at school and this could have been a source of aggravation in college. However, M described the college response to student complaints about the inclusion of core skills in their programme. The college had responded by demonstrating their relevance and contextualising them within the

programme. Presumably, the college links to the world of work made such efforts credible in a way that school could not.

To K, the structure of the course and the nature of the work that the students undertook were important. Varied practical work was important, but so too was the modular system operated by colleges, and the fact that this allowed programmes to be delivered in a more individualised way –

> *…We do modular courses and can work through levels at their own pace…rather than have to work at the pace of a class. It's like – well, this is what the curriculum says …'this is what we should have achieved by this time' – we don't have that.*
>
> K

The Young People

The young people that the three interviewees constructed were 'normal' young people, some of whom may have faced adverse circumstances, but whose relationship with school had deteriorated. K was acutely conscious of how difficult many of her students had found school and would find it, if they still attended. She portrayed them as having presented a range of behaviour problems in school, often reacting to circumstances within and outwith school, including having been the victim of bullies. These young people, in turn, created problems for those around them and for them to attend college benefited others in school who no longer had their learning disrupted.

Mostly, however, the lecturers identified that school had become an irrelevance and the young people had begun to question the reasoning that kept them there. The young people's attitudes to core skills were perhaps indicative of this process –

> *They don't see the need here* [for core skills]*.*
> *'We've done English; we've done Maths. Why do we need*
> *to do this in college?'*

M

M recognised that the young people who attended college from school were lower achievers and she spoke of *'other issues'*, including poor behaviour and attendance, but also lack of parental encouragement to perform well at school, or peer pressure to truant or misbehave. Some young people had decided what they wanted to work at and viewed school as an unnecessary obstacle to achieving this.

M provided examples of two young people who had benefited from attending college. Designated as having *'social, emotional and behavioural difficulties'*, they began attending college initially half a day a week then came full-time. Within the duration of their college course, their behaviour and attendance had improved and they were now seeking to continue their courses in the next session. I asked M what she thought would have become of them had they not attended college and she described a process that could well be the blueprint for NEET – repeated school exclusions, low achievement and no clear aim on leaving school. M proposed that even a half day placement at college could be sufficient to keep such young people engaged at school.

Not all were so successful, however, and some were returned to school as being too immature, not purely a factor of age. Some young people, M felt, particularly boys, were unable to adapt, often attempting to exert influence over their peers –

> *It doesn't always work…there have been some instances where people who have had issues at school – they come to college, and unfortunately, college hasn't been the answer. The issues have still been there.*

M

K agreed that not all young people benefited from attending college and she proposed that for the majority of young people, school was the best place for them. There were also those for whom college would make little or no difference, for example, there were some who had been –

> *…non-attending at school and came to college and non-attended here as well!*

K

As one of the anecdotes K provided showed, some young people were simply too immature to benefit from college, with behaviour that was probably best described as 'naughty' but importantly showed little regard for consequences, thus compromising the health and safety of others.

The three respondents were in agreement that the young people coming to college were treated '*like adults'* but were equally in agreement that this did not necessarily mean that they behaved like adults. L took particular pains to emphasise this difference and what it meant for staff, for the college and for the young people themselves. L several times made the

point that they were treated like adults in the same way as other students,

being accorded a '*measure of respect'*. However, although L treated them

as adults, they were also '*different'*. L pointed out that they were younger,

for a start, and to be effective, L thought staff had to understand this. She

said they should be treated '*as near as possible to an adult'*. There is

acknowledgement in L's words that the treatment of the young people

should be aspirational rather than reactive – they are treated as adults in

order that they behave as adults, not *because* they behave as adults. In a

similar vein, inclusion in the college is not contingent on behaviour –

> *We kind of bring them in to a working environment –*
> *this is my working environment and we kind of include them in*
> *that even…if they come into our staff room…you know, it's not*
> *like 'you knock at the door and wait'. They have to knock at*
> *the door but they come in and they can go right into our office*
> *and sit beside us and talk about an issue…So just including*
> *them in that, I think, is important as well.*

L

This treatment began before the young people entered college. M

described setting the scene, whereby the young people applied and were

interviewed by college staff for a place on the course. But again, M made

no claims to treating, or even seeing, the young people as the same as the

college's adult students. She also stressed that they were younger and

because of this, they needed more support and some leeway in the

expectations of staff. Nevertheless, she thought that the student view would

be that '*they get treated like an adult'*.

Despite the interview process, the young people arrived in college

with little knowledge of what to expect.   This ignorance of college was a

reflection of the ignorance of colleges that L identified in school teaching staff.

> *…school staff don't understand what colleges do…we make huge attempts to bring staff in from schools and they don't come. We have open nights, we have open afternoons, open days…and they still don't come…if the schools knew at the start what we had to offer, I think the pupils would benefit from that. They would have a better understanding of what we had to offer.*

<div align="center">L</div>

Coming to college was a major life transition for the young people and L recognised the challenge college presented. K portrayed this as a difficult time for young people, isolated from friends and their community, they were often confused about rules and boundaries. To a large extent, they had to find things out for themselves as they had few reference points –

> *They don't have people when they come into a big college.*

> *…they feel abandoned a wee bit when they come into college because they don't have bells, they don't have break times with everyone playing outside at the same time…and actually, at the beginning, they don't have that discipline that they've been used to at school.*

<div align="center">K</div>

K reckoned that consequentially, a certain level of inappropriate behaviour was to be expected, but being in an adult environment quickly matured them and that they soon acceded to its expectations –

> *Most of them, when they come into an adult environment, they do mature and settle down a bit.*

<div align="center">K</div>

Where are Schools in School/College Collaboration?

The college staff were asked about what schools and colleges stood to gain from greater school/college collaboration. Unsurprisingly, all three identified that schools stood to gain from losing pupils who had no interest in school and whose behaviour disrupted the learning of others. K viewed the relationship between school and college as one where the school stood to benefit greatly –

> *…we're actually taking young people on that they* [schools] *would be able to provide little for…that allows them to concentrate on other people in the school.*

> K

and identified the practical opportunities and chances to become *'really work ready'* that colleges offered.

All three identified that there were things that each could learn from the other in the process and while this would not alter the fundamental difficulty of the presence of reluctant learners in school, there was much that could be gained from the relationships that would be to the advantage of the young people concerned. However, L pointed out that there was ignorance among teachers about college and what it could offer, and this needed to change.

> *School staff don't understand what colleges do…that step is missing from their own education.*

> L

This ignorance may well have contributed to the problem colleges experienced in the early days of the school/college partnership, when

college did become a *'dumping ground'* for some difficult pupils. Although the situation has improved since then, L felt that there were still shades of this in the school/college relationship. The ignorance was mutual, she conceded, because she herself was unaware of teaching methods that may have changed since she was a school pupil. There was clearly room for learning from each other.

The question was asked - could schools change in some way to become more like colleges, perhaps doing away with the need for such collaboration? The staff felt that although changes were possible, the role that colleges had assumed was there to stay.

K did not feel that schools were able to deal with disaffection well – they would need smaller class sizes and additional support, and there would need to be other fundamental changes, such as a different approach to school discipline and greater empowerment of pupils by facilitating the development of time management skills. Young people who came to college found it difficult to organise their time because they were so used to it being done for them - pupils were not encouraged to develop skills for independent living. However, K felt that schools and colleges could work together to provide for disaffected young people. Along with L, she agreed that greater cooperation could ease the transition from one establishment to the other and understanding each other's procedures and provision would assist this.

If colleges were to stop their involvement in working with under-16s, L felt that the young people would still leave school at the earliest

opportunity and be lost to education. Schools could really only counter this, she felt, by providing a *'more realistic working environment'* and employing staff who had *'industrial experience'*, as well as providing a more adult environment for pupils. Such changes were unrealistic, she felt, and schools were simply not *'geared up´* for this. In relation to the adult world, synonymous with the world of work, schools were more remote than colleges –

> *Now it's not the same, our college, as it is in a real*
> *grown-up work situation, but it's much closer than school is.*

L

M was not optimistic about the prospect of schools taking on the vocational aspects of colleges. Although there were things schools could do to offer a more relevant experience, there were fundamental characteristics that would militate against this. They could, for example, provide more practical work by physically equipping schools to do this, but to the pupils, this would still be school. School teachers would find it difficult to manage the different relationships needed with pupils in workshops. To M, the provision made for young people was at least a major constituent of the essence of what the institutions are. Success in working with the young people lay in partnership and collaboration between school and college whilst maintaining the differences between them, rather than any attempt on the part of one to become more like the other –

> [Schools]*…they'll maybe have workshops and will*
> *deliver automotive or plumbing or whatever, but … I think the*
> *pupils coming away from the school environment adds so much*
> *to the programme…it's difficult because they are a school and it*

is a different environment and can they have the more relaxed relationship with a pupil that our lecturer can have?

M

M reckoned that colleges could learn from schools about maintaining consistency in discipline with young people and also about what to expect from them in terms of behaviour, as well as pedagogy, in how to teach and work with them. However, most important of all was the need for both institutions to know more about each other, about each other's practices and procedures and significantly, to understand the different priorities that drive these.

Chapter 6

Policy Review – Overview

Educational Policy

Within the Methodology chapter, I proposed that the substance of educational policy is discourse and its true nature is an attempt to impose order on chaotic situations. Colebatch (1998) described it thus –

> *There may not be a clear link between means and ends: policy has to deal with 'wicked problems'…which have to be addressed even though it is not clear what would 'solve the problem'.*

Colebatch, 1998, p.58

When education policy makers turn their attention to the '*wicked problem'* of indiscipline in school, the foundation for the discourse lies in establishing what they intend education to be. The Scottish Executive Report, *Better Learning – Better Behaviour,* put it bluntly –

> *Schools are important public institutions which promote society's values. Children and young people who are part of an educational community and are subject to high levels of expectation, achievement, commitment and personal conduct are more likely to have better long-term opportunities in society as they grow older. They are more likely to continue within the educational process, gain purposeful employment and avoid patterns of crime.*

Scottish Executive, 2001a, p.3

Thus schools play a major role in justice and the economy, with a role that is palpably wider than that encapsulated in classroom delivery. Considering the discourse of educational policy must therefore take

cognisance of policies for youth justice and employment which will have an important part to play in the dissemination of such discourses.

The role of schools is clarified in the above quote, but where do Scotland's Colleges fit within this? Colleges have certainly played a complementary role within formal education - school/college partnerships flourished under local authority control prior to college incorporation in 1989. Colleges have always been seen as the providers of vocational education linked to the world of employment and young people have attended college with this in mind. College has not been about an eclectic education that encompassed personal and social development. However, Scotland's Colleges are now part of the debate on how schools deal with behaviour problems and it is pertinent to ask how they came to be in this situation, rather than remaining aloof and firmly within the ranks of tertiary education. The answer to that may lie in the proximity of colleges to Scotland's policy makers.

Because of a perception of underpinning ideology (Humes, 1999), relationships between the parties concerned with policy-making appear harmonious and democratic but there are differential levels of power. Closer scrutiny reveals a corporatist approach where the most powerful body uses its power (through funding, for example) to achieve its goals (McPherson and Raab, 1988). So while there may be democratic consultation, through the exercise of its power the agenda of the more powerful will prevail (Humes, 1999).

Educational policy is highly sensitive to conflicting ideologies because it is a key area of policy at all government levels and closely bound up with other policy areas such as economic development and social justice. At the interface between schools and colleges, there are several policy-making bodies involved, but in a hierarchical sense, the Scottish Executive wields the greatest influence with bodies under its control, such as the HMIe, the Funding Council (SEFC) and Scottish Enterprise who can be weapons in the push for ascendancy but also intelligence sources (Humes, 1986).

The ability to resist policy depends upon the susceptibility of institutions to the influence of central government. The school sector is relatively well buffered in local government, as well as by a professional body in the form of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). Scotland's Colleges have no professional body representing them beyond the Association of Scottish Colleges, which lacks the political muscle of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and does not aspire to the status of a professional body. The vulnerability of the sector is compounded by its apparent inability to challenge central policy because of its diversity and a consequent lack of unity of purpose (Robson, 1998). Thus, while the school sector may feel able to resist policy change, Scotland's Colleges are more likely to be driven by it.

School/College Collaboration

In 2003/04, the Scottish Executive embarked on a consultation on school/college partnerships. Recognising that collaborative working was already taking place, the consultation sought to identify good practice but also barriers and thence proceed to the eradication of these. This exercise was a significant step in a policy direction that had proceeded tacitly for several years and it had particular resonance for those young people viewed as at risk of exclusion within the school system.

The consultation was more concerned with method rather than principle, the principle of collaboration having been taken as read, with the stated objectives coming from the Scottish Executive's response to the National Education Debate (Scottish Executive 2003b) to '*develop a joint schools/further education strategy'* and the 'lifelong learning strategy' (Scottish Executive 2003c), to '*develop a joint schools/FE strategy and implementation plan'.* The final outcome of the exercise inevitably meant greater school/college liaison and perhaps a blurring of the sector divide. Also, logic dictates that a disproportionately large percentage of pupils who will leave the school premises for college will be disaffected young people. Although explicitly denied within the consultation document as an aim, this was admitted within the document as a possibility. The following quote from the consultation document illustrates well the dilemma that this will pose local authorities and the secondary school system –

It is widely recognised that there are children who do
not respond well to a school environment, but who would

respond better in a college environment. However, it is important that this option is seen positively, not as a way of removing disaffected pupils from schools, but as a way to improve a young person's transition between school and further education or employment.

COSLA position statement

Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.20

However, despite the apparent benefits of vocational education and suitability of Scotland's Colleges to deliver this, there was an inference within the consultation that Scotland's Colleges should become more like schools in certain respects in order to discharge this. The areas for consultation, and by implication, those around which there was debate, were those where the nature of Scotland's Colleges differs from school e.g. its degree of informality, voluntary enrolment and the professional development of its teaching staff. One emergent concern was child protection, recognizing there was an inherent paradox in placing a vulnerable group of young people within an environment that was less regulated.

Closer school/college links were probably inevitable, given that all political parties were, and apparently still are, motivated towards establishing these. For the policy makers of the Scottish Executive, the college sector is an ideal tool in pursuit of economic and social goals, being a sector over which they can exercise much direct control. Given its susceptibility, Scotland's Colleges are likely to comply. To the school sector, such links offer a pragmatic and effective solution to an apparently growing problem within secondary education, how to retain the interest and motivation of young people disengaged from the school curriculum.

Moreover, the solution does not appear to challenge their existing institutional practices.

However, this policy direction <u>will</u> have a major impact on practice for colleges. While the ethos, professional values and skills within Scotland's Colleges are conducive to delivering vocational education successfully to young people and adults at every level, these depend upon unique qualities of the sector.

Considering first the voluntary nature of Scotland's Colleges, this is an issue within the Consultation simply because young people under the age of 16 are still within compulsory education. However, there are wider implications. Scotland's Colleges are in a competitive market and now adopt '*business-like practice*' (Johnston, 1999, p.581), i.e. targets, income, and customers, recognising that students are free to leave if dissatisfied. In compulsory education, such dropping out is not allowed and regarded as a sign of deviance within the individual but in college the responsibility lies within the institution. Taking a 'barrier' as opposed to a 'deficit' approach in working with disaffected young people has profound implications for reflecting on professional practice. However, because of performance indicators, this becomes an area where the policy and professional dimensions of Scotland's Colleges can come into conflict (Nixon et al, 1997).

In the vocational perspective of Scotland's Colleges, the background and training of college lecturers are significant. They confer a concern with '*economic realities*' (Halliday, 1999*,* p.586) to an extent unlikely

to occur in schools. By focussing on the intrinsic value of work, colleges encourage students to look beyond the basic money exchange aspect and to take a pride in a job done well, imparting a sense of inclusion where all labour has value. This position is closer to a social role valorisation approach to inclusion (Wolfensberger, 1983), rather than one rooted in meritocracy, and implies greater sensitivity to individual difference and an awareness of the consequences of actions, what Bottery (1998, p.170) defined as '*an ecological appreciation*' of practice.

Within Scotland's Colleges, a dichotomy is manifested in concerns often expressed publicly through the Press, that the quality of services offered within colleges is jeopardised by decisions taken in line with government policy. Examples abound here with regard to the inclusion of those under 16 in Scotland's Colleges (e.g. Munro, 2003; Fraser, 2003) and the STUC echoed these, making specific reference to maintaining quality of learning for all learners whilst avoiding becoming a '*dumping ground for children not wanting to be at school*' (Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.40).

The Scottish Further Education Funding Council articulated a fear held by many college lecturers that the ethos that makes Scotland's Colleges attractive may be lost in the pursuit of closer school/FE links –

> *… if colleges were to provide a very significant amount of provision for school-age students they might become more like 'technical schools' and less like 'lifelong learning colleges'. This could impair the ability of colleges to meet the needs of the communities they serve...*

SFEFC position statement

Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.32

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Nixon et al (1997) made the distinction between 'practice', the execution of professional work, and 'institution', the organisation created for the promotion of practice. The quote from the Scottish Further Education Funding Council illustrates well the tension between protecting the unique culture of Scotland's Colleges, one of its intrinsic rewards of practice, against its institutional dimension. While the two aspects are complementary and neither can exist without the other, distinguishing them allows professional practice to be seen in the quality of learning without compromise to external economic realities, which neatly separates what is wholly under college control from that under the influence of government. In this view of professionalism, professional practice is far less vulnerable to government policy and therefore the sector, despite its dependence on external funding, can assume a role as a guardian of learning in the face of encroaching managerialism within the sector. Nixon's model within this context polarises the debate between 'learning' on the one side and 'targets' on the other and although the argument is far more complex, it can be seen from the contributions to the consultation that it is often boiled down to this simple level.

In the next two chapters, I deal with policy documents of the recent past, examining the discourses they present. I selected a relatively small sample from those produced by the Scottish Executive since January 2000, a point in time marked by the publication of the Beattie Committee Report. The first deals with policy documents of years 2000 to 2003, a period I feel was dominated by the inclusion agenda, in the wake of the Disability

Discrimination Act and the Beattie Committee Report. However, the issue of discipline in schools was never far below the surface and the inclusion agenda may have served to highlight the disruption caused by young people designated as having behavioural problems and certainly to highlight their increasing exclusion from schools. By the end of 2003, the argument for greater vocationalism in compulsory education had been sounded out and the involvement of Scotland's Colleges tentatively broached. Thus, Chapter 8, in dealing with the policy of 2004 to 2006, is dominated by the increasing formalisation of school/college partnerships.

For ease of presentation and given the sequential (but not necessarily linear) nature of policy development, the documents are presented in annual format. Arguably, the documents could have been presented within the political year, as opposed to the calendar year, in which they appeared but as some documents are longer in preparation than others and appear in later years, this seemed an irrelevance and unnecessary obstacle to impose.

Chapter 7

Policy Documents 2000 to 2003: the 'inclusion' era

2000 – The Impact of Beattie

1999 saw the publication of the Beattie Committee Report, *Implementing Inclusiveness: Realising Potential*, (Scottish Executive, 1999) making Beattie a watchword for inclusion with an impact on educational and social policy in coming years. The report addressed the transition from school to adulthood, including entry to employment and/or further education and it popularised the term 'not in education employment or training' as the NEET group, an acronym that became standard shorthand for describing disaffected young people. It also created a classification whose membership could be quantified.

The Committee took cognisance of many diverse voices, including young people alongside voluntary and statutory organisations, schools etc. It examined social exclusion and how its roots were often found in childhood, and considered the impact of factors such as disability, mental health problems, under-achievement at school etc. Young people were generally portrayed as victims of circumstance and the report was illustrated throughout with case histories describing both cause and consequence. The perspective was interventionist and remedies suggested were equally individual, proposing strategies for young people who had become vulnerable to social exclusion, unemployment and recidivism. This opened

the way for projects and services intended to alter the circumstances of these young people.

The report also drew attention to the relationship between the NEET group, youth offending and the costs to society. Thus, the economic and judicial arguments were made, along with the proposal that, while solutions may reflect individual circumstances, responsibility for the NEET group and social inclusion/exclusion is a social one.

The year 2000 saw the publication of another policy document that added weight to the Beattie conclusions - the *Report of the Advisory Group on Youth Crime* (Scottish Executive, 2000a).   This report again presented young people as the victims of circumstance alongside their inexorable route to social exclusion.

> *The roots of much offending behaviour lie in families and communities but persistent young offenders are often alienated and excluded from both by their behaviour…Early intervention programmes delivered jointly through social work, health, housing and education can help here …*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2000a, p.3.9

Evident here is Foucault's medical-judicial discourse, where judgements are based on an individual's deviancy and identifying '*dangerousness'*. This was apparent in the intervention strategies and stressing the role played by families and communities (but interestingly, not schools at this point) in supporting young people.

However, this was not the only prevailing discourse of that year. 2000 was the first full policy year of the newly established Scottish

Executive, with its stated commitment to education. Policy documents of that year were therefore not surprisingly concerned with laying down an unequivocal argument that the impact of school education was felt throughout adult life with particular resonance for employment and social inclusion at an individual level and economic success at a national one. One of its first Acts was the *Standards in Scotland's Schools Act* (Scottish Executive, 2000b) which launched a major policy initiative, *Ambitious, Excellent Schools* (Scottish Executive, 2000c). This fell squarely within the corporate discourse, concerned particularly with leadership in schools and setting targets which would be revisited in subsequent years. Between them, they established a reporting procedure that required education authorities to publish annual plans. In addition, foundations were laid for a review of the pay and conditions of service of school teachers in 2001.

The attention to standards and managerial accountability was further evident in statistical collection. 2000 was the first year that statistics on school exclusions (for 1998/99) were published, along with the establishment of annual monitoring and a commitment to reduce school exclusions (Scottish Executive, 2000d). This report offered no evaluation of the incidence of school exclusions beyond that not all local authorities had responded to the request for statistical information. However, this in itself signalled that such statistics would continue to be collected but with more rigour.

2001

The trend of producing statistical reports emerging in 2000 continued with what would become a standard trio of reports – school exclusion; violence (and later, anti-social behaviour) against school staff; and absence and attendance in school. Such statistics may have been intended for corporate consumption but they had the effect of raising awareness of problems and giving them prominence and definition (Spricker, 1995). The first report in 2001 was on violence against school staff in 1999/2000 (Scottish Executive, 2001b). Presented as a news release, it disclosed the total and distribution of such incidents and described a significant year-on-year increase since recording began three years previously. However, statistics showed that Primary Schools, not Secondaries, recorded the highest number of incidents which were mainly directed at teachers. Such statistics were intended to offer an explanation for, and possibly allay increasing public concern over, the statistics on rising school exclusions released in 2000, the implication being that school exclusions increased as a direct result of increased violence against staff.

The second statistical report conveyed attendance and absence levels in Scottish schools for 2000/01 (Scottish Executive, 2001c). As with school exclusions, there were comments on the nature of the data collection along with definition and interpretation difficulties by different local authorities. It appeared from both this paper and its predecessor that data collection was far from an exact science, although in publicly recognising

this, the Scottish Executive was again signalling its intentions to make it more so in the future.

Beyond statistical presentations, the discourse of 2001 was one that related the themes of behaviour, performance in school and social exclusion in adult life. A departure from the discourse of Beattie, this constructed schools as agents in altering the behaviour of young people. The message was that failure in school led to reduced life chances, but with a clear connection between behaviour and learning in schools. There was no direct link proposed between poor behaviour in schools and recidivism – the relationship was more complex and recidivism was portrayed as the product of poor learning, itself related to negative behaviour (and therefore still within-child). Get it right in schools, appeared to be the message, and we have solved the problems of unemployment and recidivism in the future.

The first to articulate this message forcibly was the report from the Discipline Task Group, *Better Behaviour – Better Learning* (Scottish Executive, 2001a), which from its title onwards stressed the connection between behaviour and performance in school. The report emphasised what schooling should be concerned with and its role in shaping the future. Frequently under-achievement at school was related to unemployment and recidivism in later life but unlike many earlier reports, there were also clear signals that schooling itself may have contributed to problems of disaffection with reference made to the '*management and organisation of learning and teaching'* (Scottish Executive 2001a, p.5). The discourse within this report was overwhelmingly corporate.

This was followed by an Action Plan produced jointly by the Scottish

Executive, COSLA and the Associations of Directors of Education and

Directors of Social Work (Scottish Executive, 2001d). The findings of the

Discipline Task Group were rolled up with the recommendations from

Beattie and the resulting plan was dominated by interventionist and deficit

perspectives –

> *The Discipline Task Group found that demands on the nature of the work of guidance staff in supporting the pastoral needs of a wide range of pupils and families, particularly those with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, has increased significantly…The Beattie Report highlighted the importance of guidance and support in enabling young people to make the transition from school to post-school learning and employment; and problems in the assessment and guidance available to the client group.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2001d, p.19

The importance of schools in laying foundations for adult life was

reiterated in the report, *Adult Literacy in the Labour Market* (Scottish

Executive, 2001e). This report reviewed research indicating that poor adult

functional literacy had its origins in failure to make progress at school and

that the greatest gains in literacy were made at school, little being achieved

in remedial action taken after leaving school. Much of the literature reviewed

revealed that performance at school including attendance and behaviour

problems, alongside low teacher expectations, had consequences for

employment and for social inclusion.

Opportunity Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2001f) gathered

responses to a paper published in 1998 on the opportunities in the non-

school education sector. Although released in 2001, the paper was

prepared prior to the Beattie Committee report and clearly with high

expectations. Responses expressed dissatisfaction with current provision

for young people with special needs, including those whose needs are

'*social, emotional or behavioural'* (Scottish Executive, 2001f, p.18). There

was reference to the role that might be played by Scotland's Colleges in –

> *…the support of disaffected young people in offering them alternative learning opportunities while they are still at school and in motivating them to continue learning after leaving school…*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2001f, p.21

Produced around the same time as this and *Better Behaviour –*

*Better Learnin*g (Scottish Executive, 2001a), the research paper, *Learning*

Gains from Education for Work, (National Centre, 2001) examined the

impact of work experiences. This discovered that pupils '*expecting higher*

levels of academic attainment' (National Centre, 2001, p.27) were also

those most likely to have had learning through work while those with

behaviour problems were the least likely, although where they had

participated in work experience, they gained significantly in motivation,

attendance and behaviour. This paper is easily lost within the dominant

discourse of 2001, that unemployment and social exclusion were largely

individual problems attributable to low skills levels and a reluctance to work,

inculcated in early educational experiences.   The report provided a perhaps

unwitting illustration of how disadvantage can be the product of structural

inequalities and is often self-perpetuating.

The brief research summary, *Developments in Inclusive Schooling* (Scottish Executive, 2001g), added to this minority voice being concerned with the management of schools but from a social creationist perspective, drawing attention to the practices within schools that either cause or fail to address issues that militate against inclusive schooling. The writers referred to 'barriers' and drew attention to the links they identified between exclusion from school and social exclusion. In this report, behaviour problems were viewed as a product of institutional practices.

The last report I identified in 2001 which was relevant to my theme was the annual report into activity in Scotland's colleges (Scottish Executive, 2001e) and this marked a return to the discourse favoured by Beattie. These reports tended to be overwhelmingly statistical and this was no exception but it also reflected ministerial and funding priorities and the major impact on future funding was acknowledged as Beattie and its implications for the college sector. The report anticipated that colleges would become more involved in supporting and meeting the needs of young people who –

> …*have few or no qualifications, low basic skills and poor attitude and motivation; and others who need the support because they have physical disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health problems.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2001h, p.19

The increased funding agreed for the sector was to be targeted at increasing the inclusion of such young people within colleges.

2002 – Child Protection and the Youth Justice Agenda

The year opened with the release of *Exclusions from Schools, 2000/01* (Scottish Executive, 2002c), which revisited a subject of ongoing concern. The statistics showed a slight decrease in school exclusions in line with targets set by the Scottish Executive and it appeared that most exclusions were short-term, predominantly male (mainly white), and that 60% of incidents were 'one-off' exclusions for offences that ranged from verbal and physical violence towards peers and staff to general disobedience. The theme of structural inequalities has run as a covert sub-text throughout reports of the past two years and it attempted to surface here with the statement that almost half school exclusions were children/young people entitled to free school meals, a group constituting less than 20% of the school population.

However, the dominant theme for 2002 was the youth justice agenda, with policy papers on youth crime, bullying and child protection, with the discourse being firmly located in child protection. Even where children and young people were perpetrators, so the argument went, this was a child protection issue where the young person needed guidance into the consequences of their actions and thereby protection from their own excesses.

The first of these was *Scotland's Action Programme to Reduce Youth Crime 2002* (Scottish Executive, 2002a) which restated the objectives of the 2000 report and attempted to put youth offending into perspective by stressing that most youth crime is committed by young people who offend

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once only. However, the report drew attention to a small (but growing) number of young people who were persistent reoffenders. Consequently, the report's recommendations fell into two camps. On the one hand, there were recommendations for education, youth work and communities, in order to reduce the levels of offending generally. On the other, there were measures proposed to address the needs of the individual in danger of recidivism. While an '*Action Programme to Reduce Youth Crime*' might suggest that it concentrated on punishment, this programme was manifestly directed at identification and remediation - the discourse that dominated this report and the original was Foucault's medical-judicial discourse.

A progress report on this came out later in the year (Scottish Executive, 2002d) and although there was no mention of schooling, there was an iterative emphasis on having '*effective programmes in place*' (Scottish Executive, 2002d, p.1) to reduce offending by young people. The report highlighted the numbers of persistent offenders in different geographical areas and exemplified projects set up to work with these young people. It also presented statistics demonstrating that the numbers of young people referred to a Children's Panel because of their offending had fallen by over 2,800 since 1974. Where there had been an increase, it was among persistent offenders. The impact of this study was the impression of a small but growing number of particularly deviant young people requiring specialist help.

The second report, *With All Due Respect* (Scottish Executive, 2002e) followed on from the *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse*

in Scotland (Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse, 2000) and proposed

that schools had a critical role to play in fostering respect for others and

thereby reducing domestic violence. Equal opportunities and inclusion were

stressed but also attitudes of teachers towards pupils and there were

important messages for the way schools administered discipline and for their

role in inclusion. The report frequently used the terms '*value*', '*values*' and

'*valued*', mainly with reference to regard for individuals.

A third document picked up this theme and addressed bullying in

schools. Directed at school pupils, the booklet, *Let's Stop Bullying* (Scottish

Executive, 2002f), stressed individual responsibility in reducing the

incidence of bullying (e.g. reporting incidents). Throughout, the themes of

justice and protection were closely woven and the importance of trusting

relationships with adults was stressed, importantly that the real barriers to

stopping bullying lay in its invisibility to authority figures – *'The school can*

act to stop bullying – if they know it is happening' (Scottish Executive, 2002f,

p.3, original emphasis)

There are two further documents in this theme of protection of

children by adults. The first of these was *It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure*

I'm Alright (Scottish Executive, 2002g) and this provided guidance and

background for professionals working with children and young people with

responsibility for their well-being. While its overall message concerned roles

and responsibilities of adults, it also challenged institutional practices. The

second child protection report following hot on the heels of this, *Vulnerable*

Children: Young Runaways and Children abused through Prostitution

(Scottish Executive, 2002h), underlined schools' key role in supporting young people and identifying problems at an early stage. The Discipline Task Force was mentioned as part of a strategy to combat bullying, a factor featuring large in contributing to children running away.

The above documents made quite unequivocal statements about the nature of the relationship between children and young people and adults. Young people were vulnerable and in need of protection, sometimes against themselves, and adults, particularly professionals involved in working with young people, were required to impart the values of society, through teaching, by example and through the protection of the young people in their care.

2002 saw the launch of the policy initiative, *Determined to Succeed* (Scottish Executive, 2002b). This document was in sharp contrast to previous initiatives since it set out to inculcate a sense of enterprise and independence among young people and one objective was to increase the involvement of businesses in schools. Businesses would become active contributors, forming partnerships to increase *'appropriate experiential entrepreneurial activities'* (Scottish Executive, 2002b, p. 4) in all schools. The report and its predecessor, '*Learning Gains from Education for Work*' (National Centre - Education for Work and Enterprise, 2001), identified that such experiences were not equally open to all. Rather than challenge practices that gave rise to this inequality, the solution targeted the young people who traditionally faced barriers in obtaining work experiences. There was recognition of the value of enterprise activities (including part-time work)

in engaging young people in learning, and as such, the initiative linked into

other policy initiatives that were both economic and social i.e. –

> *Reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is an indicator for success in 'providing a better start for young people' in the targets progressing towards a Smart, Successful Scotland… The issue is a Milestone in the Scottish Social Justice Report … with the target of reducing the figure by 25% by 2007 and by 50% by 2012.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2002b, p.30

The report cited projects aimed at increasing work experience and

showed that young people in this vulnerable group gained in self-esteem

and school attendance improved. The writers admitted that not all pupils

were prevented from dropping out, but the gains for most were significant.

Schools were exhorted to value vocational subjects alongside

academic ones and promote these to young people and their parents and

the writers identified that difficulties introducing enterprise into schools,

along with lack of esteem for vocational subjects, stemmed from teachers'

poor awareness of the workings of the economy. The recommendations

took in work awareness programmes but made no mention of providing this

mooted 'alternative curriculum' through Scotland's colleges.

The final document from 2002 was an open letter to the Scottish

Further Education Funding Council (Scottish Executive, 2002i), proposing

modernisation of the college sector, including the removal of barriers to

education for identified groups (e.g. asylum seekers) and developing

articulation routes into higher education. There was no mention of school

partnerships in this document, in keeping with the general tone of the policy documents of 2002, which, while drawing together the threads of youth justice, child protection and school education, omitted the possibility of school/college collaboration and colleges received no recognition of their role as agents of transition to the adult world.

2003 – Inclusion in Education

2003 produced two major educational initiatives: the *Additional Support for Learning Bill* (Scottish Executive, 2003d) and the launch of the *Lifelong Learning Strategy* (Scottish Executive, 2003c). These, along with the report on the national Education Debate, set a slightly different tone for 2003. The harbinger of this had been in the document that closed 2002, the report on Further Education, that targeted the removal of barriers to learning for identified minority groups. The removal of barriers to inclusion in education generally and establishing routes for those who had been disadvantaged at school were the cornerstones of the policy initiatives. However, the discourse remained the same – individuals rather than systems were the focus of activity.

The Scottish Executive also produced several statistical and descriptive reports. These, despite their apparent blandness, often provided more than a clue to the intentions and reasoning of government. Within these reports, there were circulars aimed at managers addressing how such information should be presented and interpreted. The first of these was

Incidents of Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour against Local Authority School Staff in 2001/02 (Scottish Executive, 2003a), the second presentation of these statistics but the first to include 'Anti-Social Behaviour' in its title and while there was no explanation for this in the report, one wonders if this was clarification to improve or encourage reporting. In fact, the report did highlight an increase of around 17% on the previous recorded incidents, but suggested that there were factors operating other than an actual increase in the level of violence such as awareness raising, staff training and increasing concern expressed by teaching unions. Beyond the apparent increase, the pattern was similar – most incidents (37%) occurred in the primary sector rather than the secondary sector (30%). Two thirds of incidents involved teaching staff and only around 4% of reported incidents were notified to the police.

However, the report made the now customary reference to lack of reporting consistency and in June, the Scottish Executive issued local authorities further guidance along with a reporting pro-forma (Scottish Executive, 2003e) to improve the reporting of incidents. This also clarified definitions and reiterated the origins of this action i.e. the report from the Discipline Task Group.

Later, the Scottish Executive published *Exclusions from Schools, 2001/2002* (Scottish Executive, 2003f), a report now closely associated with its predecessor. The report commenced by stressing that statistics relate to *incidents* of exclusion, rather than the number of pupils excluded. Some pupils, roughly a fifth of the total number excluded, were excluded more

than once during the year. This clarification may have served to mitigate the impact of figures that had been the source of much press angst (e.g. Shaw, 13/06/03) earlier in the year. Also, the statistics showed a decrease of 3% on the 2000/01 figures. In what was clearly a pattern, they showed that male pupils, at 81% of incidents, were more likely to be excluded and that exclusions in secondary schools peaked dramatically in S3. Children entitled to free school meals, at 19% of the school roll, are over-represented in school exclusions, making up 45% of the total number of instances. The highest number per thousand pupils (against a Scottish average of 50) occurred in two city areas (95 and 91 respectively) and regeneration areas (e.g. 102). The statistics offered a picture of social inequality and structural patterns of deprivation associated with certain geographical areas.

In November 2003, the Scottish Executive issued *Exclusion from Schools in Scotland: Guidance to Education Authorities* (Scottish Executive, 2003g). The Scottish Executive had previously made clear its intention to reduce the number of school exclusions and had established targets which were quietly dropped in this report, to be replaced with judgements made on a '*case by case basis'* (Scottish Executive, 2003g, p.3). Although the Executive argued its commitment to a continued reduction in the numbers of exclusions, it was at pains to stress the 'greater good' –

> *It can be necessary to exclude a pupil from school in the interests of meeting the needs of the majority of pupils and teachers and helping foster an environment in which they can learn and teach with as little disruption as is possible.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003g, p.1

This was in keeping with earlier guidance that made it clear that all children should be educated in mainstream schools except where this would have an adverse effect on the education of others. However, it recommended that before excluding a young person, the schools should examine their practices –

> *Where pupils enjoy a positive and purposeful learning experience which meets their individual needs, treats them with respect and promotes their active involvement in decision-making, the challenging behaviour which often leads to exclusion can be significantly reduced.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003g, p.25

There was a focus on '*ethos'* and the promotion of positive behaviour, as well as taking '*an actively inclusive approach'* (Scottish Executive, 2003g, p. 25), to be reflected in the provision of support and curriculum planning.

However although redolent of a more social creationist view of education and a genuine attempt to address practices in schools, the report still refers back to deficit theories –

> *Research has shown that many pupils who are excluded have pre-existing learning difficulties or social, emotional or behavioural problems which have not been fully recognised or addressed prior to a crisis point being reached.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003g, p.27

There were also reports describing education in Scotland. *A World of Opportunity (etc.)* (Scottish Executive, 2003h) described the respective bodies involved in Scottish education, including non-providers such as the

GTCS. *'Link courses for school pupils'* (Scottish Executive, 2003h, p. 29)

were mentioned, putting school/college partnerships back on the agenda.

Colleges certainly were and in May, a statistical report revealed that 62% of

young people between ages 16 to 21 years participated in post-compulsory

education, either within further or higher education, around half being in full-

time education (Scottish Executive, 2003i). At the same time there was the

Education and Training in Scotland – National Dossier (Scottish Executive,

2003j) which tracked the separate development of education in Scotland

from the 19th century and provided a comprehensive description of the

Scottish system (including an intriguing and incongruous reference to the

Discipline Task Group and its 36 recommendations). The report made

specific reference to school/college links, echoing the Lifelong Learning

report –

> *Secondary schools often have links with further education colleges, particularly when arrangements exist for their pupils to take courses in these colleges. Links also exist to help to keep schools informed so that pupils continuing in their education in the further education system may have up-to-date advice about what it offers.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003j, p.55

The annual update on the college sector (Scottish Executive,

2003k) was released in August 2003 with an overt reference to develop a

schools/college strategy and implementation plan –

> *Many colleges worked closely with secondary schools. School and college staff have arranged meetings and link programmes so that pupils with additional support needs can gradually get to know the college and settle in well. Many colleges also ran programmes for pupils who were*

reluctant to attend school, providing them with an alternative learning environment with a focus on vocational awareness and personal development.

Scottish Executive, 2003k, p.17

The major policy initiative of 2003 was the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill. *Moving Forward!* (Scottish Executive, 2003d) outlined proposals in the draft legislation where behavioural difficulties had been highlighted as an area of concern for schools and teachers. The report went on to list initiatives designed to address this within schools, including *Alternatives to Exclusion* and the *Anti-Bullying Network* (Scottish Executive, 2003d, p.19). The substance of the report was achieving inclusion and it recommended that young people withdrawn from school required help with personal problems, as well as changes to the curriculum, in order to adjust to school. Thus, difficulties engendered by school's practices were acknowledged but the approach was still fundamentally a deficit one. The system would continue to be founded on identifying individual difficulties, including behaviour, and providing support. A later report, the *Report of the Consultation on the draft Additional Support for Learning Bill* (Scottish Executive, 2003l), reiterated the position that behaviour difficulties and risk of offending were circumstances which warranted a support plan in school.

The National Debate on Education took place across 2002 and encouraged input from every possible source. The resulting paper (Scottish Executive, 2003b) set out the Scottish Executive response to what was essentially a widespread consultation on the future of Scottish education.

The National Debate clarified issues about which people and organisations were concerned in the provision of education and gave the Executive a mandate to proceed with changes, some of which were already well underway. The changes proposed were largely structural, changing institutional arrangements in relation to curriculum, assessment, parental involvement, class sizes etc.

Reference was also made to existing policy directions, such as the outcome of the Discipline Task Group. One of the key targets was -

> **Tackle discipline problems and bullying** *by fully implementing the recommendations of the Discipline Task Group, reviewing their impact and taking further action where necessary.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003b, p.3

Interestingly, in the consultation comments, there was no mention of indiscipline as an issue in Scotland's schools, yet tackling indiscipline in schools formed part of the Scottish Executive response on no fewer than three occasions, twice within the section headed 'Pupils, Parents and the Community'.

The *Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2003c) was also launched this year stressing the role of training and education in reducing the mismatch between the technological skills increasingly needed in the labour market and the paucity of such skills within potential employees. The Strategy contained targets for young people over 14 years to have access to '*work-based vocational learning and enterprise experience*' (Scottish Executive, 2003c, p. 3) and for reducing

the numbers over 16 years not in education, employment or training, or had low achievement.

In its response to the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Committee's report, the Scottish Executive recognised that the Committee had –

> *Set out a rationale why high quality lifelong learning is important for Scotland, in terms of:*
> - *The economy;*
> - *Social justice; and*
> - *Citizenship.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003m, p.1

Thus, education was again tied firmly into the social justice agenda – not only schools but the post-compulsory institutions as well, where previously their roles had been described more in terms of the economy.

Following on from the Lifelong Learning report but also harking back to Beattie, *A Review of Occupational Standards and National Guidelines on Provision Leading to the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQ(FE)) etc.* (Scottish Executive, 2003n) was a consultation paper concerned with the status of staff in Scotland's Colleges. It used the discourse of professionalism that aligned professional status to professional training –

> *The Beattie Committee…examined the needs of young people who have learning difficulties, are physically or mentally disabled or are socially disadvantaged. It advocated an inclusive approach and emphasised the need for colleges and other providers to develop a culture of inclusiveness... in which the needs, abilities and aspirations of all young people*

are recognised, understood and met within a supportive environment.

> *To promote inclusiveness, the Beattie report made several recommendations aimed at improving the training and development of all college staff… it recommended that they 'should have access to accredited training and ongoing development and support'….*

Scottish Executive, 2003n, p.12

The report referred to the 1993 Teacher Regulations (HMSO, 1993) and that lecturers were not required to register with the GTCS which in turn played no part in determining the content and level of professional courses. The report asked whether the process of assessing the nature and contents of TQFE courses could be delegated to '*some other body'* (Scottish Executive, 2003n, p.21), perhaps a reconstituted Professional Development Forum. Thus the connection was established that somehow success in working with young people with additional support needs is contingent upon professional training.

Protecting Children – a shared responsibility (Scottish Executive, 2003o) revived the child protection theme of 2002, providing guidance on how to proceed in child protection matters and recognising and responding to signs of abuse. The link was made between difficult or challenging behaviour and child abuse, including bullying and the writers drew attention to teacher behaviour that could be construed as bullying, e.g. –

Staff should be aware that there can be a very narrow line between remarks which recipients perceives as fair and humorous and those which are felt to be hurtful and embarrassing. In particular, staff should avoid making unfavourable comparisons, criticising the person rather than the behaviour, and 'picking on' particular children.

Scottish Executive, 2003o, p.40

Two reports in 2003 considered standards within schools. Favouring the discourse of managerialism, the first considered the relationship between schools and the HMIE. The report, *Ensuring Improvement in our Schools* (Scottish Executive, 2003p), invited consultation but made no references to either 'behaviour' or to 'college', being more concerned with administration rather than policy. The second report on *National Priorities in Education* (Scottish Executive, 2003q) revisited objectives set out in the 'Standards in Scotland's School etc. Act 2000' (Scottish Executive, 2000b), presented for consideration in a self-evaluation exercise for schools. This report summarised the returns on these and also considered the Discipline Task Group's recommendations –

Authorities reported that they have drawn up plans to address the recommendations of the Discipline Task Group … The implementation of these plans includes increased levels of support for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties ... and support for the introduction of positive behaviour management schemes supported by staff development programmes. The employment of behaviour assistants, support teachers and home-link workers, and the establishment of alternative curriculum provision, also contribute to improving discipline, and absence and exclusion rates

Scottish Executive, 2003q, p.28*.*

Thus 2003 ended by ushering in consideration of 'alternative curriculum provision' and school/college collaboration, as spelt out in the Executive's news release on the role envisaged for Scotland's Colleges –

> *The Executive is determined to offer our young people a range of options to allow them to improve their skills and enhance their development. In many cases, giving pupils access to college education will allow them to reach their full potential and can be especially useful for those people who wish to develop vocational skills. However, this review is not just about improving vocational education. Where appropriate, a college education can expose young people to academic opportunities that their school may not offer.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2003r

Thus the ground was prepared for schools and colleges to enter into collaborative arrangements in 2004 in order to tackle the problems besting the school sector. Between them, the documents had managed the elision of emotional, social and behaviour difficulties with disengagement and exclusion, and from there posed the solution of vocational education.

Chapter 8

Policy Documents 2004 to 2006: the era of school/college collaboration

2004 – Consultation on school/college collaboration

Much of the policy of 2004 dealt with the persistence of school indiscipline or the school/college interface and the main policy initiative of 2004 was school/college collaboration. In previous years, there had been increasing references to school/college links, highlighted as 'good practice' with reference to young people with behaviour problems and in relation to providing a more relevant vocational learning experience. A national conference had been held in October 2003 to provide a forum for discussion on this and the report from the conference was issued in 2004, the foundation for further policy development and a series of consultations.

To turn first to the statistical reports of 2004, they appeared to confirm the need for some intervention. The first, *Incidents of Violence etc. 2002/03* (Scottish Executive, 2004e) presented a picture of significant increase, coupled with customary warnings about the reliability of data collection and the validity of the comparison. Since 1998/99, there had been a threefold increase in the reporting of such instances but the picture was not a consistent one – in fact most authorities had seen decreases on the previous year but 4 local authorities recorded increases and between them, these were responsible for 75% of the total. Most incidents were

against teaching staff and perpetrated by current school pupils. The highest proportion of incidences was in the Primary sector, as previously reported, but this report highlighted that the increase was greatest in the special education sector, which included schools for those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, suggesting that the problem had been moved on.

The related report, *Exclusions from Schools, 2002/03* (Scottish Executive, 2004f) showed that although the minority of incidents occurred in secondary schools, nevertheless they accounted for 85% of school exclusions, peaking in S3. Moreover, there had been a slight decrease on previous years. Exclusions had peaked in 1999 (36,769) and fallen marginally to 36,496 in 2002/03, under the scrutiny and targets of the Scottish Executive. Most incidents (88%) resulted in exclusions of one week or less and most pupils were excluded only once. Less than 4% were excluded more than 5 times. The highest single cause was persistent disobedience, closely followed by verbal abuse of staff. Physical abuse of staff occurred in 4% of cases and whereas 'persistent disobedience' had decreased over the years since 1999, verbal and physical abuse of staff had increased, possibly as a consequence of reclassification following Scottish Executive guidance. Again, however, the picture is presented as a problem of disaffected young people in vulnerable economic circumstances. Young people in receipt of free school meals were far more likely to be excluded, along with children looked after by the local authority.

The *Scottish School Leavers Survey* (Scottish Executive, 2004g) highlighted an ongoing problem – the NEET group. The report identified the percentage of school leavers out of work and they emerged from the survey as significantly disadvantaged –

> *… disadvantaged in some way by family circumstances, educational experiences and outcomes, and career management skills … Young women who were out of work for three months or more, and those who suffered from multiple disadvantages, were least likely to move into education, employment or training.*

<div align="right">Scottish Executive, 2004g, p.5</div>

Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools 2003/04 (Scottish Executive, 2004h) revealed a familiar pattern. While absences generally were slightly higher for girls than boys in secondary, and for both sexes, absences peak in S3 and S4, the report offers the following –

> *Pupils who were registered for free school meals were absent for an average of ten days more than those who were not, with the difference being greater amongst boys.*
>
> *Pupils registered for free school meals had a truancy rate more than twice that of other pupils.*

<div align="right">Scottish Executive, 2004h, p.3</div>

Thus, through these statistical reports, the school scene has been constructed as failing to deal with a minority of disadvantaged young people who misbehaved, truanted, then left school ill-equipped for adult life, to swell the NEET ranks. Recognising this failure of schools alongside the consequences for the young people in later life opened the way for the

provision of a more vocational education, with school/college collaboration the means by which this could be achieved.

The conference held in 2003 (Scottish Executive, 2004a) had been addressed by the Depute Minister whose message had been to capitalise on the positive experience of young people involved in college to date, along with the need to avoid *'negative reasons such as they want to escape from school, or indeed that the school wants to escape from them'* (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p.4). Within the report, there were references to discussions that took place at the conference, on the qualifications of college staff; the consultation into TQ(FE); the conditions under which college lecturers worked; the need for Enhanced Disclosure; and registration with a professional body.

For young people attending college, the benefits were clear –

> *… facilities; increased choice; helps change attitudes towards FE; more adult experience of FE college; more appropriate learning environment for some, e.g. disaffected groups.*

Scottish Executive, p. 2004a, p.10

Nevertheless, the term *'dumping ground'* was used on three occasions within the document with a further two references to *'dump'*, in each case alongside references to young people with behaviour difficulties or disaffection, manifesting concern that this might be the future for colleges

> *…there seems too much emphasis on this being the 'answer' for low attaining/disaffected pupils…*

Scottish Executive, 2004a, p.24

At the same time as this report, the Scottish Executive released its consultation paper on school/college collaboration (Scottish Executive, 2004b). The report was introduced thus -

> *Given the outcomes of both the recent **National Debate on Education** and the **Review of Enterprise in Education**, the Scottish Executive considers that the time is right to embark on a review of collaboration between schools and further education colleges.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.1

The aim was the development of '*a joint schools/FE strategy and implementation plan' (*Scottish Executive, 2004b, p. 2), citing several reasons for this, at least half of which were related to addressing problems of disaffection and disengagement in schools e.g. –

> *Providing an alternative for young people disaffected with traditional 'academic' subjects and thus improve achievement and employability*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.3

The report also made the point that colleges offered different modes of delivery and greater potential for flexibility and relevance within the school curriculum. The report offered a synopsis of the differences between school and college – there was less direction and greater autonomy, within a more varied, adult and larger environment. The document then presented readers with a list of 51 questions, mostly covering delivery and management issues.

Interestingly, while Question 39 asks –

> *To what extent if any, should the further education sector reflect (and/or adapt) for the teaching of school pupils in colleges the requirements for the teaching of school pupils in school? If so, how can this be done in a way that retains the existing strengths of the further education sector?*

Scottish Executive, 2004b, p.30

there is no equivalent question about schools reflecting a college approach.

The Scottish Executive also sought the views of pupils and produced a leaflet to this effect (Scottish Executive, 2004d), asking not only their views of current provision but also on closer links.

The Scottish Executive had already produced a consultation document on the qualifications of college staff (Scottish Executive, 2003f) and followed this with a consultation on *The Need for a Professional Body in Scotland's Colleges* (Scottish Executive, 2004i). The report emphasised the complexity of needs facing the college lecturer alongside inconsistencies apparent across the sector in those who held the TQ(FE). There was a reference to college lecturers' '*rather low status in relation to schoolteachers and Higher Education lecturers.*' (Scottish Executive, 2004i, p.3/4), but it was made clear that it would not be the aim of a professional body to enhance the pay and status of college staff but '*levering up standards and helping to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the sector*' (Scottish Executive, 2004i, p.4) and '*to act as a guardian of standards'.*

Having discussed the adult nature of colleges, the report considered its contemplated role in working with 14 to 16 years olds. Thus,

the teaching of young people in compulsory education was offered as an argument for a professional body and standards. The report described the role of the Institute for Learning in England, a professional body for the college sector with voluntary registration. The GTCS, expressing concern over the dangers of compartmentalising education, made a case for becoming Scotland's professional body and the report itself inevitably strayed into the territory of appropriate qualifications since standards in qualifications would be part of the remit of such a body. The report also raised child protection and ensuring Enhanced Disclosure as a possible role for a professional body. Within the discourse of professionalism and all that implies with regard to quality standards and regulation through gatekeeping, there was a persistent child-protection discourse, where colleges as unregulated adult places were inherently risky and young people were characterised by their need for protection by appropriately qualified adults.

One document within the school/college partnership review explicitly considered the management issues involved. This report (Scottish Executive, 2004j) summarised research carried out into the opinions of school/college liaison staff, specifically concerning the management of the school/college interface. The report made it clear that such partnerships were not open to consultation – the commitment was explicit e.g. –

> *… enable 14-16 year olds to develop vocational skills and improve their employment prospects by allowing them to undertake courses in further education colleges as part of the school-based curriculum.*

> Scottish Executive, 2004j, p.9

However this was intended to reflect concerns of college staff about operational arrangements. Whilst there were anxieties about the vulnerability of school pupils within a college setting, there were few concerns expressed about the capabilities of lecturers to deal with these and present a meaningful curriculum. There were fears about colleges becoming the place of 'last resort' for disengaged young people, thereby becoming devalued in the eyes of its other learners. However, there was a definite perception of college as having unique and valuable qualities that could benefit young people, providing these were recognised and protected.

The staff interviewed were under no illusions that college had been seen in the past as a convenient alternative for disaffected young people. Schools had tended to identify '*certain pupils from S3 and S4 as 'likely to benefit' from college'* (Scottish Executive, 2004j, p. 26) and this, rather than self-selection, had been the norm. Interviewees felt that college had to shake off this identity, not least because discipline problems arose when the college was not viewed as a positive choice. One way to do this was by self-selection and interviewing for places –

> *…Anecdotal evidence suggests that this type of selection process results in college courses being more highly esteemed amongst students… because there is an element of choice, lead to fewer discipline problems and less 'labelling' of colleges as an option suitable only for less academic pupils… this will help move colleges away from being perceived as a 'dumping ground' for disaffected pupils and ensure that vocational provision is more firmly placed within the mainstream.*

> Scottish Executive, 2004j, p.15

There was also a literature review (Scottish Executive, 2004k) and a survey of the opinions of young people (Scottish Executive, 2004d). The former reviewed many of the documents considered in this paper and the latter offered insight into how the provision was viewed by school pupils, mainly those on college link courses, and school teachers. Pupils were most likely to have heard about college provision from school guidance staff and clearly some pupils thought they had been selected because of their behaviour or because they '*received learning support'* (Scottish Executive, 2004d, p.36).

Under the heading of 'Perceptions of College', the clearest difference was the college lecturers who '*treated pupils much more like adults than teachers did in the school environment'* (Scottish Executive, 2004d, p. 39) and many interviewees expressed negative perceptions of their school teachers –

> *Many pupils reacted well to the different style of teaching within college. They spoke of there being less shouting within college, of not being bossed around, of being able to make a mistake and there not being a fuss made or getting into trouble. Others described it as having more freedom which they defined as not being told what to do…..They felt that they had better relationships with lecturers based on mutual respect.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2004d, p.40

In the main, young people expressed a preference for college over school, referring to greater informality in college and the chance to try different subjects. In considering discipline within college, it was clear that

there was an element of peer- and self-surveillance, and an understanding that childish behaviour would not be tolerated.

In considering how provision could be extended to other pupils, the researchers found that pupils were not enthusiastic about younger students in college, feeling that S3 was probably young enough –younger pupils would be unable to '*cope with the responsibility*' (Scottish Executive, 2004d, p.78). So among young people, college is a place where one can be, is expected to be, an adult with all that implies.

The HMIE had produced *Student Learning in Scottish Further Education Colleges* (HMIE, 2004) which had relevance for other policy documents, considering factors that helped or hindered pupil learning at college. The report identified that the '*lecturer/learner relationship*' (HMIE, 2004, p.17) was of critical importance and quoted from learners, identifying '*respect*', being '*treated as equals*', feeling '*accepted*' etc.   The report commented on the lack of research into how students learn at college, citing a possible reason as there having been a greater focus on learning at school and university.

Although school/college partnerships appear to have dominated the activities of the policy makers in 2004, there was an undercurrent of concern with school discipline. The action plan from '*Better Behaviour – Better Learning*' (Scottish Executive, 2001a) was reviewed in 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2004l) and revealed that most local authorities were implementing the recommendations from the report, resulting in a reduction in the number of school exclusions. Anti-bullying strategies had been widely

introduced and some schools had introduced 'dress codes' for pupils. However, the report noted that greater flexibility in the curriculum for more vulnerable pupils needed '*further developed and implemented'* (Scottish Executive, 2004l, p.29).

The report was accompanied by a newsletter, *Better Learning - Making the Connection* (Scottish Executive, 2004m), the 'connection' in question being the relationship between 'better behaviour' and 'better learning'. Aimed ostensibly at school staff, focussing on the teacher's role as a 'class manager', this was intended to minimise discipline problems in school. It described various initiatives, including the *Staged Intervention Model* (Scottish Executive, 2004m, p.7) and '*restorative*' techniques in addressing inter-pupil incidents, alongside initiatives designed to solicit opinions of disaffected young people that would otherwise '*remain elusive'* (Scottish Executive, 2004m, p.16)*.* Between them, these documents presented an interesting juxtaposition of greater control by adults (e.g. dress code) alongside pupil power (e.g. restorative justice).

In November, 2004, discipline was revisited in a report produced for the Scottish Executive (Munn et al, 2004) considering teachers' and headteachers' perceptions of discipline in Scottish schools. It began by stating that discipline in school served two ends – good discipline led to better learning; and developing self-discipline. The report highlighted several significant differences between reality and perception, for example male teachers thinking female teachers would experience more discipline problems, when in fact male teachers reported experiencing more problems.

Teachers in general reported an increase in indiscipline, particularly low level incidents that took up time and frustrated the attempts of teachers to educate pupils.

Better Behaviour in Scottish Schools: Policy Update (Scottish Executive, 2004n) revisited statistics for 2004 and assessed their conclusions. The report reiterated that, contrary to impressions given in the Press and elsewhere, most indiscipline was low level and dealt with easily by class teachers. Contrary to statistical evidence of violent incidents, the report stressed that greater difficulties occur within secondary education and teachers, head teachers and pupils all reported difficulties posed by persistent indiscipline. The report recognised that boys were more likely to be involved in serious delinquency or aggressive behaviour than girls, but suggested solutions lay in developing their problem solving skills and emotional intelligence. This document along with some of the statements in the school/college review reports appeared to be attempting to correct widely-held impressions of rising indiscipline and uncontrollable young people who could no longer be contained in school, an impression that had its roots in the statistical bulletins and news releases of the previous few years.

The annual review of Further Education in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2004o) described school partnerships as a priority for the coming year and, anticipating the outcome of this review and that into occupational standards in college teaching generally, the Scottish Qualifications Authority proposed to write standards for those working with under-16 year olds in

college. The review commented on the increased numbers enrolled in Scotland's Colleges and their role in the 'lifelong learning agenda'.

To support colleges' role in working with under-16s, central government produced *Guidance for FE Colleges Providing for Young Learners* (Learning and Skills Council, 2004), providing very practical advice for the support and integration of young learners (14 to 16 year olds) into FE colleges. The advice ranged from the legal and procedural, to identifying and sharing good practice.

There were two further major policy initiatives that impacted on the school/college interface. The first was *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004p), aimed predominantly at schools but introducing 'Skills-for-work', new vocational courses to be offered in conjunction with colleges, alongside a clear commitment to school/college partnerships. Colleges were implicated as agents in transmitting the values of 'citizenship', i.e. –

> *It is one of the prime purposes of education to make our young people aware of the values on which Scottish society is based and so help them establish their own stances on matters of social justice and personal and collective responsibility…*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2004q, p.11

The second initiative was *Ambitious Excellent Schools* (Scottish Executive, 2004r). Again, aimed at schools, this document made reference to '*promoting better behaviour*' (Scottish Executive, 2004r, p.15), but together with partnership working with colleges. This was primarily an initiative aimed at school management, setting targets for school sector

alongside those of other initiatives such as *'Determined to Succeed'*
(Scottish Executive, 2002b).

Following the considerable activity earlier in 2004 and the analysis
of the responses to the consultation, the Scottish Executive revisited the
school/college review in November, producing an *Interim Report* (Scottish
Executive, 2004s) setting out the its responses to the consultation findings
so far. This included proposals for Skills-for-work programmes and making
it incumbent on schools, through *'Ambitious Excellent Schools'*, to initiate
partnership arrangements with a local college. The report made it clear that
college provision was not aimed at disaffected young people –

> *It should be a positive choice to access specialist
> provision in further education colleges – it should not be
> regarded as opting out of school for young people with
> additional support needs or disaffected or disengaged pupils.*

Scottish Executive, 2004s, p.7

Commitment to reducing the numbers in the NEET group was
explicated, with school/college links beginning within compulsory education
via Skills-for-work courses articulating to full-time college courses. Schools
would retain responsibility for pupil curricular guidance and welfare and
colleges would maintain their autonomy, deciding which courses they would
offer etc. To satisfy demands for staff development in colleges, the
Executive again proposed a qualification in working with those under 16
years. The partner document to the Interim Report (Scottish Executive,
2004t) provided some of the underpinning detail to this report. However, it
also makes some unambiguous statements of its own, e.g. –

Partnership with schools is an essential and significant part of colleges' work, but it is – and will remain – a minority activity for colleges. We have no intention of turning further education colleges into schools. The distinctive contribution that colleges can make to pupils' education arises from their role as centres of voluntary learning for adults. It is therefore essential to the success of collaboration that this ethos is not altered.

Scottish Executive, 2004t, p.21

A final report for 2004 was on the *Head Teacher Leadership Academy* (Scottish Executive, 2004u), which detailed findings from a pilot programme directed at Head and Depute Head Teachers, aimed at developing '*Enterprise in Education*'. The study was generally positive, particularly in relation to managing change and applying solution-focussed approaches.

2005 – Partnerships

2005 opened with the report, *Partnership Matters: A Guide etc.* (Scottish Executive, 2005b). This theme of partnership was revisited throughout the year and was chiefly aimed at implementation of the policy initiatives of 2004. This first report considered the NEET group and, echoing Beattie, the additional barriers they could face if they were *'looked after',* had *'physical or learning difficulties'* etc. (Scottish Executive, 2005b, p.4). Disaffection was recognised as an additional support need and college provision was mentioned but the report clarified that college provision for S3 and over was not solely for disaffected pupils.

Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential (Scottish Executive, 2005c), concerned with guidance standards in Scottish schools, followed swiftly after. Under the heading '*Establishing Effective Partnership Working*' (Scottish Executive, 2005c, p. 44) starting college was recognised as a transition where partnership working could help, particularly –

> *…in supporting vulnerable, alienated and disaffected children and young people and their families.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2005c, p.48

Skills-for-work courses had been proposed as a means of re-engaging young people by offering them a more vocational option, presented in partnership with colleges. Consultation seminars were held in 2004 and reported on in 2005 (Scottish Executive, 2005d), securing agreement to proceed with development of the new courses with their '*strong element of experiential learning*' (Scottish Executive, 2005d, p.8)

A report looking at best practice that made recommendations about proceeding with school/college working came from the *Working Group on Best Practice Guidelines for School/College Partnerships* (Scottish Executive, 2005e). The report was substantially concerned with the practicalities of partnership working, revisiting some of the management issues identified within the school/college consultation. Absence reporting, staff Disclosures and risk assessments were all considered and the report also recommended that colleges take on board the recommendations of *The National Review of Guidance 2004* (Scottish Executive, 2005c).

In statistical reports of 2005, the annual presentation of school exclusions (Scottish Executive, 2005a) revealed a significant reversal of the downward trend evident over the previous 2 years, with an increase in the numbers of exclusions on 2002/03 of around 7%, and an increase of 3% on the numbers of pupils excluded. The majority of exclusions continued to be in secondary (86%), peaking in S3 –

> *Following an answer to a Parliamentary question in June 2003, the Executive issued Circular 8/03 which gave revised guidance and formally informed local authorities that the target to reduce exclusions had been dropped. Exclusions in this publication cover the year during which this change was made.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2005a, p.4

Local authorities had been given revised guidance on reporting and while this may have contributed to the increase, it is more likely attributable to the removal of targets. Whatever the reason, the total for all exclusions now exceeded the total recorded in 99/00 when reporting began. The greatest recorded increases were for '*verbal abuse of members of staff* ', '*insolent or offensive behaviour*' and '*physical abuse of members of staff*' (Scottish Executive, 2005a, p.12)*.*

A portent of policy direction for the Scottish Executive emerged from a consultation paper released by central government, *14 – 19 Education and Skills* (Department of Education and Skills, 2005)*.* This report set out government proposals for England and Wales to extend compulsory education to18 years old to be offered through schools, colleges and new establishments, possibly created for the purpose by local

authorities. The paper envisaged this having a distinct vocational theme, with work experiences being part of 14 plus education. Although the proposals were directed at England and Wales, it was clearly setting national policy direction –

> *This White Paper is concerned with England only, though we recognise that a number of our proposals have implications for Wales, Northern Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Scotland, especially where shared qualifications will be affected. In implementing our proposals, we will work closely with colleagues in those countries… to ensure that developments take account of the needs and circumstances in other parts of the UK and are compatible with structures there…*
>
> Department of Education and
>
> Skills, 2005, p.3

There were 16 references to NEET in this paper and they were manifestly at the heart of the proposals. The report identified disadvantages they experienced prior to unemployment and social exclusion –

> *…research suggests that a significant proportion of the 'long-term' NEET have become disaffected with society and marginalised. This is frequently associated with dysfunctional family relationships, emotional or behavioural difficulties, homelessness, drug or alcohol abuse or criminal activity.*
>
> Department of Education and
>
> Skills, 2005, p.69

The return to the subject of the NEET group reinforced the discourse relating disaffection at school to exclusion in society.

Within 2005, the various review groups set up to report on different aspects of school/college partnership reported on their findings and made recommendations for further development. The first recommendation was on funding, as most partnership work carried out to date had been at colleges' expense. In March 2005, the 'funding' group recommended an increase in funding for growth in school/college work for 2006/07 (Scottish Executive, 2005f) and that pupils' fees should be met through fee waivers. The increase in funding was not to be ring-fenced, and the Group took no decision with regard to weighted funding, remitting this to a further stage in the review process.

One of the major areas of concern from bodies more concerned with school teaching had been the lack of initial and/or compulsory training for college staff and of a body to oversee professional standards. Under the chairmanship of Professor David Raffe, the School/College Working Group on Qualifications reported (Scottish Executive, 2005g). Having confined itself to a consideration of the qualifications of staff involved in school/college work, it commented on proposals to introduce qualifications in teaching 14-16 year olds. The report recommended that this could be better incorporated into initial teacher training, thus signifying that such work was mainstream and part of a college lecturer's role. Also, the point was made that, although the debate related to those still in compulsory education, young people aged 16 already attend college and are taught by college staff. The report pointed out that a specialist qualification for college staff teaching the 14 to 16 age group neglected this fact and also ignored

the possibility that such a qualification could equally relate to school teaching staff.

As the report pointed out, the debate over qualifications threw up many contradictions, as this quote illustrates –

> *The purposes of school-college collaboration were largely based on the differences between the two sectors and on the distinctive skills and experience of college staff; an attempt to make them more like school teachers could undermine these purposes. Many of the young people whom colleges were asked to teach were those whom the school sector had been unable to engage in learning; it was therefore perverse to impose additional qualifications requirements on college staff and not to address the parallel issues for school staff raised by the current curriculum changes. School-college partnerships accounted for only a small proportion of colleges' work, but imposing additional requirements on the staff involved in them could have a disproportionate impact on colleges' overall flexibility to recruit and deploy staff….and could lead them to reduce, or even end, their participation.*

Scottish Executive, 2005g, p.8

The paper also questioned why other bodies such as voluntary groups involved in the education of 14-16 year olds were not part of the consultation.

The report on the consultation on the need for a professional body followed (Scottish Executive, 2005g) and while there was general support for this within the responses, there was some resistance (including the Association of Scottish Colleges). Respondents accepted the professional body having the power to grant/remove licences to practise and there was an apparent consensus that belonging to a professional body that set standards in terms of ethical behaviour and qualifications contributed to the

professional status of members. Opposition reflected concern about jeopardising relationships with universities as well as a feeling that the proposal was either premature ('*conditions were not right' – SFEU statement,* Scottish Executive, 2005g, p.11) or superfluous: lecturers could join the GTCS if they wished; standards were already high; and many people already belonged to other professional bodies more relevant to their vocational area. There was also a fear that the greater regulation that would accompany a professional body would pose practical difficulties for colleges in maintaining flexibility and in recruiting vocationally experienced staff. However, despite support for a professional body, when it came to consideration of the actual body that could represent the sector, support for the GTCS being that body was limited (28%).

The analysis of responses to the Interim Report (Scottish Executive, 2005h) had been largely subsumed in the reports of the various working groups. This report was published alongside these others and echoed satisfaction that the Scottish Executive had allayed fears that colleges will be only for the disaffected –

> *…welcomed the Executive's commitment to ensure that the courses would be for all pupils and not just problem pupils….courses should not be regarded as second class….*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2005h, p.13

There was a return to a familiar theme, however, in a reference that singled out third year pupils – who had been persistently identified within statistics as those who swell the numbers of school exclusions.

*Colleges should be promoted more positively rather than as a 'last chance saloon', **especially to 3rd year pupils***

(my emphasis)

Scottish Executive, 2005h, p.38

The Scottish Executive issued its strategy statement in May (Scottish Executive, 2005i), making it clear that the aim of school/college partnership working was fundamentally inclusive and concerned with '*the ease*' by which young people make '*their transitions into further learning, training or employment*' (Scottish Executive, 2005i, p.v). The Executive proposed to increase resources available to colleges for growth in school/college partnerships, to take account of recommendations for child protection training, Enhanced Disclosures for all staff etc. There was a specific commitment to developing new vocational courses for pupils and revising the TQ(FE) to incorporate an award for teaching under-16s. The strategy recognised the importance of re-engaging disengaged learners and providing for the 'winter leavers', alongside aims to improve '*work readiness…including developing attitudes and behaviours necessary for work*' (Scottish Executive, 2005i, p.12)

The report makes unequivocal statements about the strengths of colleges over schools in the areas of '*...less direction and greater self-reliance… size … varied student population … curriculum and teaching…*' (Scottish Executive, 2005i, p.13) and recognised that the different nature of colleges contributed greatly to their success. School work was presented as a small but significant area of college work, reiterating the autonomy of

colleges and refuting any allegation that the intention was to alter this in any way. However, on the same page, reference is made to funding and the Executive control over this aspect, making the power relationship between Scotland's Colleges and the Executive perfectly explicit.

Sitting alongside the Strategy document was the guide produced by the Scottish Executive for schools, colleges and local authorities (Scottish Executive, 2005j) which built on the findings of the various review groups and gave non-statutory guidance for the administration of partnership working between schools and colleges (with a passing reference to the independent sector). The Guide related other initiatives to school/college partnerships, for example, there were 9 references to *Determined to Succeed*, many illustrating how partnership working could ensure schools achieved their enterprise and work experience targets under this initiative. However, although there were twenty references to pupil behaviour, along with guidance on discipline and countering bullying, there was no explicit reference to *Better Behaviour – Better Learning*.

There were snippets within this guidance that lent support to the guarantee of maintaining the autonomy and adult ethos of colleges given in the Strategy document. For example, there is the following almost subversive recommendation –

> *Colleges should, where possible, make facilities available to pupils to take off their school uniforms, if they so choose, when entering the college and to put their uniforms back on when leaving.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2005j, p.45

Running alongside the school/college partnership developments, the Scottish Executive returned to the theme of discipline in schools, specifically 'bullying', but also, and for the first time since the publication of the National Priorities in 2003, nodded at the involvement of parents in schools. The publication, *Good to Know* (Scottish Executive, 2005k), was issued as part of the 'Safer Scotland' initiative and gave general advice to parents on supporting young people, as well as on school initiatives such as '*restorative practices*' (Scottish Executive, 2005k, p.17). There was also a leaflet aimed at teenagers, *Fresher* (Scottish Executive, 2005l) and a booklet, *It's OK to be You* (Scottish Executive, 2005m). The latter came in a magazine format for pupils, reiterating the anti-bullying message and offering strategies to young people, both to avoid being bullied and becoming a bully.

In September, the annual review of Scotland's colleges (Scottish Executive, 2005n) was published, offering its managerial view of the sector, in terms of capacity, funding, use of resources etc. There were insights into the actions being taken by colleges to deliver the Scottish Executive's agenda, particularly *Determined to Succeed* and several colleges, in their individual commentary, made reference to school/college collaborative work.

The final document of 2005 was a further statistical notice on absence rates in schools (Scottish Executive, 2005o). Truancy rates were dramatic in this report – persistently low throughout school (at 0.4%), these rose to 2% in S3 and S4, doubling amongst pupils in receipt of free school meals. Lateness showed a similar pattern, with boys slightly ahead of girls.

In considering absence due to sickness, this also peaked in S3 and S4, but was higher for girls than for boys. In the case of young people with social, emotional and behavioural problems, attendance was lowest of all groups at 84.7% and they also recorded the highest number of half day absences, at 58.3 within the year. Perhaps it is legitimate to ask here what the nature of the relationship is between the classification of *social, emotional and behavioural problems* and high absence rates, whether cause, consequence or concomitance. However, from the perspective of inclusion, the figures appear to re-emphasise the route to unemployment and social exclusion that begins with disengagement in S3, manifested in poor attendance and low achievement at school.

2006 - the Reckoning

Given the proliferation of policy initiatives over the past five years, it was inevitable that there would be a reckoning when these would be evaluated (and perhaps this can also be understood within the context of the12 month lead-in to elections to the Scottish Parliament and Local Authorities). Within the first 6 months, the Scottish Executive reviewed the impact of *Ambitious Excellent Schools*; the *Better Neighbourhood Services Fund*; *Determined to Succeed*; and *Curriculum for Excellence*. However, by the end of 2006, the Scottish Executive had returned to the issue of indiscipline in Scottish schools, reviewing *Better Behaviour – Better Learning*, turning the spotlight once more on to the NEET group and the role of Scotland's Colleges in addressing social exclusion.

2006 began with the annual statistical report on school exclusions (Scottish Executive, 2006a), showing a further rise and now over 3,000 higher than when the initial concern was recorded (and 5,500 thousand higher than they were at their low point in 2002/03). This dramatic rise in school exclusions was disproportionately within the S3 age band.

The Scottish Executive revisited *Ambitious Excellent Schools* (Scottish Executive, 2006d) in a self-congratulatory report that summarised improvements in leadership and quality since the beginning of the initiative in 2004, particularly the '*leadership*' of the Scottish Executive (Scottish Executive, 2006d, p. 2), commenting on its various policy initiatives (e.g. *Curriculum for Excellence*). The report singled out increased partnership work with colleges for comment, notably in the introduction of Skills-for-work courses.

In 2001, the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund (BNSF) was established to provide a £90m 3-year programme in 12 Pathfinder areas. In 2006, the report into its impact was published (Scottish Executive, 2006e). There were several projects running under this programme, dealing with education, health, emotional and behavioural issues, and sport and leisure. Obtaining information on outcomes was difficult, according to the researchers, because of the complexity of the factors the projects dealt with and despite the ambition of the project aims, there was a general feeling that the projects themselves were small scale in comparison to the problems they confronted so had minimal impact.

A second evaluation was published in 2006, this time into the first phase of the policy initiative, *Determined to Succeed* (Scottish Executive, 2006f). The main impact of the initiative appeared to have been a heightened awareness of *Enterprise in Education*, although less than half of the schools had developed partnership arrangements with local businesses. Particular success had been achieved in the sphere of school/college partnerships, however –

> *All secondary schools had developed links with their local colleges in order to provide increased opportunities for vocational learning.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2006f, p.1

Earlier, I commented on the omission of colleges in the achievement of vocational learning targets in the original policy document (Scottish Executive 2002b).

In March 2006, *A Curriculum for Excellence* was reviewed (Scottish Executive, 2006g), documenting achievements and setting the agenda for future action. The report described three main strands of activity – engagement of local authorities and schools; review of existing practice; and development of Skills-for-work courses. Skills-for-work courses were now well established, with a view to further expansion in 2007/08. In general, the initiative was regarded as a success and the report is very upbeat i.e. –

> *Review work shows that space <u>can</u> be found for learning in depth and for wider experiences……*
> *A Curriculum for Excellence offers a way of unifying the curriculum…*

> *Activities such as enterprise, citizenship, sustainable development, health and creativity, which are often seen as add-ons, can be built into the curriculum framework.*

<div align="right">Scottish Executive, 2006g, p.8</div>

S3 was singled out for attention as a critical point in the school career, well borne out by statistics that suggest it is within S3 when young people are more likely to become disengaged from school –

> *S3 offers an opportunity to recognise achievements of different kinds across the whole range of experiences and learning, across all of the components of the curriculum and beyond. Taking stock of achievements at this stage can give recognition to all that has gone before in readiness for young people to make decisions about future pathways and specialisms.*

<div align="right">Scottish Executive, 2006g, p.18</div>

The evaluation of *Determined to Succeed (DtS)* took place over several fronts, but one strand considered the impact on those at risk of becoming NEET (Scottish Executive, 2006h). The review, conducted via interviews with Directors of Education and local authority staff with responsibility for overseeing NEET strategies, identified good practice in working with young people, many who were identified and referred to projects by schools. In some areas, DtS resources were being used in planning and provision that would prevent young people becoming part of the NEET group. The researchers recommended that the Scottish Executive should do more to engage local authorities in working with the NEET group and recommended more 'joined up' thinking and provision –

> *…some of the 'at-risk' group are easily identified –*
> *many of them have a history of disruption in schools or their*
> *local community and have often had a range of contact with*
> *local agencies or services. Others tend to go more unnoticed*
> *– not attending school because of bullying, problems at home,*
> *or disaffection with the delivery of education. Getting access*
> *to this latter group, who are effectively 'out of the system', can*
> *be very challenging and requires effective outreach*
> *approaches.*

Scottish Executive, 2006h, p.9

The irony of such a study, of course, lies in the fact that the NEET group are no longer in compulsory education, so the true impact will not be evident for two or more years.

Following the consultations into professional standards for lecturers in Scotland's Colleges, the report was published in June 2006 (Scottish Executive, 2006i), setting out the arrangements for initial teacher training, as well as outlining a model for universities to provide the TQ(FE).   As expected from the school/college partnership work, the standards now made explicit the relationship between the sectors, requiring familiarity amongst college staff with the school sector, understanding its structure and ethos and how it compares to the college sector. There was no reference to a professional body and the monitoring of the standards remained with the Professional Development Group.

The Scottish Executive had made a commitment to the reduction of class sizes and had established a working group in 2005 to consider where Scottish education stood in comparison to other education systems. The report (Scottish Executive, 2006j) benchmarked Scotland in terms of resourcing, considering its impact and making recommendations. The

evidence showed that Scotland was in the average ranges for resourcing, class sizes etc. but there was little available relating class size to educational performance, although there was some inconclusive evidence linking class size and behaviour.

Following on from the *National Priorities* (2003) and the commitment to work with parents, the Scottish Executive introduced new legislation, *Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006* and produced accompanying guidance aimed mainly at parents (Scottish Executive, 2006k). The Act –

> *…makes it a top priority for every education authority and every school to support the involvement of parents…by providing them with information on what their children are learning at school …[and] … opportunities to contribute to the life of the school…*

In the rationale, the leaflet states that –

> *…research shows that when parents are involved in their child's learning, children do better in school and throughout life.*

Thus the Scottish Executive made it clear that parents and family have a stronger influence on children and young people than school, since –

> *After all, between the ages 5 and 16, children spend only 15% of their time in school!*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2006k, p.2

Relevant to this was the review of behaviour and indiscipline in Scottish Schools (Scottish Executive, 2006l). Whilst the policy initiative

Better Behaviour – Better Learning was not mentioned within the title or introduction, the policy itself was mentioned over 30 times within this report and it became clear that its recommendations were under consideration. What emerged was that, while there had been no real decline in standards of behaviour, the true problems stemmed from low-level indiscipline that was wearing and frustrating for school staff. The report concluded that action was needed to deal with the -

> *…common pattern of low-level indiscipline…particularly given its demotivating effect on school staff…*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2006l, p.7

A hierarchy of perceptions emerged in this study whereby the more elevated the position a person occupied, the more positive was the view of pupils' behaviour. Head teachers held the most positive views whilst pupils (and learning support staff) held the most negative views, not surprisingly since they were most affected by indiscipline, being the most likely victims in incidents of violence and having their learning adversely affected by the behaviour of others. A strong sense of justice emerged, where children expected both rewards and punishment to be more tangible and visible to others, but also greater *'fairness'* from their teachers.

The entire discourse of this report was corporate – this was a paper intended to inform school managers and the report concluded with recommendations for improving the management of staff in particular. There was no attempt to construct any view of the young people involved in

indiscipline; in fact, in the references to *'general horseplay'*, the behaviour emerged as widespread and characteristic.

Preceded by a statistical report into attendance and absence in Scottish schools in 2005/06 (Scottish Executive, 2006m) reporting a situation little changed from the previous annual report, the Scottish Executive launched the consultation *Engaged and Involved: Attendance in Scottish Schools* (Scottish Executive, 2006n). The consultation made recommendations and related the issue of school attendance less to engagement of young people, despite the title of the paper, and more closely to child protection. Partly, this was about knowing where children were, in order to protect them (and avoiding *'missing'* children), but also about meeting the justice agenda –

> *Children's safety and wellbeing can be compromised by their own behaviour. Young people may avoid school in order to focus on other activities such as anti-social behaviour, sometimes leading to more serious concerns of offending or substance misuse.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2006n, p.6

> *More rarely, some truancy is organised and planned in advance, and involves groups of pupils, for example, in gang-related or territorial activity, or in preparation for parties or weekends. In school where staff have positive relationships with pupils and make opportunities to listen, they will be in touch with what pupils are up to and through sharing appropriate information, can develop a school response. Local police and youth work staff should also be encouraged to share information where appropriate and collaborate on a joint response, so that the response is consistent in the community and continues outwith school hours. As well as preventing truancy this approach can help prevent pupils coming to more serious harm.*
>
> Scottish Executive, 2006n, p.22

The report also considered chronic truancy that may have its roots in difficulties at school and at home. Young people were presented as the 'victims' of their family and community circumstances and a failure to attend school represented a failure in the protective mechanisms around the child. The language used in this report underscored the child protection discourse – whilst the term 'young people' was used 36 times, the term most frequently used was 'children' (124 times), and in order to emphasise the relationship between the young people and the professionals at whom this study was aimed, the term 'pupil' was used 84 times.

The annual review of Scotland's Colleges adopted a completely different approach in 2006 from previous college reviews. The report took a more analytic perspective than in the past, where reports had tended to be more descriptive, presenting self-reports and statistics that invited little comment. However, in June, 2005, the Scottish Executive established the Review of Scotland's Colleges, intended to –

> *…provide Scottish Ministers with a robust evidence base, and where appropriate, informed recommendations for change, upon which sound decisions can be taken on how to fund and equip Scotland's colleges to meet future challenges and demands.*

<div align="right">Scottish Executive, 2006f, p.74</div>

Describing itself as the '*first substantive outcome of the Review of Scotland's Colleges'* (Scottish Executive, 2006f, p.5), the title alone was illustrative of a different approach - *Unlocking Opportunity: The Difference Scotland's Colleges Make to Learners, the Economy and Wider Society*.

This was a highly flattering but grounded review of the provision and impact of Scotland's Colleges. The report demonstrated through statistics how students from disadvantaged areas were well represented in college, as were those from other minority groups. Satisfaction ratings from both students and employers were very high and colleges were generally rated well for their flexibility and responsiveness. The report also considered the value of colleges in terms of what the sector puts into the economy. There were references to working with schools, and particularly school leavers, since employer satisfaction was much greater where employers recruited direct from college as opposed to school. The report also made points about the ethos and atmosphere of college. One point made was that the impact college courses makes on school pupils was very difficult to evaluate, because the school and college influences can't be separated out.

In Chapters 7 and 8, I have chosen to review a wide range of policy documents in order to illustrate what has confronted a sector where change has been relentless. If we discount the idea that the position in Scotland prior to devolution was so poor, how can we explain the number of social justice and education policy documents since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999? The first and most obvious explanation is simply because it can – these are devolved areas and the Scottish Parliament has substantial legislative responsibilities for them. Another explanation could be the backgrounds of the elected members themselves, since Members of the Scottish Parliament are more likely to be drawn from public sector occupations (Keating and Cairney, 2006) and therefore more

likely to have direct professional knowledge of its concerns (Connelly and Chakrabarti, 2007). The policy documents of this period reflect this ground-level concern and discourses have been promoted through action directed at a micro-level – at schools and school managers, college staff, parents and so on.

As we saw in Chapter 7, the discourses of inclusion were pre-eminent from 2000 to 2003, following legislation and the publication of the Beattie Committee Report but I have argued that the issue of indiscipline in schools was highlighted by inclusion and the Scottish Executive walked a fine line in promoting this within a system where the institutional practices remained largely unchallenged. Statistical reports, intended to inform educators but *'...subject to in-depth analysis by journalists...'* (Connelly and Chakrabarti, 2007, p.82), highlighted increasing truancy, indiscipline and even violence towards staff and to counter fears of a rising tide of violence in schools, policy documents began to stress how a small number of pupils was responsible for most of these ills. Thus the medical-judicial discourse, with its within-child deficit perspective, was ascendant throughout this time as ways were sought to identify and apply segregating procedures to those thought to be most at risk.

By 2003, the discourse had become more vocationalist at heart, returning to the well-worn arguments of the medical-judicial discourse that those who are deviant can be taught the error of their ways and skills to ensure their positive contribution to society. The search for vocational alternatives had begun first in schools, with Determined to Succeed, then

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moved to colleges as the potential for school/college partnerships became clear. Thus, 2004 onwards has been dominated by vocationalism, accompanied by increasing managerialism that stresses accountability for public funding through action plans, targets, performance indicators and evaluations.

The next chapter provides further analysis of these discourses, returning first to what we can learn about these and the operation of power within our educational institutions through the narratives of the young people and staff who experience them.

Chapter 9

Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, I have pulled together the various discourses and constructions that have emerged, both from the above interviews and from the policy documents of the then Scottish Executive[5]. I begin by analysing the experiences of the young people and staff, using models suggested by Deleuze and by Foucault, both to help understand the individual experiences and the importance of college within these, and to analyse the operation of power relations inherent in education.

I then return to the policy documents which, in the space of six years, have, perhaps predictably, narrowed their focus in seeking solutions through education for the disengagement of young people. In the early years of the new Scottish political landscape, policy focussed on wider society and laid out the principles that should characterise Scottish society. The focus later narrowed to consider schools, particularly the corporatist view that disengagement could be addressed through better management, and eventually incorporating Scotland's Colleges into this view. Finally, the policy gaze fixed itself on families and how they could be supported in their role as the primary socialisation agents of their youngsters. In the concluding chapter, I consider where the experiences of the young people

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[5] Since the election of May 2007 and the change of administration, the name Scottish Executive has been replaced by the Scottish Government.

sit within this wider policy arena and what we, as colleges and educators, can learn from these.

Analysis of Interviews

To all the interviewees, college is a totally different experience from school. The staff admitted a certain ignorance of schools, but the young people's memories were fresh, although probably recollections of a virtual rather than an actual past (Bogue, 2004), constructed from sensory experiences and mixed emotions.   The interviews gave them an opportunity to explore their experiences of school and college and in describing these, the young people were clearly using the one to help them make sense of the other, setting up what MacLure (2003) referred to as *'binary oppositions'* i.e.

> *Such binary oppositions are one of the key ways in which meaning and knowledge are produced…One 'side' achieves definition – comes to meaning – through its* difference *with respect to a (constructed) 'other' which is always lacking, lesser or derivative in some respect.*

MacLure, 2003, p.10

Thus, the young people are describing their college experiences and constructing them as 'better' – in respect of relevance, effectiveness, satisfaction and, of course, justice. However, in doing so, they have also constructed their school experiences as profoundly 'worse'. If the young people had never attended college, would school have been constructed in such stark, negative terms? Or is it the case that by presenting an

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acceptable alternative (college), it confirms that what they experienced (school) was 'bad'?

The analysis below considers firstly how the difference between school and college may lie in the essence of the two institutions and this is explored through the notions of *smooth* and *striated* space, using a model provided by Deleuze and Guattari (1994). Space also features in Foucault's analysis of power within institutions and the discourses and non-discursive practices of schools and colleges that emerged from the interviews are examined again in this light.

Smooth and Striated Spaces – College and School Experiences

The juxtaposition of school and college may tempt the reader with the illusion that school and college are fundamentally the same but with some significant differences – like comparing two varieties of apple that vary in taste or colour. However, the possibility exists that the two institutions have so little in common that such comparisons are meaningless. Deleuze made the distinction between *'otherness'* and *'difference'* (Deleuze, 1994, p. 38), reflecting difference in *'essence'* as opposed to simpler variations, and to me, the differences between schools and college do appear to be of that magnitude.

Firstly, the young people did not perceive that schools and college might pursue the same ends and some identified an *essential* difference – school was about *behaviour* and Martin came close to inadvertently

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recognising what Fairclough called *'the hidden agenda'* of education which was *'...the reproduction of class relations and other higher-level social structures...'* (Fairclough, 2001, p.33) in addition to its more overt educational agenda.

They're more making you obedient than enjoying yourself.

Martin

College, on the other hand, was about *'getting a job'.*

Secondly, *'difference in essence'* was a view espoused by each lecturer who stressed fundamental differences of principle and approach rather than any similarities –

> *…they do have choice, whereas at school it's mandatory…they are treated more as individuals and adults and I think that's a big difference for them…*

> *…schools have to be – it's difficult because they <u>are</u> 'a school' and it's a different environment…*

> *…schools can't really offer what we offer because they're not geared up for it in a practical sense…I would say the adult environment is the most important thing…*

And yet, despite this *'difference',* one could not deny that a relationship of sorts exists, even if it is only through the young people who have attended both. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) present a model that exposes the essential differences, but also the relationships between the two. They offer us two entirely different spaces, yet each is dependent on the other for its existence. Using what they termed a *'maritime model'* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 528), they described *striated space* and *smooth space*, where striated space was akin to a city, full of obstacles,

barriers and streets that inhibited free movement and predisposed people to behave in certain ways. They contrasted this with the open sea, a space with no striations or delineations and accordingly, all movement is possible. And yet the spaces '*exist only in mixture*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.524).

School provides us with a vivid example of a striated space, with its rules and practices and its physical layout, aimed at the containment of the individual and imposing order. The young people described its striations well – timetables, subject choices, school uniforms, teachers and so on – and the impact of these in terms of the restrictions they imposed. Some people are natural *city dwellers*, however, and find security in such a space, in its order and logic, as some pupils accept and even relish the comfort of a well-regulated school.

However, Deleuze and Guattari had also proposed that striated space is continually threatened by those who find little pleasure in such space and who, rejecting its striations, seek to make them smooth. They spoke of '*shanty town dwellers*' and '*urban nomads*' and '*an extensive misery secreted by the city*', with the '*potential for counter attack*'. Thus the institution of school is continually threatened by those who cannot live within its striations and seek to make them smooth – by disregarding rules, resisting the attempts at order and rejecting those who impose them. In this sense, the young people I interviewed are these '*shanty town dwellers*' and '*urban nomads*' – so too are the bullies within the school who found their own way of rising above or circumventing the striations. Deleuze and

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Guattari have also provided us with a model that offers an explanation for the caution with which we regard them – they seek through subversion and confrontation to change what city dwellers find comfortable. Here, then, is the link to the NEET group – it is their anarchy and rejection of regulation by society that we fear.

College, on the other hand, is characteristic of smooth space. The maritime model suggests early adventurers who put to sea with little notion of where they were going, still less how they were going to get there. However, the aim was not to wander aimlessly but to get 'somewhere' ultimately, and preferably somewhere 'better'. To do this, a sense of direction is needed so through time, they impose striations on this space that will guide their actions and apply navigational rules on this open sea. The young people who are like these early adventurers will make choices of careers and be guided by courses and progression routes, but an important distinction is that the young people are free to select their destination and can, if they want, reject the striations that are there to guide them. They can change direction, which has become possible simply because they occupy a smooth space -

> *In smooth space, the line is therefore a vector, a direction and not a dimension or metric determination. It is a space constructed by local operations involving changes in direction. These changes in direction may be due to the nature of the journey itself…but it is more likely to be due to the variability of the goal or point to be attained…smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affect, more than one of properties. It is haptic rather than optical perception.*
>
> Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.528

So the challenge is to arrive somewhere but there is an initial period of exploration and apparently aimless activity while this ultimate destination is identified. The staff described this in the initial reactions of the young people to college and the journey towards some understanding –

> *…they get to appreciate what college is actually all about…scratch the surface of what actually goes on in college*

L

> *…the first 6 months is …getting them to feel good about themselves before you can actually get them achieving anything.*

K

The absence of rule-breaking in college is important in such an analogy, as is its presence in schools. Rule-breaking was a technique employed by the young people to overcome the striations of school. There is no perceived need to do this within college because, to them, it is already a smooth space. The young people who, like Janice, pointed out that there was no need to play truant at college, were articulating precisely this.

College – A Haptic Experience

Deleuze and Guattari used the expression *'haptic rather than optical perception'* to describe smooth space *(*Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 529) and rather than a place where one finds one's bearings by looking around and identifying the familiar, smooth space is explored through other senses and is *'intensive'.* The lecturers described the young people arriving in college *'a bit high'* and unruly at first, as this space and its boundaries are explored. However, it is the language used by the young people themselves

in describing their college experiences that conveys this excitement, intensity and pleasure (and sometimes fear) absent in their descriptions of school –

Nicola: *…like celebrations – meeting new friends 'n' stuff*

Danny: *…You can let all your ideas flow into your head.*

George: *…In college, you're more free to do what you want…you're just free – happy to be out of school…College is more exciting.*

Henry: *…Sometimes you get a bit – like – having a laugh 'n' stuff.*

Martin: *…I enjoy it and it's mair I dae…you can work and have a laugh…you're enjoying it as well…I'm really enjoying this.*

Stewart: *…I'm… really happy that I'm coming* [to college).

Francis: *…I meet people. It's really good…I was a bit scared.*

Janice: *…the thought of doin' something new that I've not done…just meeting new people…it feels exciting*

What is the significance of this 'haptic' experience for the young people and does it have any relevance for their learning or their transformation from childhood to adulthood? Bogue (2004), in exploring Deleuze's contribution to pedagogy, proposed that –

> *To learn, then, is to immerse oneself within an alien element and thereby to open oneself to an encounter with signs…Signs 'cause problems' through their disorienting shock, forcing thought to deal with experiences that disrupt the common, coordinated functioning of the senses and faculties.*

Bogue, 2004, p.337

The unfamiliar and unrestrictive environment of college is the basis of *haptic* experience. K spoke about the young people feeling *'abandoned´*

when they came to college and their previous learning has, as K surmised,

left them unprepared for this experience. They do not know the *'signs'* and

the ones they do know, like school bells, no longer exist –

> *…the bell system…pupils notice it when they come*
> *here. The only thing is – they actually worry about here*
> *because they keep missing things because there's no bell to*
> *tell them when it's time to get up and go to the next class.*

<div align="center">K</div>

This *'disconcerting shock'* and the immersion in the college

environment forces them to relearn – it becomes in fact the basis of the

young person's learning, which has become experiential and multi-sensory,

leaving them open to all the new experiences they encounter.

Space and Foucault

Michel Foucault also analysed space, but from the perspective of

how space was used in creating and maintaining order. He considered how

space was apportioned and subdivided according to its use and the need to

exercise surveillance, but also how it was used to exclude or segregate. He

was less concerned with the *striations* and more concerned with the spaces

that they delineated and the way that these operated. To Foucault,

> *Space is fundamental in any form of communal life:*
> *space is fundamental in any exercise of power...*

<div align="right">Foucault in Rabinow, 1984, p.252</div>

Foucault's concept of *'governmentality'* allows us to compare and

contrast the two institutions in a different way, through consideration of

space and its deployment within the *'technologies of power'* and the *'technologies of self'*.

Technologies of Power

Within the technologies, or *techniques of power* (Gore, 1998; 235), are included distribution, surveillance, normalisation, exclusion, classification, individualisation, totalisation and regulation (Gore, 1998). Many of these are clearly evident in the interviews with the young people and how they describe their school and college experiences, and in the interviews with college lecturers.

The first of these, <u>distribution</u> refers to temporal as well as spatial dimensions and the various practices employed in educational institutions that can be grouped under this heading are such things as timetabling, segregation, and the physical arrangements of space into classrooms, workrooms etc. All are designed to assist classification and break down groups into smaller units that can be better managed.

Timetabling caused issues at both school and college and not always in the ways one might expect. Certainly, timetables were regarded as *'striations'*, restrictive and limiting choice, particularly in school. For example, Janice described the impact of the timetabling regime at school –

> *…school's like – gaun for your school dinners; gaun back; runnin' aboot classes – you've got to be in for the bell, ken? Hectic! Naewhere to sit – you've always got to go oot.*

Janice

And Nicola revealed how the need for order in terms of space and time created a complex, and complicated, process that removed autonomy from her in making choices about her future –

> *Because you had to do five subjects, and I didn't want to do a language or anything. You had to choose a language…you couldn't pick up anything new so you had to take – well what you had done at your Standard Grades…you had to choose them in columns and the ones I wanted to take were like in the same columns so I couldn't do it. And I didn't want to take a science 'n' I didn't want a Higher. But the sciences were all in a column and you had to choose. Sciences were in the same column as English and I wanted to take English but it was just the way it was working out!*

Nicola

However, it could be argued that individual choice has to be sacrificed to achieve a greater good. In college, Danny described the impact of timetabling when it failed in a system where it was intended to produce order –

> *…when we came here, we were always getting moved. Classes were double-booked. We were to get* [subject] *for 3 hours and we were only getting it for an hour and a half…*[and with regard to lecturers]*…They're here one week and no' the next…they cannae get anyone to stay in a class. It's always moved about all the time.*

Danny

Therefore, timetables are used within both college and school to achieve order, allowing the institutions to discharge their real function of education. However, one of the lecturers made the point that imposing order and structure through timetabling was one way of controlling the young people –

> *They* [the young people] *really need to be in classes*
> *all of the time. You can't allow half an hour…they need to be*
> *busy now until 4.00 when they leave. You can't have them*
> *having time in between because that's when they get into sort*
> *of mischief…*
>
> K

This reflects child protection and is redolent of the discourse surrounding much younger people. Such a statement would be considered unacceptable in referring to adults.

Segregation provides an extreme example of distribution and was used in schools where young people with behaviour difficulties were segregated into residential care or behaviour units. Such enclosure identifies and allows corrective practices, but has the further benefit of reducing 'cross-contamination'. In *The Birth of Social Medicine* (in Rabinow, 1984), Foucault described an analogous situation, where distribution, segregation and enclosure kept the sick from the healthy and made the whole area of public health subject to bureaucratic control. While hospitals ensured segregation, segregating practices, Foucault proposed, were more efficient. One could argue that the practice of providing in-class support in schools, as described by one young person, was a segregating practice. So, apparently, was attendance at college. In interviews with college staff, the avoidance of cross-contamination was explicit as they identified that college provision benefited the learners who remained in school –

> *…that allows them to concentrate on other people in the school then as well – that maybe need to get additional help but they've not been able to give them because they've got somebody in their class that gives them a problem*

K

Ultimately, the young person's attendance at college is also an application of power exercised through distribution, particularly for the young people who felt that they had little choice in the matter of attending college because of difficulties they would encounter in returning to school.

Exclusion as a technique of power has additional connotations to those identified in the Literature Review, where exclusion from school was presented as a route to social exclusion. Gore presents exclusion as Foucault defined it – the *'...negative side of normalisation – the defining of the pathological...'* (Gore, 1998, p.238). Exclusion is therefore more than being singled out for punishment for minor infringements – it is making a statement about the person. Victor's experience of school exclusion and having to return to face teachers and his peers exemplifies this change from simple punishments of misdemeanours to *subjection* – the problem had become Victor, rather than Victor's behaviour. There is a further extreme example of one young person who had been educated whilst in residential care which had come about, it was inferred, because of extreme behaviour in school. Being in residential care meant being denied the 'normal' choices and opportunities –

> *…the school I was at…it was a residential school – if I wanted to stay on to 5th year, the Social Work department would have had to pay for it. And I was wantin' to stay on 'coz I was really enjoying it. And I was getting good marks. But no*

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*– my Social Worker refused to discuss it with her department
to let me stay on to 5th year.*

name omitted

These two young people provide illustrations of the medical-judicial discourse in operation. The punishments, the exclusion from their peers, the classification and individualisation all are there to permit remedial action that will ultimately protect society from the effects of their deviance.

The corollary to distribution and exclusion is <u>surveillance</u> which '*singles out individuals, regulates behaviour, and enables comparisons to be made'* (Gore, 1998, p. 236). From the interviews with the young people, it was clear that surveillance, along with individualisation was regarded as a characteristic of school more than college and there were many examples of this within their narratives. Teachers maintained surveillance within the formal areas of the school – the classrooms and corridors and regulated pupil behaviour by '*shouting'.* The young people related examples where teachers singled out and *objectified* pupils, with perhaps the most notable being Victor who told how he had been shouted at in front of the class. Punishing Victor in this very public way provided a vicarious lesson to others about what is and is not acceptable behaviour, with the aim of encouraging self-regulation whilst simultaneously tacitly inviting Victor's peers to become part of the surveillance network within the school.

In order to extend the gaze as far as possible within the school, surveillance was delegated formally to school prefects who, as in George's case where he was beaten by one, regarded themselves as a legitimate

part of the disciplinary process. Where the gaze of the institution could not reach, surveillance was delegated back to parents, in the sense that the parents' responsibility for surveillance over their children is ceded to schools at an early age. Parents were thus obliged to take on a role in reinforcing school discipline. Nowhere was this more evident than in how schools approached truancy. Truancy was a deliberate action on the part of the school pupils, with the effect of removing themselves from school surveillance and regulation. Parents like Victor's mother became conscripts in extending the gaze of the school and held liable for ensuring that their child attends, while '*at the same time making them* [parents] *objects of that surveillance'* (Allan, 1999, p.86).

Victor's case was extreme. However, it was clear from all the interviews that these were mostly young people who were 'known' and visible within the school to a greater or lesser extent. In many cases, someone in a position of authority within the school had suggested college as a remedy of sorts to the difficulties the young person encountered, presenting it as *'a bit mair lenient'* (Victor) and *'better than school'* (Janice) but certainly it removed the young person from the surveillance that had, in their cases, ceased to be benign. With Francis (and perhaps others) it also removed him from the punishing attention of bullies within the school. Lecturers endorsed the point that young people left a lot behind, including their own reputations.   They no longer represented the potential for *dangerousness* that they had in school.

Within college, the young people made little comment about surveillance – perhaps it was less in evidence. However, what was clear from the staff interviews was that surveillance had been superseded by self-control, surveillance of the self, with the expectation that the young people would conform to the discipline of the institution in their desire to learn or simply be there – the *'educated subjects'* identified by Fendler (1998, p.58) who are willing to learn and who are defined by self discipline –

> *…governmentality is a kind of reflexive governance – the subject disciplines the subject. The subject is recognized as 'educated' and 'civilised' precisely because of its 'self-discipline'.*

<div align="center">Fendler, 1998, p.53</div>

In effect, by accepting the culture of colleges, the young people are signalling their preparedness to enter this adult world.

Normalisation requires the establishment of standards and comparison to be made against these but normalisation is also an active process concerned with conformity: not only to rules but to *'natural and observable processes'*, where *'non-conformity is punishable'* (Foucault, 1977, p. 179). What norms are established and how are they promoted or enforced? Here, we must return to the aim of education, which Jardine described as *'the intention of turning each individual into a socially desirable object for others and even for ourselves'* (Jardine, 2004, p.10). The young people recognised that they were being compared with a generalised 'other' in college, clearly articulated as 'adult' – the *'socially desirable object'*. The young people and the lecturers stressed the adult nature of college

frequently and this defined how they were treated and expected to behave, in contrast to school where they were treated more like children (although were not expected to behave like children). The former is clearly an act of *normalisation*, the latter an act of *surveillance*.

The young people continually positioned themselves in relation to this *other*, not so much in terms of how they saw themselves but in how they thought others should see them and treat them. Danny's comments on an aspect of his college work which he found particularly demeaning and unacceptable illustrates this –

Just because I think it's bairnish. They gi'e you bairnish stuff t'dae. We play games…it's a bit bairnish, eh? We're 16 noo – we're no' needin' t'dae stuff like that.

Danny

Or George, commenting on why he felt he had outgrown school –

…and at school, they don't really treat you like an adult – still treat you like a young child.

George

In school, the norms perceived by the young people were peer norms, evident in George's observation that certificates were awarded in schools on the basis of *behaviour* and being *better* than others, and in the insistence on a school uniform code of dress -

…we got a new Head Teacher 'n' he's made everybody wear the same sort o' stuff…like the lassies, he's tryin' no' to get them to wear certain things 'n' that…everybody looks the same

Steven

It was seen in the 'zero tolerance' to minor infringements described by Danny and Stewart, where there were protocols to be observed if they wanted to go to the toilet and in how they addressed teachers. This exercise of power was '*mortification'* that served to emphasise the individual's *'submissive or suppliant role "unnatural" for an adult'* (Goffman, 1961, p. 45). It also offered further opportunity to exercise power, since granting such a request can be delayed, as the young people above had experienced.

Regulation is the formal structure and application of rules and discipline. In schools, rules are intended to provide a structure, ultimately, for self-regulation, as well as a means whereby a complex institution can function effectively. Rules also exist in college and for the same end. However, the young people clearly discerned a difference between rules put into place to regulate behaviour within specific spaces with the aim of securing health and safety and accommodating others, and rules aimed at the control of the individual. Steven gave the example of smoking to illustrate this –

> *At school, y'cannae smoke wi'oot getting detention or something. But here, ye've t'go to the smoking area…so it means y'cannae get into trouble for smoking unless you're outside the…area.*
>
> *Steven*

Foucault proposed that discipline was maintained by *'gratification-punishment'* (Foucault, 1977, p.180), but the young people identified little in the way of *gratification* within school. On the contrary, punishment was

often a public *'spectacle'* (Foucault in Faubion, 2000, p.72), where the observers were vicariously chastised through *'experiential mortification'* (Goffman, 1961, p.40).

College, on the other hand, offered such privileges as being treated like an adult (including being able to smoke); certificates for success on courses; gaining a qualification that offered a route to a job; and positive relationships with lecturers and other students.

> *I like learning new skills…meeting new friends…you're not treated like a wee kid…you can actually call lecturers by their first name…*

Nicola

> *…here, I'm getting better grades and that I'm doing better than I was in school because – well – you get treated better and more like an adult than you did in school. And, I don't know why but it just helped me…it just makes me want to dae it 'coz I'm no like getting treated like a bairn and I have to do it.*

(Original emphasis)

Stewart

> *The lecturers are more easy-going that the school. They're no' telling you off so much for having a laugh at the same time.*

Martin

> *…I'm actually learning stuff at college but it's stuff that I want to do. And at the end of the day, I've got to get a certificate for it.*

Henry

Rather than these being privileges that had to earned, they were there at the start for all – the real threat was their loss through non-conformity. Foucault quoted Demia, writing about discipline in schools in 1716, –

> …*he* [the teacher] *must endeavour to make rewards more frequent than penalties, the lazy being more encouraged by the desire to be rewarded in the same way as the diligent than by the fear of punishment; that is why it will be very beneficial, when the teacher is obliged to use punishment, to win the heart of the child if he can before doing so.*

Foucault, 1977, p.180

The lecturers identified the importance of establishing relationships with the young people, winning their confidence and trust in the early stages of their course. Jeopardising this rewarding and adult relationship was something that would not be undertaken lightly.

The young people themselves had portrayed college as a place with less regulation than schools, but by no stretch of the imagination could this be interpreted as 'less strict'. On the contrary, each of the members of staff was at pains to point out to me the severity of the sanctions that accompanied transgression.

> …*they are in an adult environment – they have to behave like adults or – we just don't tolerate that, if they don't behave…*

L

The message was clear – if you wish to attend college, you must adhere to its code of conduct. Thus, the young person is no longer in opposition to an institution in which they have little choice or power, since

the discipline that must be applied is their own. As Hughes and Sharrock pointed out, the young person has become *'a willing accomplice in the requirements of power'* (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997, p.186).

Classification, like stereotyping and totalisation, brackets individuals together on the basis of some characteristic/s and it often determines their location in space and time. It can result in individuals classifying themselves. However, classification was more likely to be the preserve of college lecturers who did use terms like '*social, emotional and behavioural problems'* or simply *'behaviour problems'.* Classification was also evident in the distinction that the staff made between the young people of this study and other students in the college. What was apparent from their interviews was that they regarded the young people as in some chrysalis stage where all the potential is there and they would be accorded equal status and treatment but they remain different, unformed. At an institutional level, this is seen in the specific provision made for these students, rather than them being fully integrated into mainstream courses –

> *The facilities are the same, what we are teaching them is the same…we're taking it from a slightly more basic stage.*
>
> *…we try and treat them as near as possible to an adult…*

L

None of the young people chose to classify themselves in any way that acknowledged a degraded view of themselves and most stressed that their attendance at college was a positive choice that accorded with their

goals and needs at the time. One young person who had attended a behaviour unit at school rejected classification by describing his experience in the following terms –

Well, I had a wee bit trouble wi' reading 'n' writing so – a bit of that and a wee bit of behaviour.

name omitted

Such re-classification is what Foucault would have recognised as a transgressive act and it redresses the power imbalance somewhat, providing a demonstration of what he called *technologies of the self.*

Bullying and Technologies of Self

Before considering the *technologies of the self* further, I would like to consider the phenomenon of 'bullying' within schools. It entered into too many of the stories told by interviewees, students and staff alike, for it to be ignored and although I considered it within *surveillance* above, bullying represents resistance to the established order and is therefore a *technology of the self.* Bullying represents a use of power that often apes, but also provides a means of resisting, the *techniques of power* employed by the oppressors – the teachers (McLean, 2003). Bullies employ the techniques of power we have seen applied within school and delineated above, particularly surveillance, normalising judgements (bullying is generally portrayed as a reaction to 'difference', as in racist bullying), exclusion and distribution.

For example, consider how the bullies used space in their harassment of Francis, making use of corridors and communal spaces within the school. Again, we see Foucault's synaptic power and subversion in operation. George also identified the techniques of power being applied in the identification and singling out of those who would become victims. And bullying, as many identified, was all pervasive within schools and provided a valid demonstration of capillary power. As Steven said, there was a lot of bullying – *'bigger folk'* bullied others.

While the *incidence* of bullying in school has been researched quantitatively and there has been a great deal of activity directed at the production of anti-bullying strategies in schools, it is not a subject that has received a great deal of attention from researchers until relatively recently (Corby, 2004). Its impact on the young people in this study would certainly warrant more attention.

What was also very clear from the interviews was that bullying was a historical phenomenon – it did not happen in college, presumably because, as with truancy, there was no further need for such transgressive acts.

Technologies of Self

Above, I considered classification and totalisation as techniques of power but they also provided stereotypes within which the young people could construct their own identities. The identities they constructed often

contrasted with the identities they were ascribed in school and allowed the young people to go beyond these bounds set by others. Such transgressive acts provide what Pini called *'ways of becoming a self'* (Pini, 2004, p.164)

Thus, technologies of power create the potential for the technologies of the self and they are evident within the interviews where the young person identified with some classifications but also distinguished themselves from others. Nick, for example, distinguished himself from the '*wee dafties'* and *'wee disruption people'* that plagued his latter years in school. As proof that he could not be classified thus, he offered his college performance in evidence –

> *I've already got a review and I've read it and it's a' right. There's quite good things in it…just said I'd been working well in the classes and I've been attending, stuff like that. Attendances are 90%.*

Nick

Owen was also anxious to distance himself from the trouble-makers or those less serious in their aims.

> *…I work…some folk in my cless dinnae…like, the now, they're away. They'll be sitting in the library no' wantin' to do their work…*

Owen

There were no constraints within the interviews to inhibit the identities the young people constructed for themselves through the selection of the stories they told. These may provide a picture of the 'self' the young person wanted to become. Generally, these 'selves' were

focussed on the adults they aspired to and the careers they intended to pursue. They were emphatically not the identities constructed for them in school – not *'bairnish'*, not *'dafties'* nor delinquents. There is an interesting parallel with the study by Miller and Glassner (1997), cited by Silverman (2001), conducted using the stories told by teenage girls in gangs –

> *… Miller and Glassner note that respondents make their actions understandable in two ways. First, they do not attempt to challenge public views of gangs as bad. But, second, they do challenge the notion that the interviewee herself is bad.*

Silverman, 2001, p.100

In a similar way, the young people in my study were prepared to accept and relate to me the negative opinions held by others within schools – and to describe some of the experiences that led to such opinions, albeit in a general or sanitised way, for example Henry's account of an incident at school –

> *…I shouted and stuff and knocking chairs off the desk. Swearing and that - …'Nice boy but had a tantrum'.*

Henry

But they were keen to use their college experiences to invalidate any negative classification and demonstrate that they are not 'bad', although, like Henry, the school situation may have made him do 'bad' things, or Nick whose truancy in school could not be down to him since he had *'90% attendance'* in college. Such transgressions permitted the young people to reclassify themselves by challenging the grounds on which they were labelled 'bad' and in doing so, allowed them to take ownership of the

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act – a process that Foucault described as *'reverse discourse'* (Pini, 2004, p. 63). Janice in particular expressed a certain pride in her 'bad' acts since it showed that she had taken control of a situation in which she had originally been the subjugated party.

> *…I got bullied every day. I just stuck up wi' it. I fought back eventually and they stayed awa' fae me.*

Janice

The technologies of self are also seen in their truancy and resistance to authority. Janice provides one example, but consider the others – Victor reacted aggressively to being humiliated in class; Francis walked out of school to escape bullies; Henry absented himself from school in order to undertake paid work; Hannah refused to return to school, where she felt she had been victimised by teachers; Nicola 'stuck to her guns' and left to pursue a vocational rather than an academic route, and so on.

Truancy is a transgressive act that removes the young person from the gaze of the school as well as physically removing themselves as the object of power. The young people were fully aware of the consequences and suffered by them, yet persisted in the behaviour and such deliberate flouting of rules has been described as '*messing up'* (Goffman, 1961, p.55) where getting caught and punished was an important part of redressing the balance of power.

Being in college meant that truancy was no longer an issue, however.

> *…Foucault argued that where there is power there is resistance. If the body is seen as the primary target of power, then it can also be a site of resistance. Bodies can 'resist' their particular classification by 'speaking out' in ways which challenge or 'upset' established order, in ways deemed 'inappropriate'. Foucault was therefore interested in seeing what he called 'subjugated' (or censured) voices 'speak out' in resistance to their regulation.*

Pini, 2004, p.163

In each of the above cases, the young person was *speaking out* and challenging the system, resisting the classification that school was imposing on him or her. There was a clear message from the young person to school that questioned the techniques of power that had been used against him/her.

It is important to remember that simply the act of attending college rather than school was an act of transgression for the young people and the school and college staff who facilitate this process are complicit in this. Attending college as an alternative to school whilst still under the yoke of compulsory education is not mainstream provision, nor can it be, according to K –

> *And a lot of the ones who go to school don't really need college at that time, either. They need to be in school, getting standard grades. So you're talking about a small part of the school population…*

It began as provision made for a group of young people who were resisting all other means to conform to the school's *technologies of power* and the lecturers interviewed still regarded it this way, and apparently, so did the school guidance staff who promoted it to the young people – or did

not promote, as in the case of Nicola who, as an academically able pupil without behaviour problems, was encouraged to remain in school. It is not for everyone, the lecturers emphasised, and school was seen as the default position for compulsory education. Thus, involvement with and promotion of this programme and the young people is, in itself, an act of subversion on the part of the staff.

This act of subversion is legitimised through policies recommending school/college collaboration, however. Now, the spatial distribution of child/school, adult/college has become a further example of a technique of power, although one that changes the balance of governmentality in favour of the young people. This is testimony to the importance of transgression in challenging the status quo and initiating change.

> *…transgression appears to offer scope for a kind of creativity which does not promise complete freedom, but enables alternative versions of restraint.*
>
> Allan, 1999, p.47

Identity and Relationships

Much has been said above about the identities that the young people construct through the technologies of self. Identity is also confirmed in the relationships with others and the young people in the interviews were asked about their relationships with parents and friends, and with teachers and lecturers. Had anything changed in their relationships with friends and families as a result of attending college rather than school? With few

exceptions, the young people felt that their status had improved as a result of attending college. For the young people, they had been able to cross a line that separated 'failed school pupil' from 'successful college student', a valued social role (Wolfensberger, 1983) and a critical feature of their identity to themselves and other key people in their lives, including parents.

Several of them had become the object of envy to friends who thought they were more mature and certainly engaged in more interesting activities. Some had become enthusiastic advocates of college, taking application forms and prospectuses to friends who were still at school – even Danny who had been critical of aspects of the college had given information to a friend to encourage him to apply for college. Some, notably Nicola, felt that they had outgrown their friends from school and had formed other friendships within the college.

Relationships with parents were also improved for most of the young people. For some, this was because he/she was no longer in trouble at school and the pressure was therefore also taken off parents for the surveillance the school had imposed. For example, Owen's mum had been able to relax the 'curfew' he had been under whilst at school –

> *…she wouldnae let me stay oot, like, longer. She would…make sure I was in, nighttimes 'n'; that. But noo, I'm allowed oot 'n' that wi' my mates. It's better.*

To some, like Owen, attending college was a rite of passage which accorded the young person more permissions in his/her personal life. A simple deduction would be that attending school constructs an identity of

childhood, whereas attending college constructs an adult identity and all that implies.

The lecturers were also involved in constructing identities within the interviews, both for themselves and for the young people. The identities they constructed for themselves and the young people, and the relationships they described were inextricably linked. The staff were acutely aware that they represented an opportunity to turn over a new leaf for the young person who came to college and accordingly, presented college as a place that could succeed where school had failed, and themselves, along with other college staff, as instrumental in this. However, where colleges and their staff were able to claim credit for the successes among this young population, the failures were generally attributed to the young person him/herself – for example, with the proposition that some young people were simply too immature to benefit from college. This reverting to *'conventional discourse' (*Avis et al 2002, p.198) when considering difficulties encountered within one's own practice appeared to be a failing of the even the most reflexive teaching staff.

The staff had a great deal to say about relationships, specifically the relationships between staff and the young people. To them, these were of critical importance in how they worked with these students and their success or otherwise. They each stressed the adult nature of college and the students who attended, yet each made a similar point – that the young people in question were the *same* but *different*. There did appear to be a clear attempt to maintain the formality of the teacher/student relationship

whilst developing relationships with the young people that were based on mutual respect and equality. To the young people, however, they were seen as equals and *'mair real'*.

Lecturers, Navigators and a Pedagogy for Smooth Space

If we consider the maritime model presented by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), we would have to concede that while college staff *appear* to inhabit the same smooth space as the young people, to them, it is a striated space. The striations are evident when L complained about the need to be driven by assessments, K spoke about issues of timetabling and all three recognised the striations of performance indicators and the college's disciplinary procedure. While Deleuze and Guattari concede that '*it is possible to live striated on the…seas'* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 532), it appears that the staff strive to find their own methods to keep the space smooth*.* They deal with their striations by disparaging them or diminishing their importance in the face of a greater good – the *'distance travelled'* by the young person e.g. –

> *…we took the decision 3 years ago not to put them through assessments because we felt that it was adding another pressure and these young people are coming in with lots of other issues…it's just important to get them into the workshop to teach them the skills.*

> *…I'm not that clued up in PIs…I know…PIs are something that do affect…but I'm honestly not sure.*

<div align="center">M</div>

This 'down-playing' of the importance of the procedures and performance indicators in college in the face of a greater good resounds in the arguments presented by Nixon et al (1997) in considering the professional status of teachers.   They distinguished between 'practice' and 'institution' i.e. between the performance of professional work and the quality of learning, and the organisation created for the promotion of practice. By distinguishing one from the other, the staff can present themselves as guardians of learning despite striations imposed by procedures and performance criteria.

In terms of the Maritime Model presented by Deleuze and Guattari, staff like K, L and M are seen by the young people as having acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate around this apparently barrier-free space and thus able to support others in their journey. The notion that lecturers may be 'skilled navigators' is an interesting one in terms of their pedagogical role. The use of the term 'navigator' is becoming more popular in the health arena where it has been used in cancer care to denote a mentor who supports another on the 'journey' of the illness –

> *Entering, negotiating, and travelling through the system can be a challenge. Patient navigation, a relatively new concept within Canadian health care systems, is intended to expedite patient access to services and resources.*
>
> Breast Cancer Initiative, 2002, p.29

Thus, the navigator role is one that supports and defers to the patient rather than directs. To transfer this role to education is to propose that the student is in control of the learning and the college lecturer is not an

instructor but a facilitator, supporting young people on their learning journey, providing guidance as required but not directing, who *'abdicates authority in deference to the "other" (the learner, the student)'* (Green, 1998, p.191). In the interviews, the young people were clear that being able to work on their own and make choices about what they did was important, but so was having the benefit of the lecturer's experience, as these quotes below illustrate –

> *…you've got a lot of choices about what you can do. Like, he tells you, 'make a poster' and you can do it on whatever you want as long as it's reasonable…but in school you were told exactly what you were to do.*

> *…you could actually pick up a bit paper an' the chef was just cutting up…he just went like that 'n' he cut right away…an' then he was talking about how people cut their fingers 'n' stuff wi' brand new knives.*

Deleuze (1994) offers more insight into the lecturer role, here using the metaphor of learning to swim to illustrate the distinction between instructing and assisting someone to learn.

> *We learn nothing from those who say: 'Do as I do'. Our only teachers are those who tell us to 'do with me', and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.*

> Deleuze, 1994, p.26

In the interviews with the young people and the relationships they describe with lecturers, the assisting role is clearly evident. Below, Steven knew he was in control of his own learning, but also knew the facilitation role he expected the lecturer to take –

> *…you just like get along wi' them* [lecturers] *but at school it's like – ye find it hard t'get along wi' the teachers…*
>
> *…at school, it's smaller classes. The teachers helpin' you non-stop, or ye cannae get the teacher's attention. But here, it's like – bigger space 'n' the teachers…trust you…t'get on wi' it, without them helpin' you. N'then, when you want them, they'll like come round 'n' see you.*

Steven

Staff also recognised this assisting role and lecturer L in particular identified and described well the role of *'do with me'*,

> *Just the very fact that you're treating them as adults and you're expecting them to treat you the same way, with a measure of respect – without being – you know, you're being away up there and they're being away down there. I think it's more working with them physically – I mean, right beside them, actually helping them with their work. Very hands-on.*

L

Clearly, to the young people, the staff role was as navigator. This then may be the pedagogy of college – not instructors demonstrating what to do and inviting imitation, but navigators who work alongside. Green distinguished between the *'transmission classroom'* and the *'interpretation classroom'* (Green, 1998, p.188), where the former was the epitome of the traditional classroom and the latter, while it challenged existing discourses on how education should be delivered, engaged the learners in a way that the traditional model failed to do.

Analysis of the Policy Review

Educational institutions play a fundamental part in the regulation of society and how we live together. In policy discourse, education in particular has both an individual and a social dimension to the role it plays in society and both have a function in reducing inequity and promoting economic stability. Educated individuals have better chances in life and in some kind of aggregation of this, a well-educated society has the key to economic success and stability.

It was precisely this point that the Scottish Executive iterated in its first year, the first year of this examination The policy documents issued and developed in the year 2000 were those that established the role of education in general and schools in particular in creating a well-ordered (and prosperous), tractable society. These documents illustrated through statistical presentation and description the relationship between schools' abilities to regulate behaviour and adult life. The focus was not on the identification of miscreants but on the management of individuals and thereby their control.

Foucault's *'techniques of power'* (Gore, 1998, p.235) are clearly evident in the policy actions of the Scottish Executive. Throughout the policies there are expectations of standards of behaviour and statements of the efforts that will be made to enforce these through regulation, distribution (for example, either in school, special units or colleges) and exclusion (both actual exclusion from school and the threat of exclusion from society in the future). There is surveillance, not simply in the exhortations for better

management of schools and their premises, but exemplified by the legislation of 2006 that drew parents back into the mechanisms of control and reasserted their rights to exercise surveillance and regulation over their children (Scottish Executive, 2006k).

Classification and individualisation can be perceived in the various policy documents that, whilst apparently directed at the institutional practices within schools, still subjectify individuals. The best example of this is possibly the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scottish Executive, 2003d) where institutional practices are recognised as giving rise to difficulties for young people, but the identification and classification of young people is still required for change to be possible.

Classification is also apparent within the statistical documents produced by the Scottish Executive, in order to illustrate trends and to give definition to matters of concern. Despite their apparent objectivity, they turn the gaze of readers (and not simply policy makers, since these are issued as news releases) onto certain individuals. There are, for example, frequent references to 'those in receipt of free school meals' with regard to such ills as truancy, school exclusions and violence and anti-social behaviour. 'Free school meals' is not merely a piece of social welfare policy, of course. It provides a category by which young people can be classified and made visible. It also provides a classification for the better targeting of resources, in itself a means of avoiding challenge to institutional practice.

The many consultation documents, along with guidance for action, provide examples of the operation of capillary power, where it is exercised

through a web of surveillance and control that exists at the level at which it is implemented. There are many examples of this – the guidance to young people on bullying (Scottish Executive, 2002f); the guidance to parents in dealing with young people (Scottish Executive, 2006k); the paper *It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright* (Scottish Executive, 2002g). The discourse of child protection, in particular, promotes and legitimises such surveillance and the action of capillary power.

Foucault's analysis of education is one based on the role of education in perpetuating the status quo. And yet, those working within education complain about the rate of change. Perhaps this analysis of policy serves to distinguish these concepts. With over 80 policy documents and 12 major policy initiatives in this area alone, each establishing new or revised procedures or requiring additional information to be collected, change is imposed through working practices. Simply keeping abreast of developments becomes an onerous task. However, reading through the documents reveals that they are directed at maintaining and/or reinforcing the status quo – they are presented as better or more refined ways of doing what was already accepted in principle.

> *Society …expects its citizens to be capable of proactively dealing with change throughout life both individually as well as collaboratively in a context of dynamic, multicultural global transformation. Of all the institutions in society, education is the only one that* potentially *has the promise of fundamentally contributing to this goal. Yet education, far from being a hotbed of teaching people to deal with change in basic ways is just the opposite.*

> Fullan, 1993, p.4

Chapter 10

Implications and Conclusions

When I first embarked on this piece of work, I was prepared for the outcome that young people found college preferable to school; nor was it unexpected that their experiences would have been affected by the teaching staff they encountered in both establishments.   It was precisely their enthusiasm for college in the face of their disengagement from school that prompted this study and what was important to me was to gain an understanding of what the critical factors were, with the idea half-formed in my mind that schools could learn from colleges and change practices in some way in order to become more inclusive, especially of these young people. However, now, like Danny, I am not so sure that schools can so easily free themselves from their own discourses. And while it was clear from the interviews that the young people had enjoyed their experience of college, they had also engaged with their own development in a way that had evaded them in school.

The picture that emerged as the discourses and constructions were unpacked was more complex than I had anticipated. Relationships were more important than simply liking or disliking – they exerted a strong influence on learning and engagement and what was described in relationship terms often sent out a loud signal about pedagogy. I suspect that in colleges, we are often guilty of confusing pedagogy with teaching

methodology and spend a great deal of time on the latter, whilst neglecting what is right under our noses. Were I to conduct this research again, I would explore in greater depth the relationships between lecturers and the young people, particularly the importance of these in creating a pedagogy that may be unique to colleges. The young people recognised the importance of equality and interaction, but also autonomy in their learning, while the lecturers I interviewed were able to describe the *'right'* staff to work with disengaged young people in college – enthusiastic, willing, learner-centred and able to establish relationships with the young people that were conducive to their learning – often providing a description of ways of behaving rather than personal characteristics. Deleuze (1994) described the role of *'do with me'* and these three words encapsulate far more pedagogy than lengthy treatises on the technologies of learning.

Within colleges, we need to engage the young people in more meaningful dialogue about the college experience and to pay particular attention to what they tell us. We should not, however, expect these stories to be easily forthcoming, simply because we ask for them. In my encounters, there was an element of stepping out of my college role in the interviews and I had to make a conscious effort to listen hard to what was being said and not to close down an area because I felt it was not relevant. Nothing could be rejected or dismissed out of hand and listening to the silences was as important as listening to the words. And I needed to go further in engaging with the meaning of the dialogue. Danny, who complained about a particular lecturer's style, was making a strong point

about how he expected to be treated as an emerging adult at college. Childish games and school-type work were behind him.

Below, I explore this within the context of the conclusions from this research and the lessons that we, as college managers and educators, can take from them.

Policy

One important lesson is that we, as educators within colleges, should engage more with the political process. Scotland's Colleges are public institutions that operate within what is clearly a political arena, although as educators, we frequently strive to distance ourselves from that, stressing rather the 'good' that we do. The examination of policy documents and the discourses they reflect leaves us in little doubt that the provision of education in Scotland is jealously guarded as the territory of the Scottish Government and where it is unable to exert direct control, it does so through the establishment and monitoring of objectives and targets. In colleges, the political agenda becomes more overt because funding can be made contingent upon such targets, evident in initiatives like the implementation of recommendations from the Beattie Committee (Scottish Executive, 2001h) and school/college collaboration (Scottish Executive, 2003k) where increases in funding were directed explicitly at meeting the government's agenda. As educators, we have a choice – we must either acknowledge the political agenda and its impact on us or deny it. Denial may allow a degree

of professional detachment, but sooner or later, we have to face the discomfort this brings – as in the protest that we *'did not come into FE'* to teach disaffected young people or that our colleges have become *'dumping grounds'*. On the other hand, acknowledgement allows us a degree of insight and empowerment.

Acknowledging it, however, means acknowledging our role as agents of social control – we are there to play a part in making our society better, safer, more prosperous etc. and according to current policy discourse, to play an important role in reducing the numbers of those not in employment, education or training. Because of the attendant evils of social exclusion and recidivism, we cannot deny that this is a 'good thing' to pursue. Accepting all this allows us to have a voice in how such an agenda can be delivered, but importantly, it allows us to make a legitimate claim for the voices of the young people themselves to be heard. However, we can only do this if we engage in the political process. Taylor et al (1997) put it thus –

> *…we have an interest in exploring the values and assumptions which underlie policies and the related issues of power, leading to questions such as "In whose interests?" and "Who are the winners and losers?" in any particular policy initiative.*

Taylor et al, 1997, p.37

Jardine (2005), in considering the messages Foucault had for educators, admonished us not merely to ask questions about what is happening but also to ask what are the alternatives and outcomes –

What else could we do here? Is our ability to imagine what else we might do itself insinuated in hidden regimes beyond our good intentions in raising such alternatives? What would be the present and absent effects in these matters?

Jardine, 2005, p. 33/34

In applying this to the position of under-16s in college, we should ask 'what else could we do here?' The clearest message emerging from the interviews with lecturers and young people was that doing nothing was not an acceptable option. School is failing these young people, not because it lacks facilities for vocational education, but because it lacks the links to the world of work and the gateway to an adult world. On the other hand, college was providing what the young people needed. In the interviews, I asked the lecturers whether schools could change in any way to remedy this and they were doubtful about success– as were the young people themselves. Sproson, in his study, reached a similar conclusion –

Schools must acknowledge the fact that some young people who have not enjoyed learning at school thrive at college in similar size teaching groups pursuing a similar curriculum.

However, he continues -

The difference is that students experience respect. Solipsism rules – all schools would argue that they do treat students with respect – for some students, that is not their experience.

Sproson, 2003, p.23

There are explicit messages within the comparisons made by the young people that all was not well within their school experiences. Their

environment was simultaneously restrictive and insecure and they related incidents that illustrated a distinct lack of respect.

Schools

Have the young people perhaps simply outgrown school? The statistics would appear to suggest something of the sort is happening. If attendance at, and truancy from, school can be taken as measures of engagement, it certainly appears that the position changes radically in S3, when truancy and absence increase dramatically. What was acceptable to young people in S1 and S2 appears unacceptable in S3. To some of them, school had changed irrevocably and for the worse. It had become stricter, more dangerous and less fun.

Schools could perhaps identify and address such issues if they had a greater awareness of them. As the policy on bullying stressed (Scottish Executive, 2002f), teachers can only deal with what they know to be happening. Perhaps they could gather and learn from the stories of the young people, from their '*subjugated knowledges'* (Jardine, 2005, p.119) and act upon these. There are issues in relying on such stories, however. One such issue is trust (Westcott and Littleton, 2005) – schools would have to establish trust in the system that it would listen and change, in order to elicit the stories. Also, Jardine (2005) proposed that while Foucault offered us the means whereby we could analyse and challenge educational institutions, particularly schools, she cautioned that simply *'telling stories'*

was insufficient. She warned of *'weak and trivialised versions of "classroom stories" that kept in place precisely what they are attempting to uncover'* (Jardine, 2004, p.32), simply because people felt empowered by telling their stories. There had to be a commitment to change. Another issue concerns whether children and young people are valued as credible agents of change. Wescott and Littleton (2005) quoted James –

> *"…recognising children as people with abilities and capabilities different from, rather than simply less than, adults…"*

<div align="right">Westcott and Littleton, 2005, p.154</div>

According to the young people, they were treated like children and certainly *'less than adults'* and it remains to be seen whether schools, so immured in the discourse of child protection, could set this aside to engage in such interaction.

What emerged clearly from the interviews with the young people was that, although they had accepted the popular construction of colleges as a *'place where people come to, to get qualifications if they want a job'*, what made the greatest impact on them was its difference from school. The qualities of college that they explicitly valued were its voluntary and unrestrictive nature; its adult environment; and the choices it conferred. Arguably, schools can never become the 'smooth' places (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that colleges appear to be to these young people, especially when the striations are related to the protection of children, a role that schools assume from parents. The characters of these narratives – the

young people as pupils and then as students, the school teachers and the college lecturers – all occupy *'subject positions'* where certain things are expected of each *'in line with the discoursal rights and obligations'* (Fairclough, 2001, p.31). Therefore, for teachers and schools to change, the discourses in which they feature would also have to change and being constrained in this way may leave little scope for being other than they are.

However, perhaps the barrier to change lies more in the important role within society that schools play as *'institutions of delimitation'* (Foucault,1972, p. 46), having acquired the power to identify and categorise deviance. The pervasiveness within school education of Foucault's medical-judicial discourse, where the deviant individual is identified and classified as *'the author of his acts'* (Foucault in Rabinow, 1984, p.220), is evidence of this power. If, within the education system, we accept and sanction the individualisation of problems such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, we then *'divert people's attention away from the real cause of their distress'* (Joseph, 2007, p.429) and work against finding solutions.

Foucault, Deleuze and Goffman all provided models whereby we could analyse schools as educational institutions and research (e.g. Shucksmith et al, 2004) and policy documents (e.g. Scottish Executive, 2004q) have recognised the part played by institutional practices within schools in creating the problem behaviour they seek to avoid (McLean, 2003). The advice and guidance has been clear and consistent yet the improvements have been barely noticeable in a society that changes still

faster. It may be, as Ball (1993) proposed, that such rapidity of change in society makes us nostalgic for 'Victorian values' and a mythical time when there was order and discipline in schools, with the teacher dispensing knowledge from the front of the classroom. So schools' attempts to change may be doomed to failure because they cannot engage parents and wider society in more pupil-centred approaches: what receives approval are the actions take that look like 'good, old-fashioned discipline' – school uniforms, regimentation, totalisation, and isolation of those who represent a threat to social order. That this is reinforced by policy makers is seen in how warmly reviewed was the imposition of a dress code in certain schools, in their evaluation of *Better Behaviour – Better Learning* (Scottish Executive, 2004l).

Difference

Colleges do not have to contend with this level of public expectation or scrutiny. Firstly, they are viewed as places that adults attend, so applying disciplinary measures or regulation seen as relevant for children is not appropriate. Secondly, they are transparent – anyone can attend college and witness its operations first hand. Thirdly, and this is where vocationalism becomes important, they are judged by outcomes that have direct relevance to their activities (e.g. colleges train plumbers who then get jobs as plumbers).

In this regard, how did a college lecturer compare with a school teacher? To the young people, the differences were clear and consistent.

College lecturers established relationships with their learners that implied an equality that bordered on friendship – they are *'mair real'*. But there may be a danger that these relationships obscure other, more critical differences such as pedagogy, an often overlooked feature of college education, and Deleuze (1994) offers us a view of learning that encapsulates the role of the College teacher. The college lecturer is one who is *'able to emit signs'* (Deleuze, 1994, p. 26) and facilitate learning. I see the college lecturer as a navigator in the 'smooth' space of college, one who knows the ropes and helps the young person on their journey, but who ultimately defers to the young person in terms of destination, pace, support etc. Within this role lies the *'large, precocious embryological differentiations'* (Deleuze, 1994, p. 43) that gives clear professional identity to the college lecturer.

However, the college lecturer must become something more than a navigator, in order to protect the 'smooth' space that college is to these young people. The lecturers demonstrated a reluctance to have their work defined by the colleges' performance indicators, preferring to stress 'soft' indicators or 'distance travelled'. In colleges, there is a real danger, as Nixon et al (1997) cautioned, that the tension between targets and quality in learning and teaching results in one becoming mistaken for the other and in a similar vein, Allan warned against becoming obsessed with *'proving rather than improving'* (Allan, 2004, p.417). In order to discharge such a responsibility, the lecturer must understand yet guard against the rhetoric of policy makers, whilst learning to identify, value and protect the unique aspects of college. This involves engaging in reflexive practice of their own,

in order to challenge the institutional practices that would erode the unique qualities of Scotland's Colleges. It also means engaging with students in a way that does not simply nod at learner-centeredness. As a college manager, I certainly have a role in supporting staff to become the guardians as well as the navigators of the 'smooth' space and to ensure that within my practice, I am clear about the difference between effectiveness and efficiency.

Professionalism

In the debate on the role of Scotland's Colleges, there have been voices of concern raised by bodies who represent colleges, for example the SFEU, cautioning against undervaluing the important characteristics that distinguish college from school, particularly its adult and voluntary nature. On the other hand, the GTCS and teaching unions have lobbied to make the college sector conform to what is expected of schools. However, in unpacking the position of the GTCS and the EIS, it is apparent that what is often the subject of their concern is the lack of a professional identity for college staff and the solutions are often posed as lying within initial training, compulsory registration and so on. At a time when other sectors are retreating from 'professionalism' (e.g. Bottery, 1998), it is ironic that this is being sought for college teaching staff but perhaps this represents application of technologies of power, particularly regulation and classification, in order to deal with a sector that often appears wayward and

subversive. This point was explored by Robson (1998) who cautioned against the tendency to –

> *…to confer any emphasis on a narrow or technicist concept of professionalism, or one which might stress outcomes and performance, for example, at the expense of pedagogy and a shared professional knowledge. It is time to attach a proper value to the FE teachers' professional role, as teacher, and to address the future of a sector which has yet to receive the kind of support or attention it deserves.*
>
> Robson, 1998, p.604

Robson also warned against attempting to enhance status by *'controlling the numbers seeking entry to its teaching profession'* (Robson, 1998, p.588). Professionalism therefore should reflect the quality of teaching and learning within colleges, rather than regulation, freeing rather than constraining teaching staff.

Ethics and Reflective Practice

So perhaps the genie is out of the bottle. Providing an alternative and vocational education for young people who have disengaged from school is now part of the work of Scotland's Colleges. The arguments for this are clear and powerful: it is a solution that benefits all parties – schools are given an effective motivational aid in re-engaging young people in education and coincidently, the space to focus on the more tractable young person who also needs attention; the young people prefer it as it meets their needs to have their *'almost-adult'* status acknowledged; and colleges gain access to students and secure their role in an arena where often their

identity is obscured by the demands and provision of other sectors. Things

have not changed appreciably since Robson (1998) emphasised the

marginal position that colleges occupy, being alternatively drawn or

compressed by schools, universities and informal education provision.

Accepting and developing this political agenda is one way of regaining

control and establishing primacy over post-school, as opposed to post-

compulsory, education. However, this comes at a price – that of cultivating

the essential differences between colleges and schools, including their staff

and their pedagogy.

As we have seen, colleges provide an often exciting (yet

apparently safe) place where young people can make, or begin to make, the

transition to adulthood. The lecturers identified that within this process, the

young people must acquire self-discipline (Fendler, 1998) in order to

succeed and this is achieved through what Foucault described as an '*ethical*

project' (Allan. 2005, p.284). For the young people of this study, the

practices were attendance, the completion of work, the suppression of

childish behaviour etc. and their goal, while it may have encompassed a

vocational outcome, this was as a badge of attaining the true goal –

adulthood.

However, ethical practice is not the sole preserve of the young

people. In order to be the guardians of post-school education, the

educators and institutions themselves must engage in reflective practice

and acknowledge the impact that they have upon their learners and their

communities (Bottery, 1998). Lecturers in particular require to have *'cultural*

vigilance' (Allan 2004, p.289) and to ensure that, in acting in the best interests of their students, they acknowledge the student voices rather than assuming the moral high ground. In interviewing the lecturers, I asked them what colleges could learn from schools. While teaching methodology was considered by one, the others thought that the lessons we could learn from schools were discipline and structure – precisely those features of schools about which the young people complained most. Recognising and valuing what colleges do well takes reflexivity and confidence and seeking the validation of the students offers considerably more than unquestioningly reiterating the discourses of school.

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2004l, *Connect – Report on implementation of Better Behaviour-Better Learning 2004.*

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2004r, *Ambitious, Excellent Schools – our agenda for action.*

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2004s, *Building the Foundations of a Lifelong Learning Society: A review of collaboration between schools and further education colleges in Scotland –interim report.*

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2005h, *A Review of Collaboration between Schools and Further Education Colleges: consultation analysis report of responses to interim report and outline draft strategy.*

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2005j, *Lifelong Partners: Scotland's Schools and Colleges Building the Foundations of a Lifelong Learning Society - a guide for schools, colleges and local authorities.*

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2005k, *Good to Know: advice for parents and carers of teenagers on bullying.* Safer Scotland

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2005l, *Fresher.* Safer Scotland

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2005m, *It's OK to be you.* Safer Scotland

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2005n, *Further Education in Scotland 2004.*

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2006c, *Entitlement to Learning Scoping Study*, Research Findings No.41/20056. Enterprise and Lifelong Learning

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2006d, *Ambitious, Excellent Schools – Progress report*. Smarter Scotland

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2006e, *Children and Young People in the BNSF[6] Programme.* Scottish Executive Social Research

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, 2006f, *National Evaluation of Determined to Succeed – Phase 1: Early implementation processes across Scotland.* Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Research Findings No.37/2006

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[6] BNSF – 'Better Neighbourhood Services Fund'

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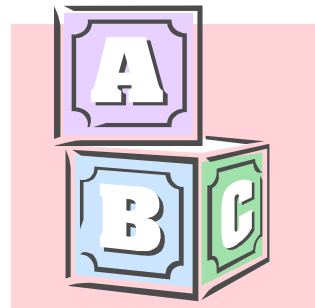
Appendices

| **Appendix 1** |
| Clip Art |

The clip art pictures are standard clip art images and were identified by using search words that emerged from the pilot interview. The words – success, achievement, education, school, college, rules, punish, reward – yielded up many images and I selected images that were simple in their presentation, containing clear images.

When the interviewees encountered these, they were presented as a set of separate images, rather than all on a single sheet. Interviewees had a flat surface on which to sort the images and to select the ones they wanted to use.

Appendix 2

Policy Map

Year 2000/ 2001	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2000		Exclusion from Schools, 1989/99	National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland, 2000		Ambitious, Excellent Schools, 2000		
				Beattie Committee Report – Implementing Inclusiveness, 2000			
2001 January to March				*Incidents of Violence against Local Authority School Staff in 1999-2000*, Media and Communications Group, 24/01/01			
2001 April to June							

2001 July to Sept.	*Interchange 66: Developments in Inclusive Schooling*, Education Department Research Unit		*Opportunity Scotland: A Summary of Responses*	*Better Behaviour - Better Learning: Summary Report of the Discipline Task Group*	National Centre - Education for Work and Enterprise, 2001, *Learning Gains from Education for Work*		*Further Education in Scotland, 2000*
2001 October to Dec.	*Adult Literacy in the Labour Market: A Literature Review*	*Provisional Attendance and Absences Results, 2000-01*, Media and Communications Group, 13/12/01		*Better Behaviour - Better Learning: A Joint Action Plan of The Scottish Executive, COSLA, ADES, ADSW*			

Year 2002	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2002 Jan-Mar		*Exclusions from Schools, 2000-2001,* Media and Communications Group, 20/02/02	*Scotland's Action Programme to Reduce Youth Crime 2002*	*With All Due Respect: the role of schools in promoting respect and caring for self and others*			*Further Education: Guidance for 2003-04*
2002 Apr-Jun							
2002 Jul-Sep			*Youth Justice in Scotland – a progress report for all those working with young people who offend*				
2002 Oct-Dec			*Vulnerable Children: Young Runaways and Children Abused through Prostitution*	*Advice for Children and Young People: Let's Stop Bullying,* Anti-Bullying Network	*Determined to Succeed: A Review of Enterprise in Education – evidence report*		

			It's Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright – Literature Review			

Year 2003 p.1	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2003 January to March			*Protecting Children – A Shared Responsibility: Guidance for Education Authorities, Independent Schools, School Staff and all others working with children in an education context in Scotland*	*Moving Forward! Additional Support for Learning*		*Life through Learning through Life: The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland – Summary,* Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department	*A Review of Occupational Standards and National Guidelines on Provision Leading to the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQ(FE)) and Related Professional Development*
				Educating for Excellence: Choice and Opportunity – the Executive's Response to the National Education Debate, The National Debate on Education		*Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee: Final Report on Lifelong Learning Strategy – Response from the Executive*	
				Incidents of Violence against Local Authority School Staff in 2001- 2002, Media and Communications Group, 30/01/03		*A World of Opportunity: A guide to education and training in Scotland,* British Council	

Year 2003 p.2	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2003 April to June	*2003 Education and Training in Scotland - National Dossier,* Scottish Executive Education Department	*Participation in Education by 16 to 21 year olds in Scotland: 2000/2001,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569		*Reporting Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour and Violence,* Education Department: Pupil Support and Inclusion Division			
2003 July to Sept.		*Exclusions from Schools, 2001/2002,* Statistics Publication Notice					*Further Education in Scotland, 2002*

Year 2003 p.3	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection		School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership
2003 October to Dec.		*Incidents of Violence against Local Authority School Staff in 2001-2002*, Media and Communications Group, 30/01/03		*Report of the Consultation on the draft Additional Support for Learning Bill,* Scottish Executive Education Department			
				Ensuring Improvement in our Schools: a consultation paper and draft bill			
				National Priorities in Education: performance report 2003			
				Exclusion from Schools in Scotland: Guidance to Education Authorities Circular 8/03, Education Department: Pupil Support and Inclusion Division			

Year 2004 p.1	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2004 Jan-Mar		*Incidents of Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour against Local Authority Staff in 2002/2003,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569				*LLL: A review of collaboration between schools and further education in Scotland – Report of school/college conference 20/10/03* *LLL: School/College review – school pupils' views* *LLL: A review of collaboration between schools and further education in Scotland – Summary of Consultation Paper*	*Scottish Executive Response to the Enterprise and Culture Committee's Scottish Solutions Report,* Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department
2004 Apr-Jun							

Year 2004 p.2	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2004 Jul-Sep		*Exclusions from Schools, 2002/2003,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569		*Connect – Report on implementation of Better Behaviour-Better Learning 2004*		*School/College Review – management of school/college partnerships and the main operational issues involved*, (Linzie Wood) Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department	*The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges – A consultation on the need for a professional body for staff in Scotland's Colleges,* Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department
				Making the Connection			*Further Education in Scotland, 2003*

Year 2004 p.3	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2004 Oct-Dec	*School Pupils' Attitudes to Further Education,* (Carole Miller Research)	*Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools, 2003/2004,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569		*Better Behaviour in Scottish Schools – policy update 2004*	*A Curriculum for Excellence – a Ministerial response*	*LLL: A review of collaboration between schools and FE etc – interim report*	
	MUNN P et al, 2004, *Discipline in Scottish Schools: A comparative survey etc.*, SEED				*A Curriculum for Excellence – the Curriculum Review Group*	*LLL: A review of collaboration between schools and further education colleges in Scotland –partner document to the interim report*	
	Collaboration between Schools and F E etc. Literature Review						
	Findings from the Scottish School Leavers' Survey Education Department Research Programme			*Insight 15 – Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline in Scottish Schools*, Scottish Executive Education Department	*Ambitious, Excellent Schools – our agenda for action*	*LLL: A review of collaboration between schools and FE etc. – consultation analysis report*	
	Columba 1400: Head Teacher Leadership						

	Academy: developing enterprise culture,(the Hunter Foundation)					

Year 2005 p.1	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	Year 2003 p.3
2005 Jan-Mar		*Exclusions from School, 2003/2004,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569		*The Report of the National Review of Guidance 2004: Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential – a standard of support for children and young people in Scottish schools*		*Skills for work – National Consultation Seminars, November 2004 – Report*	*Partnership Matters – a guide to Local Authorities, NHS boards and voluntary organisations on supporting students with additional needs in further education*

Year 2005 p.2	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	Year 2003 p.3
2005 Apr-Jun	*Education and Training in Scotland: National Dossier 2005*, SEED			*Fresher,* Safer Scotland		*Best Practice report.*	*A Consultation on the Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges: analysis of responses*, Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department, July 2005
				Good to Know: advice for parents and carers of teenagers on bullying, Safer Scotland		*Funding report* *Qualifications report* *Lifelong Partners: … - a strategy for partnership*	
				It's OK to be you, Safer Scotland		*Lifelong Partners: … - a guide for schools, colleges and local authorities*	
						A Review of Collaboration between Schools and Further Education Colleges: consultation analysis	

						etc.	

Year 2005 p.3	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	Year 2003 p.3
2005 Jul-Sep							*Further Education in Scotland 2004*
2005 Oct-Dec	SHUCKSMITH J, PHILIP K, SPRATT J, WATSON C, 2004, *Investigating the Links between Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools,* (SEED Pupil Support and Inclusion Division) University of Aberdeen	*Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools, 2004/5,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569					

Year 2006 p.1	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2006 January to March		*Exclusions from School, 2004/2005,* Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569		*Children and Young People in the BNSF[7] Programme,* Scottish Executive Social Research	*Ambitious, Excellent Schools – Progress report,* Smarter Scotland *National Evaluation of Determined to Succeed – Phase 1: Early implementation processes across Scotland,* Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Research Findings No.37/2006 *Curriculum for Excellence – Progress and Proposals,* Curriculum Review Programme Board		

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[7] BNSF – 'Better Neighbourhood Services Fund'

Year 2006 p.2	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2006 April to June	BROWNLIE J, ANDERSON S, ORMSTON R, 2006, *Children as Researchers,* SEED, Scottish Executive Social Research *DtS Young People at Risk of Becoming NEET* , Department of Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning *Education in Scotland 2006*, Smarter Scotland	*Pupils in Scotland, 2005,* Statistical Bulletin – Education Series			*Class Sizes, Staffing and Resources Working Group – Interim report* *Entitlement to Learning Scoping Study*, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Research Findings No.41/2006		*Professional Standards for lecturers in Scotland's Colleges*, Smarted Scotland

Year 2006 p.3	Research Reports	Statistical Reports	General/Social Justice	School – Discipline/ Protection	School - Curriculum	School/College Partnership	College
2006 July to Sept.	*Behaviour in Scottish Schools*, Scottish Executive Social Research			*Making a Difference: a new law to support parents - guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006* *Insight 34 – Behaviour in Scottish Schools*, SEED			*Unlocking Opportunity: Review of Scotland's Colleges –the difference Scotland's Colleges make to learners, the economy and wider society*, Smarter Scotland
2006 October to Dec.		*Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools, 2005/6*, Statistics Publication Notice, ISSN 1479-7569		*Engaged and Involved: Attendance in Scottish Schools – a consultation*, Support for Learning Division			