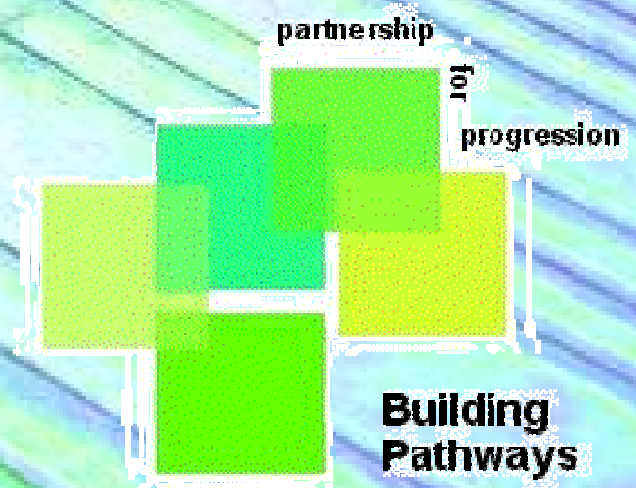


Aimhigher...

# Building Pathways

summary of activities  
2003 to 2006



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# **BUILDING PATHWAYS PROJECT**

## **REPORT ON ACTIVITY 2003-2006**

This report provides a summary of the activities of the Building Pathways Project between 2003 and 2006. Building Pathways is a Further Education-Higher Education widening participation partnership project that has played a key role in the South Yorkshire Aimhigher strategy since 2003. The project has been funded through the Partnerships for Progression funding stream with additional financial support from Integrated Aimhigher funding since 2004. Project partners are listed at the end of this document.

The Building Pathways partnership project has been in existence since 1999 supporting activities to widen participation to higher education for under-represented groups from local FE colleges. The project has benefited from various HEFCE/LSC funding over that period. Its mission is:

*To create a framework and infrastructure that allows the learner to embark on an educational programme with the confidence that, irrespective of where it takes place there are clear and accessible pathways and opportunities into HE.*

Activities have aimed to simplify and encourage progression; widen participation in HE through partnership planning and co-ordination; develop where possible the use of credit as a common currency across the partnership; enable learners to move easily within and between institutions with clearly mapped routes and pathways; and maximize access and retention through information, guidance and support.

The Aimhigher activities summarised here were designed to build on some of the earlier partnership work to raise awareness of the barriers to progression faced by identified groups of vocational, work-based and adult learners, and to develop initiatives that challenge those barriers, raise aspirations of the target groups, support the preparation and transition of learners to Higher Education and provide information for guidance staff, teachers and lecturers.

From September 2006 the FE-HE partnership will be working to implement developments for the new South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network that will challenge current working practices and create new progression agreements, provide IAG, and employer engagement structures that support vocational and work-based learners to engage and re-engage with HE. Consequently the partnership element of the BP project will refocus itself. However, some of the existing BP activities to raise aspirations for identified groups of learners and their advisers will be continued by the BP team as separate Aimhigher projects, funded through the continuing South Yorkshire Aimhigher strategy 2006-2008.

In view of the new direction given to the FE-HE partnership and the re-shaping of the Aimhigher activity it is appropriate to reflect and review BP activity over the last three years and I hope you will find this summary of interest. The BP team is very grateful for the support and advice received from the members of the BP Planning Group and to all the individual practitioners based in the colleges and the universities that have participated in the various projects.

**Judith Smith**  
**Building Pathways Project Co-ordinator**  
**October 2006**

*funded by ...*  
**South Yorkshire  
Partnerships for  
Progression and Integrated  
Aimhigher**



# RAISING ASPIRATIONS of VOCATIONAL LEARNERS

## Target Group

Learners in FE (and where appropriate) school programmes with vocational focus e.g AVCE/BTEC where progression/retention/achievement is low

Staff involved in supporting Level 3 vocational learners to progress to HE

## Quantitative Measures

5% increase in learners from vocational programmes into under-graduate programmes

## Qualitative Measures

Development of progression entitlements for learners in at least 3 curriculum areas into HE



This large element of the project has concentrated on development of entitlements, enhancing progression routes and providing encouragement and information for students on vocational courses in key sectors and over a range of specific programmes. There have been a variety of activities funded from direct work with FE College students, development of HE Student ambassadors and staff development activities. This section summarises the range of projects undertaken.

## Aims & Objectives

- To increase the progression of learners from vocational programmes in FECs to HE programmes across the sub-region.
- To develop a progression entitlement for learners from vocational programmes to local HE provision as part of HE progression entitlement across the sub-region.
- To support the development of information to learners and advisors of the progression available from School/FECs vocational routes into HE.
- Identify with partners the needs of the learners in relation to raising aspiration and attainment on vocational programmes.

## Activity Summary

There have been several smaller projects and activities that have provided direct activity and interaction with students. These have been centred around:

- **Raising aspirations of Travel and Tourism (T&T) students in Dearne Valley College (DVC)**  
Between 2003 and 2004 Building Pathways funded a small pilot project to provide time and resources for a colleague in DVC to undertake a programme of aspiration and awareness raising activities with Travel and Tourism students. The programme also included employees from local firms and past students from FE partners and local schools. The objective was to encourage a greater level of progression to Higher Education including that available in local Further Education institutions.
- **Raising aspirations of Early Years students across South Yorkshire**  
A one day conference - 'Aimhigher- work in Early Years' - developed in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University Faculty of Development and Society, Division of Education & Humanities, was run on June 21st 2006 at the Collegiate site. The idea for this arose from work with the Early Years curriculum group. Indications were that many Cache Diploma and BTEC Early Years students did not have the aspirations to progress to HE. Undertaking a learning experience in the university could provide a taster and enhanced knowledge about careers and policy issues pertinent to the sector .
- **Go Higher-Stay Local HE in FE Fair**  
In order to publicise the HE in FE provision to vocational learners in schools, colleges and work-based learning providers, a Higher Education Fair was organised. This was to involve partner Colleges and their vocational learners. The event was

scheduled for the end of April 2006, and was designed as a showcase for local FE institutions to highlight their higher education progression opportunities for vocational learners.

## Activity Outcomes

### **DVC T&T project:**

Activity was targeted on 4 specific strands of learners: Modern Apprentices— identifying opportunities for work-based learners and others to progress to HE, and raising awareness of progression opportunities with employers; highlighting provision in the locality for ethnic minority groups; and opportunities for internal students; schools and partner FE Colleges.

The activity provided new links between schools, colleges and SHU including highlighting successes of local students progressing from DVC Level 3 to HND and top-up to honours degree in SHU. Case studies have been developed highlighting successful candidates. Work has been undertaken with local employers identifying their employees who have progressed through available local pathways. Learners on the DVC HND programmes were engaged in raising aspiration work with the college students. In addition post 16 learners, Access to HE learners, Level 3 students and their tutors on vocational programmes have received information about HE opportunities in the college and beyond— relevant to the vocational area. The project worker has also made a wide array of new links with local employers in the sector.

**Early Years Conference** Students were given formal 'lectures' as an introduction to changing policies around childcare. The purpose was to give an understanding of current skills demand and job requirements for the sector. Speakers were selected from local and national providers. The afternoon session consisted of small workshops for learners designed to enhance their knowledge of particular early years specialist services, for instance baby massage, community mentoring, Makaton sign language and Sure Start. The day was well organised and attended by over 70 students from local Colleges.

**HE in FE Fair – Go Higher: Stay Local** held April 2006, in the HUBS (Sheffield Hallam Union building). Invites were sent to a range of local schools and colleges, supported by 20 providers and exhibitors. The event was attended by 80 learners from a range of local Sixth forms and colleges. Students were given a formal presentation about the range of Higher Education available locally in Further Education institutions, and an outline of new Foundation Degrees. Students participated in an exciting 'hands on' activity and were free to visit all the 20 exhibits which were interactive and informative with an element of fun.

## Evaluation

- **DVC Travel & Tourism project:**  
Positive outcomes were achieved in raising awareness of progression amongst staff and students in the college, and particularly increased interest in progression opportunities for past and present Travel and Tourism students. This has led to



increased applications to DVC's HND programme. Between 2004 and 2006 applications have risen by 45% increase with a comparative increase in the number of offers and acceptances, thus the target for increasing applications by 5% has been met.

- Early Years Conference:**  
The conference organisation and range of activities on offer were commendable. Student evaluation of the event was positive. Attendees were from local sixth forms with some FE students. On reflection, initial marketing was limited and had too short a lead time prior to the event. Contacts with colleges were not adequately expedited. The date chosen possibly proved to be a barrier to college student participation. The morning event was very informative with lively local and national speakers. Although the format proved challenging better preparation for the students prior to attendance will be more beneficial for a future event
- HE in FE Fair**  
Around 80 students attended the HE in FE Fair. The venue was exciting and interesting and activities were engaging. Overall the number of attendees could have been higher and future planning for further events will attempt to address this by getting firmer commitment in supporting student attendance from partner colleges. Student evaluations of the event were positive:

*"I enjoyed it. My favourite bit was the dancing. There was useful information regarding the subjects I wanted."*

*"It was different. The activity we did was excellent. Thanks."*

*"I found the programme useful to me and enjoyed the event. I would like to say thank you so much for giving students good ideas about what they are doing."*

*"It was really interesting. The workshop was unusual but really good. The stalls and people that were there were really helpful."*



**Building Pathways Project**  
A participatory workshop  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Learning & Teaching Institute  
presents

A workshop for course leaders, teachers, admission tutors, access and widening participation practitioners....

**Teaching & Learning:  
Supporting  
Vocational Learners' Transition  
between FE & HE**

Friday  
24 March 2006  
9:00am - 1:00pm  
at  
The Hubs (Hallam Union Building)  
Paternoster Row  
Sheffield S1 2QQ

The purpose of this participatory workshop is to enhance the knowledge of both HE and FE staff about the curriculum, teaching, and learning and assessment experiences of students progressing from vocational programmes in FE colleges to programmes in the HE sector. The aim is to challenge the existing 'deficit model' that is frequently attached to vocational learners through the admission process and recognise the strengths of the learning in obtaining a vocational qualification. Explore how learners can be better prepared for their university learning experience and further support the widening participation strategy to ensure students entering HE continue to have a positive and successful learning experience.

Further details available from Building Pathways 0114 222 5734 or  
<http://www.she.ac.uk/pathways/WhatNew.htm>

Sheffield Hallam University Aimhigher...

### Looking Forward:

DVC T&T project provided a role model for the development of the BP Advocate role. The project worker has continued the work in this role with continuing success. South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network activity will build on this through continued IAG and Transition activity. Early Years: Plans are underway to repeat this activity with early planning a priority. Attempts will be made to establish the HE in FE Fair as an annual event working with partner Institutions and SYLLN.

## STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

This element of the project harnessed the knowledge and energy of existing HE students, allowing them to work with FE students on a range of activities. The focus of the activity was to develop initiatives to allow the HE students to communicate their experience of HE and act as role models in raising awareness and aspirations. Targeted students were those undertaking vocational Level 3 learning programmes where the 'progression to HE rate' was relatively low. Identified FE student cohorts were from widening participation target groups. Where possible HE Student Ambassadors were recruited who had followed similar progression routes as the FE students

### Activity Summary

- **Business Student Ambassador programme:** Working in partnership with the Faculty of Organisation and Management in Sheffield Hallam University, a group of HE student ambassadors was recruited to work with groups of level 3 learners from Chesterfield and Sheffield College programmes. A programme was designed which involved visiting the colleges and attending group tutorial sessions, forming relationships with the FE students and discussing experiences of applying for University and describing student life. Advice was given about making decisions to progress to HE, making choices and completing UCAS forms. The FE students were invited into the University for a one day programme – which included a lecture, discussion about programme options, a tour of the University and advice from students and staff. Students from other partner colleges were also invited to attend the Higher Education visit day.
- **Computing Student Ambassador programme:** This took a different approach to bringing HE and FE students together. BP worked closely with Hallam Volunteering (HV) the volunteering branch of the Sheffield Hallam University Student Union. Here the aim was to draw up a brief for recruiting volunteer SHU students with an interest in digital animation. They would develop a project where working together with a group of FE students a greater awareness of HE would be passed onto the FE students. A project was designed that would produce a digital animated film over a period of time using the university facilities.

SHU Volunteers were recruited and as the HV projects are student led, the group hit on the idea of using an 'open source' 3D software package to develop a series of digitally animated short films. The FE college students engaged with the project were from Rotherham College. They worked in small teams assisted by Hallam Volunteers. After a period of joint planning in the college the Rotherham students attended the university for an afternoon a week for 6 weeks developing the animated sequences.

### Target Group

- Learners on FE (and where appropriate) school programmes with vocational focus e.g AVCE/BTEC where progression/retention/achievement is low, in identified curriculum areas e.g Care, Engineering, Construction, Business, IT, Leisure and Tourism

### Quantitative Measures

- 5% increase in learners from vocational programmes into under-graduate programmes (using HESA data)

### Qualitative Measures

- Development of progression entitlements for learners from at least 3 curriculum areas into HE





## Activity Outcomes

- **Business Student Ambassador programme:**  
This project has run successfully for three years. Local FE colleges, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Rotherham, Longley Park Sixth Form College and Dearne Valley College have participated in the activities which have involved both in-reach and outreach visits and have engaged with over 60 College participants per year.
- **Hallam Volunteering, 3D project**  
This project has resulted in 40 FE/HE students working together over the last two years to produce digitally animated short films. The HV students have also organised a premiere showing of the films featured as part of The Sheffield Digital Arts Festival—an annual event that showcases the individuals, wares and companies



active in Sheffield's burgeoning cultural industries sector. Lecturers, parents and students have attended these events that have celebrated student capability and achievement.

## Evaluation

Both models of working have strengths and have resulted in FE students making direct links with the local university.

**The Business Student Ambassador programme** has become a feature of the outreach activity of the Faculty in SHU. Plans are in place to follow up the students who have engaged with the project to monitor their progression to HE.

**The 3D project** has received acclaim, being short-listed for an award from HEFCE in 2005 as an excellent example of a student volunteering project. More importantly, students who have participated in the production of the films from FE have demonstrated that they have had their aspirations raised. They have stated their increased interest in progressing to HE and have all made applications either to HE in FE programmes or to SHU. The use of student ambassadors has been successful and particularly the 3D project has shown that a project where HE-FE students work together over a period of time, have fun and engage with university resources can be very effective in widening participation to Higher Education.



## Looking Forward

Further Aimhigher funding is available to support student ambassador projects. A new programme extending the HV model to other curriculum areas is underway. It is planned to widen involvement to other Further Education Colleges (FECs).



## SUPPORT FOR VOCATIONAL LEARNER ADMISSIONS

These activities were 'staff focused' and designed to raise awareness of some issues surrounding the admission of vocational learners to Higher Education Courses. The activities were designed to provide a forum for discussion and allow staff to consider and propose possible solutions and improvements. The key points of activity were focused around:

- **'Teaching and Learning - supporting vocational learners' transition between FE and HE,** A Teaching and Learning workshop - convened in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University Learning and Teaching Institute.
- **Research into the admission of BTEC National diploma students** into University of Sheffield degree programmes. This was organised in partnership with the University of Sheffield and concentrated on work of University of Sheffield Admission tutors.
- **Understanding more about BTECs** A participatory workshop aimed at bringing together those interested in the admission and progression of students with BTEC National Diplomas at The University of Sheffield.

### Activity Summary

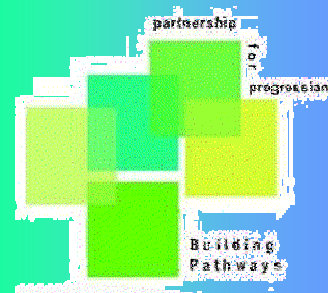
#### Teaching & Learning Workshop: Friday 24th March 2006 at The Hubs (Hallam Union Building), Sheffield

The aim of the workshop was to enhance the understanding of staff from the different institutions about the teaching, learning and assessment experiences of vocational learners and further develop communication between each about their needs and support requirements. Thirty six academic and student services support staff from Sheffield Hallam University and partner colleges met together to discuss issues of learning and teaching. Comparisons were made about HE and FE experiences, and the identification of skills requirements for success in HE. Suggestions were made about further action necessary to break down barriers. An activity orientated workshop was introduced by a Pro-Vice Chancellor, Philip Garrahan, from Sheffield Hallam University. The workshops were supported by presentations from a lecturer well experienced in HE and FE, and a current HE student who had progressed through FE programmes at a local college.

#### Researching BTEC learners' admissions to the University of Sheffield.

A project worker with extensive experience of providing careers guidance support in the University of Sheffield was appointed to undertake work investigating the experience of BTEC student entrants. The admittance process for BTEC students into the university and their experiences on programme was also scrutinised. The researcher produced a final report of activity centred around:

- Discussions with staff in Student Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing, Student Services and The Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of Sheffield.
- Conversation with 15 admissions tutors, and two central Faculty staff in Engineering and Pure Science.
- Meetings with Building Pathways Advocates in local colleges, Sheffield Futures staff and staff in the Building Pathways Project.
  - Data analysis of admissions and acceptances in regard to students from BTEC backgrounds, and analysis of the





University student record on students admitted over the period 2002-5, along with data on first degree graduates.

- Responses to an e-mail survey of current students admitted on the strength of their BTEC qualifications.
- Inputs from the half-day conference (*Understanding more about BTECs*) held 7 June 2006 at Tapton Hall and attended by 29 staff from the University and local colleges.
- Attendance at relevant conferences, comments from certain Russell Group universities, and information from background reading, prospectuses, websites and other sources.

## Evaluation

**The T&L Workshop** was well received with action points developed for supporting transition from FE to HE. Recommendations were made for activity at both the 'pre-application' and 'post enrolment' stage. Suggestions and indications for future projects included: utilising existing Aimhigher activity such as use of role models, visits to the university and tasters of assessment, familiarisation with Virtual Learning Environments and other learning tools, preparation for UCAS and interviews and working with parents and influencers. In addition, it was considered necessary that raised awareness of what it means to be an independent autonomous learner in HE is necessary at the pre-enrolment stage. The use of mentors/buddies, raised awareness of study skills support and targeted study skills, the encouragement of staff to reconsider assessment methods and the ability to support transition between vocational learning and university was essential at the post enrolment stage.

**The University of Sheffield Research** provided interesting information on the small numbers of BTEC learners admitted to the University of Sheffield. The Project highlighted interest amongst admission tutors to increase the number of applications and enrolments onto programmes and revealed the need for further awareness raising activity amongst staff. There is also indication that there is a need to raise the confidence of BTEC students in applying to the University. Recommendations have been made and accepted by the University for future development. These have included:

- the need to develop positive policy and practice for supporting the admission and progression of such students;
- information appropriate and current for students and for staff in the university about admissions;
- support for developing good personal statements and references, detailing achieved module;
- pre-entry support; study skills support as appropriate and targeted such as for maths/sciences and post-entry;
- e-mentoring support; focus on the strengths of learners as well as gaps in knowledge.

## Looking Forward:

**Teaching & Learning:** Plans are in place to develop a further workshop to address in more detail some of the issues around assessment and independent learning. The work will be funded by AH and SYLLN in partnership with both universities in Sheffield.



# DEVELOPING APPRENTICE PROGRESSION

This activity commenced with initial research into the attitudes of employers and apprentices to skill development and progression to higher education. The need for higher level skills in many sectors of the economy is well documented and researched, however barriers to progression exist. The research reports identified barriers in two key sectors, and BP activity has provided guidance for Apprentices to assist the removal of some of these barriers through the development of an exciting multimedia resource.

## Aims and Objectives

- To increase progression into HE of (Modern) Apprentices in areas of Care, Engineering, Construction, IT/Computing, Business or other identified areas.
- To support the development of information materials for MAs on progression routes into HE.
- Ascertain barriers for progression to HE for MAs across the sub-region in partnership with LSC research activity.
- Communicate with FE/HE providers to address barriers e.g. through the development of bridge programmes, identifying admission criteria to HE programmes, information guidance and advice provision for learners.

## Activity Summary

Two Reports were commissioned to research attitudes to apprentice progression in an attempt to identify barriers from an employer and an apprentice viewpoint. The research was carried out by Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Research and Evaluation.

## Guidance Resource—Multi-Media CD-Rom

Conceptualisation, design, direction and production of a multimedia CD Rom resource relevant for progressing Engineering and Construction Apprentices

The CD-Rom has a wealth of information and advice:

- Production of over 20 individual case studies - in both video and text format - of progressing apprentices, employers, training providers and University admissions tutors.
- Examples and descriptions of over 40 construction sector jobs.
- Examples and descriptions of over 25 engineering sector jobs.

### Specific sections covered:

- Definition of Higher Education
- Glossary of terms about Higher Education
- Information on relevant HE courses available for progressing engineering and construction apprentices.
- Lifelong Learning and deferring progression opportunities
- How to succeed as an apprentice
- Local support for apprentices - advice and guidance sources, examples of programmes.
- What do local training providers offer
- What local employers think about apprentices and their potential
- Information and links to lead industry bodies
- Details of how to contact Construction and Engineering training providers in South Yorkshire.

## Target Group

- Vocational Learners in the Engineering & Construction fields
- Modern Apprentices in Care IT and Business, Engineering and Construction
- Pupils in schools seeking generalised information about vocational programmes and their possible progression pathways
- Lecturers, Teachers, and Careers advisors in colleges and schools seeking to present information to students and pupils about vocational learning, pathways and progression possibilities
- Training Providers supervising Apprentice programmes

## Quantitative Measures

20 MA learners progressing to HE programmes

## Qualitative Measures

- Building on previous local research identify need for IAG for MAs in selected curriculum areas
- Develop shared recording mechanism for monitoring progression of MAs into HE
- Develop communication between partners to identify entry criteria for MAs into selected HE programmes
- Hold seminar for employers, FECs and HE providers on progression to HE for MAs in area of engineering/construction





## Activity Outcomes

Two hundred of the **Research Reports** have been distributed in response to requests from JISC mail contacts, with copies distributed to Building Pathways Partner contacts and Construction and Engineering Industry representatives in the region. The reports have been catalogued with the British Library and are available by download from the Building Pathways and CRE website.

Working with FE College partners, Building Pathways have identified **over 20 learners who have progressed locally** from Apprenticeships to HE in FE programmes for example on HNC/D courses. Some learners were used as case studies on the CD-Rom.

Over 1200 of the **CDs have been distributed**. These have been sent to targeted recipients mainly in South Yorkshire and bordering areas, and also to specific institutions and contacts who have requested copies via JISC mail notification - from across the UK - as far afield as Kendal and Taunton, Ashington and Worthing. Targeted recipients have included: College staff, teachers in schools with vocational learning programmes, engineering and construction employers, Connexions staff, Learning Partnerships in South Yorkshire, Employer Bodies, Jobcentre plus staff, LSC representatives, CoVE managers, Local Authority representatives, HE Guidance staff, HE Widening Participation officers, Training Agencies, Independent Training Consultants, and many others.

## Evaluation

The CD Rom resource has received a wide range of positive reviews from a variety of sources—some examples are as follows:

‘The Apprentices Aim Higher CD ROM is an excellent interactive media platform full of relevant information on ‘getting started’, progression pathways and careers opportunities. The case studies from ‘real’ engineers give an insight into the world of the sector irrespective of gender and ethnic origin.

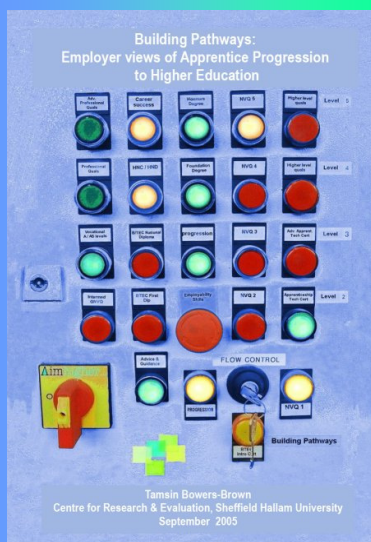
The CD has been appreciated and used by members of the CoVE Provider Group and 250 copies have been distributed at careers events and parents evenings. We have used it at employer events and made it available to IAG, IAC staff at 3 dissemination events.

Feedback from users has been positive and has led to further enquiries for information in the general engineering and construction sectors as well as apprenticeships. This was especially so following the Rotherham Employment and Labour Market (REALM) event held at the Source in April 2006 where some 60 IAG staff from schools, FE colleges and careers organisations attended. The CoVE had 23 follow up enquiries for further information and has resulted in five further dissemination events, including one for a local community group.

I look forward to working in partnership in any future projects that raise awareness of the engineering and construction sectors. Well done Building Pathways team - carry on the excellent work.’

**Tony Oakley, Manufacturing CoVE Manager, S. Yorkshire**

*‘I Really like the Apprentices Aim Higher CDRom - there is so little of this quality for the non-traditional routes to HE (in fact there is almost nothing of any quality available). I would like to make copies available*



in our Learning Resources Centre ..... ' **Aimhigher Co-ordinator South West**

*'The Apprentices Aim Higher CD Rom has proved a very useful resource with both engineering and construction students, ....there are few resources available for this type of work. It has also been used as a careers guidance tool for Young Apprentices on engineering programmes, and also for general awareness raising with Administration and Hairdressing apprentices.*

*Technicians have installed the CD Rom onto machines in the learning centre, and the resource is used in careers guidance sessions which is an integral part of students overall course at Halton College. I intend to continue using the resource during the course of next year with both Apprentices and Vocational students from a range of curriculum areas. Thanks you very much for producing this most useful tool.'*

**Elaine Hopkins, Halton College - Widnes AimHigher**

### **Example of feedback from user group at Doncaster College:**

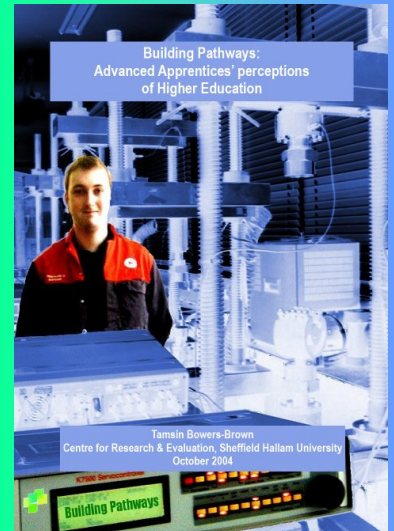
Sample of Doncaster Engineering Students at National Diploma level. All were male, full time students .Viewed between November and December 2005 –mainly college and home viewing on a PC platform - majority internet connected - although few had followed any of the 100+ links on the CD - this may have been because of access restrictions at place of viewing or shortage of time in viewing process.

### **Opinions**

- CD graphics generally give a good impression. Most considered navigation was easy to follow, with general ease of use. Information content was favourably viewed - with least positive comment being 'OK', varying upward to 'very deep and detailed'. Comments on visual design & packaging were almost exclusively favourable.
- Most thought they would return to the CD, with the majority spending between 10 and 20 minutes with the CD on this first encounter.
- Most who viewed the case studies considered them to be interesting, and the majority considered them to be useful. Those who viewed the HE information found it to be useful. A few had comments on how to improve the CD, about the voiceovers and music in one or two of the sections.
- **The majority stated the CD had improved their knowledge of progression and HE opportunities, with a smaller proportion stating it definitely improved their knowledge 'a great deal'.**

### **Looking Forward**

Activity through the South Yorkshire LLN will aim to utilise further the IAG content of the CD-Rom. Certain key elements of the resource may be updated and made available through development of a joint South and West Yorkshire Apprentices website.



**PATHWAYS FOR WORK BASED LEARNERS**

## PATHWAYS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

### Target Group

Learners with Level 3 qualifications either part completed or un-certificated requiring study skills, readiness for HE experiences

Adult learners requiring IAG and short learning programmes who have been outside learning field for some time

### Quantitative Measures

#### •Fast Forward:

Development of structure and content of new Access programmes with at least one new Award to be taken through OCN validation process and recruiting for September 2004

#### •Valuing Learning:

Enhancement to existing Access programmes made in partner's programmes with recruitment from identified non-access programmes in at least 3 partner's programmes

#### •Vocational Access:

Hold 2 seminars on vocational access pathways: launch event and subsequent dissemination event

Produce a framework of at least 35 units including content and assessment

Provide 2 new vocational pathways by July 2005 and a further 1 by June 2006

Support partners in providing at least one event for adult learners promoting vocational learning



This project has concentrated on creating new and/or enhanced forms of Access to Higher Education programmes for adult learners.

Processes for recognising previous learning and expediting student learning have been developed and new programme development has been undertaken.

### Aims and Objectives

- Providers to offer new forms of Access to HE programmes aimed at selected target groups.
- Enhancing existing Access scheme to accommodate more APL, individualised pathways and part-time routes.
- Development of short Access to FE programmes.
- System of Advice and guidance - accreditation of guidance process - reflection of experience, readiness for HE.
- Support the development of a new Vocational Access to HE framework through the identified activity of a Project Development worker.

### Activity Summary

**Valuing Learning:** an updated process for South Yorkshire Open College Network (OCN) for encouraging learners to transfer their accredited OCN learning at level 2 and 3 into Access programmes. A project worker developed new proformas for both providers and learners to complete to identify the credit to be transferred. The processes were developed through a series of discussions with partners. Some colleges were then able to identify programmes where learners achieved Level 3 credits and an information leaflet about the process and letters of introduction were sent to teachers and the learners.

#### Fast Forward:

A series of meetings between Access providers and HE staff helped develop the principles and outline of a short study skills programme that utilised existing Access to HE units. The programme was targeted at learners with NVQ level 3, requiring academic skills refreshing or developing in order to support transition to HE. A project worker developed the short programme known as *Fast Forward*.

#### Developing new Vocational Access programmes:

A project worker based in SYOCN was appointed to develop the new initiatives. The idea was launched with partners and there was agreement to proceed with the proposal building on experience and success with an Access to Health and Biological Science framework of units previously developed with BP. The project worker undertook a feasibility study and review of existing provision and it was decided to focus on Hospitality and Construction, two areas identified as having a need by employers and providers. Proposals for programmes were drawn up including the development of draft titles for new units.

## Activity Outcomes

**Valuing Learning:** a co-ordinated process for the transfer of Level 2/3 OCN credits onto an Access to HE programme aimed at adult learners. The procedures are now managed by SYOCN.

In summary

- Level 2 and Level 3 OCN credits previously achieved may be included in the award if relevant to a learner's planned programme and are appropriate to the intended progression route.
- A maximum of 8 credits (with 6 at Level 3) may be claimed. Credits will normally have been achieved within a period of 5 years. Authenticity of evidence must be confirmed by the production of the Certificate and Transcript.

Guidance on the relevance and appropriacy of any transfer of credit, in terms of curriculum skills and progression, is provided at interview and a formal claim for transfer of credit should be made during induction soon after enrolment. The final decision on the request for transfer of credit will rest with the providing organisation.

**Fast Forward:** A short study skills development programme using Access to HE units as the vehicle for learners. The programme, validated by OCN, uses existing BP/OCN Access to HE units. It is a flexible programme which provides up to 8 credits of learning with the core in study and research skills relevant to learning in HE. In addition curriculum units provide the underpinning theory. The choice of units is designed to provide flexibility to support learners through a range of curriculum areas. Study skills units can be taken from a choice: Written presentation, Reading and Note taking, Research skills, Dissertation, Exam Techniques and practice, Oral presentation, and Gathering and using information. A wide choice of curriculum units may be selected primarily from the BP/OCN regional framework of units. The programme itself covers an 8 credit bundle consisting of:

- 1 credit guidance unit – compulsory
- 3 credits of study skills units
- 4 credits of curriculum units

## Vocational Access to HE

Despite favourable outcomes from the initial feasibility study review of existing provision and outline plans for new programmes in Access to Hospitality and Construction, this project had to be withdrawn. New funding regulations by the LSC meant that Further Education Colleges were unable to expand adult learning provision at Level 3 and therefore they withdrew their support for the development.

## Evaluation

The work was completed on *Valuing Learning* and *Fast Forward* as planned.

**Valuing Learning** has ensured that the transfer of credit is available and is recognised by partners to encourage adult learners to progress to Access to HE programmes by accrediting their prior OCN learning.

## Qualitative Measures

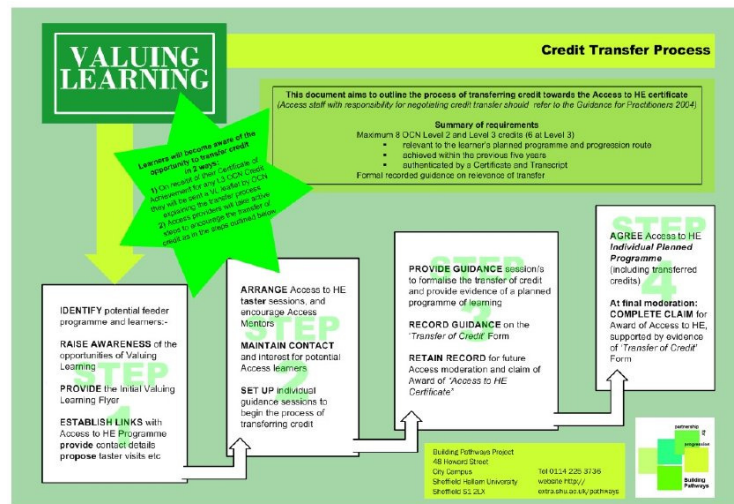
- Development of appropriate IAG around new Access initiatives.
- Carry out review of existing learning opportunities for progression via OCN programmes
- Undertake a feasibility study and work closely with LSC, employers, providers & partners in developing new routes
- Produce materials marketing the new opportunities to learners





Under new LSC funding regulations some students who wish to undertake Access to HE programmes can do so. By completing some Level 2 units their achievements can be recognised and support LSC Level 2 achievement targets (often referred to as Level 2 jumpers). The principles of Valuing Learning are allowing students in at least one college to undertake Level 2 learning and transfers credit onto the Access to HE programme. In this respect the project has been successful.

Because of introduction of new regulations for adult learning the **Fast Forward (FF)** programme could not be funded by FECs as it lies outside the National Qualifications Framework. One NHS Trust however has been offering the programme to staff that need to refresh their study skills in preparation for HE, infilling into existing Access provision. The students are able to fund their own learning using the Individual Learning Accounts available to NHS staff. The idea behind FF has been recognised by local OCN and National Open College Network (NOCN) and future developments with the national credit framework will ensure this type of programme is validated by NOCN in the near future.



### Vocational Access to HE

As with Fast Forward this project has hit difficulties because of funding changes from LSC. FECs have felt unable to support the developments because of the pressures on them to reduce the number of adult learning programmes fundable by the LSC. Consequently, and in spite of interest from local employers, the Vocational Access project had to be withdrawn. A regional Access event was not pursued mainly because of the way the project's focus was halted by LSC funding arrangements. However BP project workers disseminated the FF and VL projects at a national Aimhigher conference: *Aimhigher and FE: what works?* on Thursday 8 July 2004 Midland Hotel, Derby where other Aimhigher practitioners found the principle of 'bridging' developments very useful for their own activities. A workshop was held where the issues of funding were discussed with HEFCE and national LSC officers.

### Looking Forward:

Supporting progression to HE from adult learning programmes will continue to be a feature of Aimhigher activity and also of the SYLLN. National LSC has continued to support Access to HE, thus there may be future developments in vocational Access provision. SYLLN will work closely with CoVEs in identifying need with employers and work-based learners for new provision.

...Making your credit count...



## PROGRESSION TO HE FOR ADULT LEARNERS

In addition to the Access to HE activity BP has supported a project based with the University of Sheffield that had a particular focus on raising progression to HE issues with adult learners based in community settings.

### Aims and Objectives

There have been a number of activities focussed on promoting adult learners progression to HE over the last three years. These activities have had common aims and objectives that have evolved as a result of review and evaluation. In summary the aims are to :

- To raise aspirations among non-traditionally qualified adult learners in gaining access to HE courses within the region;
- To raise awareness and support adult learners by providing direct experience of study in a variety of subject areas within an HE institutional setting;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to adult learners in planning appropriate access routes to HE;
- Support non-traditionally qualified learners making the fast-track transition into the second year of the Mature Access (Foundation) Programme at The Institute of Lifelong Learning.

### Activity Summary

Activity has taken the form of summer schools, HE tasters and other awareness raising events and activities. In summary they include the following:

#### July 2004 residential

- Three day residential at a University of Sheffield
- sessions introducing aspects of Study Skills required for HE, English Language, Mathematics and Statistics, Arts and Social Sciences, and General Science.
- One-to-one sessions with HE tutors
- Information about local progression routes (BP partners provided materials on progression routes).

#### September 2004 bridging weekend

Two day 'bridging weekend' based at University of Sheffield accommodation. Activities included:

- an introductory session covering the structure and nature of the UoS foundation year,
- Advice on study skills,
- University library and IT facilities visit,
- Advice on module choices and the UCAS applications process.
- Sessions by TILL tutors introducing the nature and requirements of individual modules.

#### July 2005 open morning

Programme to give information about HE options for adult learners and how to access these, including

- Full-time undergraduate study at the University of Sheffield
- Full and part-time undergraduate study and foundation degrees at Sheffield Hallam University.
- Undergraduate study by distance learning at the Open University

### Target Group

- Non-traditional learners aged 21 or over
- Community groups and learning venues within the immediate Sheffield area

### Quantitative Measures

- At least 30 learners to attend summer schools and open morning
- At least 20 learners to attend Bridging weekend
- Engagement with at least 100 learners to build awareness, raise aspirations and assist progression to higher levels of study;
- Provide taster of HE programmes in selected curriculum areas

### Qualitative Measures

- Incr. awareness of opportunities for progression to HE
- Positive evaluations of events
- Refresh study skills of learners attending bridging weekend
- Identification of specific progression needs and matching of individual learner needs to existing provision.
- Dissemination of project activities and findings through a variety of channels;
- Specific curriculum development of a number of targeted modules to enhance access opportunities at foundation level 0 and degree level 1 within the TILL part-time degree framework.





- Undergraduate study, vocational and access awards at FE colleges
- Applying to HE institutions using UCAS
- IAG provision for career planning

#### 'ACTIVATE!' programme

This programme of activity has been targeted at identified communities in South Yorkshire. Four specific events held within the Activate! programme included:

1. **28 & 29 November 2005**  
At St Mary's Conference Centre, Bramall Lane, Sheffield (28 Nov) and University of Sheffield, Students' Union (29 Nov),  
Workshop/taster sessions with integrated IAG session—  
*Theme: "Family and Community Matters"*
2. **23 & 24 March 2006**  
At Forum House, Burngreave, Sheffield (23 March) and University of Sheffield, Students' Union (24 March)  
Workshop/taster sessions with integrated IAG session  
*Theme: "Health in Your Community"*
3. **16 & 17 May 2006**  
At Longley Park College, Sheffield (16 May) and University of Sheffield, Students' Union (17 May)  
Workshop/Taster session  
*Theme: "Education Matters"*
4. **13 to 16 July 2006**  
Tapton Hall of Residence, University of Sheffield A four day residential with free accommodation and catering.

The above also included a broader **IAG morning open session on 15th July** involving advisors from University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield College, amongst others.

### Evaluation

Attendance and participation has varied at each of the events but nevertheless; for those learners who have engaged the outcome has had significant impact on their decision making around choosing to progress to HE:

#### 2004 & 2005 Residential /Summer Schools:

- July 2004 residential 14 learners attended
- September 2004 bridging weekend 13 learners attended
- July 2005 open morning 13 learners attended the event.

Over the three events 04-05, 40 learners were engaged, of whom 14 (35%) are now studying at degree level and up to 10 (25%) are currently enrolled on access programmes of one form or another, or seeking direct entry to HE in the immediate future.

#### 2005-2006 Activate! Project:

**28/29 November event** 15 learners attended this event.

Respondents commented variously that the event had broadened their awareness of what HE provision involves, had encouraged them to seek further information in relation to the different types of provision available, had eased their concerns with respect to possible barriers to



study, and/or had been especially useful in providing information about the planned part-time Foundation Degree, *Working with Communities*.

- 23/24 March 2006** - 25 attendees
- 16/17 May 2006** - 12 learners attended
- 14/17 July summer school** - 18 learners attended

### Specific measurable impact

Out of the total 70 learners attending one or other of the 4 events:

- 14 have already accepted places on the new Foundation Degree, Working with Communities, and
- at least 4 others are holding offers on the new MA, Working with Communities.
- At least 45% of those attending one or other of the first two tasters will therefore progress onto HE level study in September 2006, and specifically onto programmes which may not otherwise have been available (or even conceived of, in the case of the MA) without the delivery of the events which the project funding made possible.
- The summer school attracted learners from all the metropolitan borough areas, as well as one learner from Chesterfield.
- 14 of the 18 attendees (78%) at the summer school now intend to or have applied to HE or other access courses.

### Other Community based activities

- Attendance at a parents' advice session at Firs Hill primary school in January organised through the Aimhigher 'Influencing the Influencers' project which reached more than a dozen parents.
- IAG advice & guidance to 20 or more potential adult learners at the Firth Park First Start Children's Centre. IAG to approximately 10 potential learners at a Burngreave jobs fair at Firvale secondary school in June.
- Longley Park UCAS advice evening in late June to provide IAG and promote the Activate summer school.

The Activate! project therefore, has been successful in engaging over 100 learners in events this year.

### Looking Forward

Significant opportunities for building more sustainable partnership links for working in community settings have been identified.

Further enhancement of curriculum delivery at undergraduate level 1 and foundation level 0 is now possible from a successful bid for funds from within the University of Sheffield. This will enable increasingly flexible forms of delivery and specific inquiry based learning (IBL) modules to be developed which can be of particular value to adult learners in community settings. New curriculum areas can be identified, and new and sustainable access routes into the University can be developed

Further development of the Working with Communities Foundation Degree to encourage sustained engagement with particular community groups.



## HE IN FE DATABASE

### Target Group

- Learners on HE in FE programmes
- Learners undertaking vocational and/or work-based programmes

### Quantitative Measures

- Details of 10 progression pathways from HE in FE in partner FECs to degrees in SHU (OU and University of Sheffield where relevant)
- 5% increase in learners through these routes or new FDs
- Development of an electronic database identifying progression pathways

### Qualitative Measures

- Disseminate to IAG staff in sub-region and learners about identified pathways

This strand of the project concentrated on the compilation of a database of Higher Education provision in local Colleges to assist in publicising a wider choice of opportunities for vocational and other learners.

### Aims & Objectives

- To increase the number of adult learners progressing to degrees from HE programmes in FECs.
- Development of database of articulated pathways from HE in FE to Sheffield Hallam University.
- To provide information to learners and advisers of the progression routes available from HE in FE through to degree programmes in local HEIs.
- Mapping FE programmes against degrees in partner HEIs and identification of barriers to full credit recognition.
- Publicising new pathways with partners, and IAG staff across sub-region.

### Activity Summary

BP project workers undertook initial work with SHU admission tutors, identifying the detailed arrangements for accrediting learning from HE in FE towards targeted degrees. Information was collated and the information resource augmented by gathering details from all college prospectuses and websites.

A database was compiled of the Higher Education provision in local establishments, some providing detail on arrangements for transferring credit, some with general information on progression arrangements. An independent IT expert was commissioned to develop a database which was user friendly and could be made available on CD and/or website for guidance and careers staff, teachers and lecturers to access.

### Activity Outcome

The database contains around **400 HE programmes** in **14 curriculum areas** across all providers in Building Pathways partnership. The Information consists of all the Higher National and Foundation Degrees on offer across the sub-region in the Further Education colleges. In addition, Foundation Degrees available in the two Sheffield universities are also included. Further Education programmes providing Level 4 and above *professionally accredited* provision have also been listed in the database.



The CD Database is designed to provide the learner with information about the learning programmes available at Higher Education (HE) level in local colleges. It highlights the practical, work-related skills and knowledge that are achieved following the HE in FE curriculum which may include relevant work-experience. The database will be particularly useful for those completing a Level 3 vocational programme such as a BTEC, a VCE, a work-based learning programme such as an Advanced Apprenticeship or a National Vocational Qualification. (NVQ).

The resource aims to encourage learners to be in charge of their choice of which type of HE programme will be most suitable for them. It encourages them to consider progressing their careers by taking learning to higher levels and highlighting the gains made from choosing Higher Education as an option. It hints at the increased employment opportunities and financial rewards for those with skills at Levels 4, 5 and 6.

The CD Database does not include all the specific institutional information needed to apply for to a local HE course but provides a guide and signposts to appropriate contacts.

As vocational learning and training is offered by a wide range of providers in schools, Further Education Colleges and Sixth Forms, specialised training providers, professional bodies and universities, the CD has been distributed to 250 named contacts. These have included IAG professionals, key Aimhigher contacts, key contacts within FE College partners, schools in South Yorkshire offering vocational programmes, and careers advisers in HEIs.

A downloadable version is also available from the Building Pathways website: <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/pathways/>

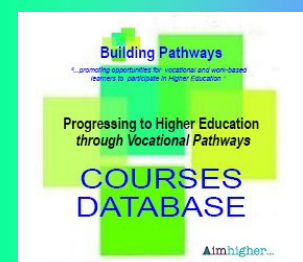
## Evaluation

An evaluation of the database use and contents is underway. Early indications are that the database has been well received.

Recipients have found the contents and information to be laid out and formatted in a clear and easy to use fashion. The database has been used by IAG and careers advisers in a range of individual consultations with a generally favourable response.

## Looking Forward

Further CD updating by Building Pathways / South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network, and possible links / joint development with Regional Aimhigher projects is planned. The database will form the core of a proposed internet based resource linked to a regional Apprentices website. In addition the HE in FE and Foundation Degree programmes will be highlighted at the planned HE in FE Fairs for 2007 and 2008.



## CAREERS GUIDANCE SEMINARS

### Target Group

- IAG Staff and Careers personnel working with target groups of learners e.g adult community learners, learners undertaking work-based or work-focussed programmes of study in schools, colleges
- Jointly hold at least one event with guidance partners on a selected curriculum activity e.g around Modern Apprenticeships or new Access initiatives

### Quantitative Measures

- Work with partners within Aim Higher Strategy to develop or build on existing networks
- Development of a number of careers guidance seminars

This strand of the project has concentrated on organisation of seminars and production of information and materials for Information Advice and Guidance professionals to assist in updating their knowledge about vocational progression routes to HE within the sub-region.

### Aims and Objectives

- Sharing information across the sub-region with IAG personnel through guidance network.
- Link with other guidance projects across the region.
- Inform the development of paper, electronic web-based information about progression routes.
- Information to be produced in partnership with others involved in development .e.g HE / FE / School partners in specific curriculum groups.

### Activity Summary

A series of Careers Seminars was developed in partnership with the OU Higher Education Guidance Support Network (HEGSN). It was agreed that the focus of these should be to provide information to support the sub-regional skills agenda and highlight the opportunities for progression to HE programmes through vocational learning routes from FE to HE.

#### March 2005: Progression to HE: Careers in Social Care

The first seminar was held in response to a request from BP Health and Social Care Resource Managers Group. Indications were that Guidance staff were unaware of the range of career pathways students could take if they followed courses in Health and Social Care. The event was organised to coincide with a national campaign promoting social care careers. Speakers were invited from training providers, the social care sector, and both FE and HE. The target audience was IAG personnel, from careers guidance agencies, Connexions, FE and HE careers officers as well as teachers and lecturers from local colleges. Presenters were invited to distribute their own literature and materials to the audience.

The seminar was very successful with good feedback and evaluation from attendees, and resulted in requests for similar events to cover a range of other sectors. Building Pathways and the OU HEGSN project therefore developed a programme of five seminars scheduled between September 2005 and June 2006. It was agreed that where possible the seminars should invite participation by local Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) to promote their provision. Building Pathways undertook to produce progression pathways information to support the seminars.

**Five seminars**, following a similar format on each occasion were provided covering the following:

- **IT & Computing** (in partnership with the Sheffield College Digital CoVE)
- **Hospitality & Catering** (in partnership with the South Yorkshire Hospitality CoVE)



- **Engineering** (in partnership with SY Engineering CoVE)
- **Early Years** (in partnership with the Yorkshire Early Years CoVE)
- **Creative & Multimedia** Industries

Each seminar had presenters from the target skills sector, training providers, lecturers/admission tutors from HE and FE including the OU and information about the HE in FE provision. In addition supporting materials were produced for each seminar.

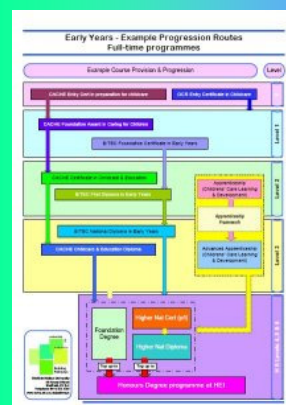
## Activity Outcomes

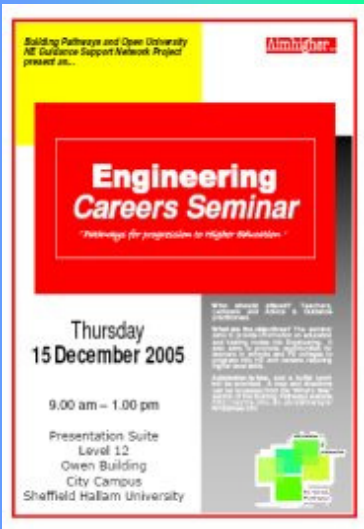
**Progression pathways brochures** were developed for each of the five seminars. The brochures were designed to be attractive and colourful and pitched at guidance staff for their own use or to use directly with students in schools and colleges.

- Progression routes from full-time, part-time and through work-based learning routes was detailed, following a common colourful design. These contained generic progression routes but the information about programmes on offer was collated from across the BP partnership. Where relevant, CoVE partners were consulted on the information.
- Each brochure had background information on the sector, skills demand and employment opportunities with emphasis on higher level skills. Each brochure also had at least four case studies of successful graduates.
- Working in partnership with the SY Aimhigher Graduation Project, individuals were identified who had progressed from local colleges and schools and BP/OU project workers approached these ex-students and sketched out relevant progression case histories. Many were under-graduates (having undertaken HE in FE programmes) or graduates working in local companies. The aim was to highlight case studies of students who had followed some of the progression routes so they could be used by the guidance professionals as exemplars with clients.

Each seminar was supported by presenters from employers groups, FECs and HEIs including the following:

- **Social Care:** From a local social services department; the local LSC funded Quality Care Partnership; FE colleagues from Rotherham and Sheffield Colleges; Social Work training provision at Sheffield Hallam University, The Open University and the University of Sheffield.
- **IT & Computing:** Presenters from the Yorkshire Forward Creative and Digital Industries sector; the Sheffield College Digital CoVE; FE colleagues in Rotherham and Sheffield Colleges; HE colleagues from SHU, and the Open University.
- **Engineering:** Presenters from The Engineering Employers Federation; Sheffield Hallam University; the engineering CoVE partners from Doncaster and Rotherham colleges.
- **Hospitality and Catering:** Presenters from the South Yorkshire CoVE: Sheffield College; Sheffield Hallam University Hospitality Management and Leisure management programmes.
- **Early Years:** Presenters from a local Early Years Centre in Rotherham, from the Early Years CoVE, Doncaster and Rotherham colleges and from Sheffield Hallam University and Open University.





- **Creative & Multimedia Industries:** Presenters from Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter, a local employer, the Sheffield College, Barnsley College, University Centre Barnsley (Huddersfield University) and Sheffield Hallam University.

**Evaluation:**

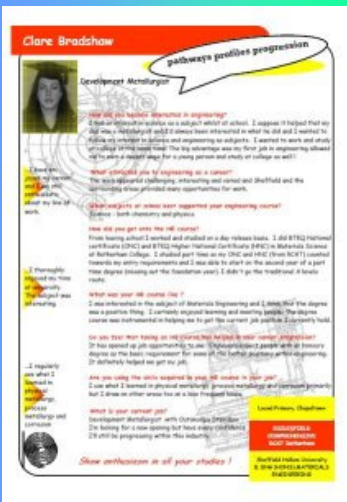
Over **150 different guidance personnel** attended the series of seminars, with many attending one or more event. Post event evaluations have identified high rates of satisfaction from attendees from each seminar:

*'All aspects were really useful. The morning gave an excellent overview of the skills, experience and qualification routes'*

*'Useful information on progression routes from college to HE.'*

*'Very good presentations, Very good overview of the sector both from the employer and HEIs.'*

A small focus group evaluation is currently underway. In total around 250 of the 5 individual editions of the progression pathways booklets have been distributed to attendees and colleagues who have been unable to attend the event. In addition, 1250 booklets have been distributed to other colleagues undertaking advice and guidance work with schools and colleges.



**Looking Forward:**

These seminars have been very successful in raising the awareness of guidance staff about career options for learners following vocational learning pathways. Aimhigher will support further seminars in the next two years. In addition, IAG and staff development will be a feature of SYLLN. One important development will be to include information recognising specific vocational learning programmes in schools as progression routes into Further and Higher Education programmes.



# BUILDING PATHWAYS ADVOCATES PROGRAMME

This element of the BP project has been designed to embed the overall aims of Building Pathways within individual colleges, through specifically identified activity appropriate to the partner institution. Building Pathways Advocates have been appointed to support and encourage the progression and transition of identified Level 3 vocational learners within their institution to HE programmes.

## Aims and Objectives

Each Advocate aimed to:

- Develop an individual BP College Activity Plan which addresses BP aims/objectives but responds to individual college needs.
- Support BP aims and objectives with a focus on work-related/ work-based learning progression routes to HE particularly HE in local FECs.
- Act as a conduit for BP activities to staff in colleges including those involved in work-based training provision.
- Liaise closely with Aimhigher coordinators, other AH projects.
- Support BP team in developing networks with LEAs, employers, training providers to enhance progression route information for learners.
- Provide data detailing progression information from FE Level 3 programmes to HE.
- Work within BP partnership on identified tasks including activities to remove barriers to progression.

## Activity Summary

A wide variety of activities have been undertaken, guided by the target objectives, but determined by Advocates at each College. Highlighted below are some of the key activities undertaken by individual college advocates:

### Barnsley College

Visits to Sheffield Hallam University were organised with the electrical and mechanical engineering departments; National Diploma in Business and National Diploma Engineering tutor groups, amongst others were targeted to raise aspirations and encourage consideration of progression opportunities. The Advocate attended a number of CPD events complimentary to the objectives of the Advocacy programme and other Barnsley staff attended the HE in FE fair.

### Longley Park Sixth Form College

Specific activities and events staff and students participated in were: the Business Studies Ambassador Mentoring Project; the BTEC Forensics Conference; SHIFT Animation Training Day (Media); Science Star Day; Student Ambassador Scheme with SHU (Business students); Stardome event at college for Physics partner school students; Web Weavers Mentoring Scheme; and the *Go Higher: Stay Local* HE Fair.

LEA Work Placements in Local Nurseries were also facilitated along with Interactive Room training at SHU Faculty of Health and Well Being and Training sessions for 'moving and handling' at SHU, Staff development events around guidance in completion of UCAS forms and preparation of personal statements were set up.

## Target Group

Widening Participation Cohort as determined by partner Institution

## Quantitative Measures

- Engage with 150 learners in each college to raise awareness of progression opportunities in at least 3 different vocational areas
- Coordinate (in liaison with BP/AH coordinators) an agreed programme of events for L3 learners
- 5-10% increase in learners from vocational programmes into under-graduate programmes (target set by individual college)
- Hold at least 2 staff development events e.g.: Promote WP/AH; WBL progression to HE; role of CoVEs in meeting skills needs/demand; developing links with employers



## Qualitative Measures

- Raised awareness of HE progression opportunities through work-related learning routes following focussed activity directly with learners
- Raised awareness of BP aims and objectives amongst staff
- New recording mechanism for monitoring progression of learners from Level 3 WRL/ WBL to HE in local FECS in partnership with other AH projects



## Thomas Rotherham College (TRC)

A wide range of group work sessions focusing on target objectives were delivered across the curriculum. Lunchtime talks were given about particular job areas – many relating to vocational course provision at the College. Other activities were as follows:

- Case study posters were designed and prominently displayed
- A HE evening was arranged (student & parents) which included talks and an exhibition from local HE providers. First year HE students returned to talk to current TRC students.
- An Opportunities evening (talks and exhibition by employers / opportunity providers for students & parents).
- Vocational seminars were delivered over lunchtime.
- Participation in university *Open Days* was facilitated and vocational students were encouraged to visit the Sheffield Arena UCAS convention. Occupational Seminars (IT, Public services, Teaching, Law, Psychology, Nursing, Sports) were scheduled; and Staff development events featuring novel items such as a UCAS quiz, coupled with updates on new developments (finance, use of unit grades and entrance tests, graduate destinations etc) were used.

## Sheffield College

A series of tutor group meetings was arranged aimed at target objectives:

- Advocate attendance at tutorial sessions at Norton and Hillsborough Centres covering a variety of curriculum areas such as Business BTEC National, Access to HE, Computing AVCE and Access courses.
- Powerpoint presentations were used covering the opportunities offered by Foundation Degrees, supplemented by distribution of information; Follow up liaison with tutors and students.
- Staff development sessions covering concept and scope of Foundation Degrees.
- Information brochures were produced for 7 curriculum areas at Hillsborough, distributed at the open evening and also sent to applicants. A Norton DVD showcase is being produced.
- Open days were organised and held in May.

## Dearne Valley College

School Careers Fairs and TRC's Opportunities evening were attended by advocate and other staff, with specific handouts and presentations covering progression opportunities generated. Also

- Staff from DVC attended the workshop on Supporting learners' transition between FE and H.E, where a DVC student was a key speaker. Students from DVC participated in the FE in HE Fair with level 3 tutors; Seminars on advanced study skills were offered to all 2nd year level 3 students with 40 students participating.
- A survey of level 3 learners' conducted in late 2005 revealed barriers to progression centred around lack of confidence in some students. A series of seminars (based on communication and working together) targeting building confidence and provide motivation was arranged;
- Formal and informal meetings with level 3 tutors around

- project aims and objectives were facilitated;
- Networking with colleagues internally and externally was arranged - included a meetings with the work-based learning co-ordinator at college, and meetings with BP Sheffield University project worker about progression of BTEC Diploma students to University of Sheffield courses.

### **Rotherham College of Arts & Technology**

Enrichment tutorials were planned as a menu of progression and HE awareness activities. Careful guidance was offered to help students choose from all available options. A HE week was organised which involved:

- Art & Design students benefited from University Liaison with Nottingham Trent Art Department who worked with students on progression routes and mock interviews, and attended 'personal statement' workshops. They also visited Huddersfield University and the UCAS Fayre.
- Performing Arts students worked with Barnsley HEI who provided speakers for the event and attended 'Progression to HE' awareness raising sessions. They also had input from LIPA and Cumbria University on progression choices.
- Computing and Performing Arts students attended finance workshops.
- Construction students benefited from a visiting guest speaker from a Construction company who discussed progression routes and arranged a follow-up visit to a site.
- Engineering – students welcomed a speaker from the Department of Engineering at SHU.

A wide selection of vocational students had tutorial input looking at options post level 3, course specific information, pros and cons of studying at Level 4+, which included Finance, Budgeting, Interview Skills and preparation planning sessions.

### **Northern College**

Progression routes for community regeneration, trade union, and computing students have been researched and careers information sheets have been produced. These have been distributed to individuals and have been the basis for group sessions;

A Mentoring Scheme has commenced which has also involved training sessions and a 'link-up' session between mentors and mentees. Pairings between mentors and mentees have taken place, and a focus group evaluation was organised;

Visits have been undertaken to Sheffield Hallam University, Doncaster College (High Melton site), and the new University Centre Barnsley;

Other group activities were organised on the following subjects (with some sessions repeated due to demand): Options for Community Regeneration students, Options for Trade Union students, Options for Computing Students, Budgeting, Student Finance, Life at University, Applying to UCAS, and Part-time HE options. Individual careers interviews were organised.





## Doncaster College

A variety of activities were organised and these included:

"*The Learning Game*" - facilitated by an external trainer and focussing on enhancing self awareness and confidence in the Hair & Beauty, Art, Motor Vehicle and Sport & Leisure curriculum areas. One hundred students participated in this event. The event comprised a series of workshops covering topics such as self respect, team building and memory retention strategies;

There was also a half day event delivering subject area workshops for students in Health & Social Care and ICT;

A Construction Seminar was also convened which included a presentation of the Aimhigher / BP objectives with supporting information supplied by a construction company. Guest speakers were invited which included presentations by successful former students.

## Activity Outcomes

From activity summaries received so far, **over 3000 students** have participated in activities lead by Building Pathways Advocates. **Over 180 FE staff** have benefitted from activities aimed at raising awareness and knowledge about widening participation and progression opportunities for vocational learners.

Other specific outcomes evidenced and achieved have been

- A raising of aspirations of students to progress to HE.
- Facilitating opportunities for vocational learners to meet current university students.
- Availability of enhanced careers guidance from professionals within the chosen field.
- Provision of opportunities to meet with admissions tutors.
- Development and enhancement of existing partnership working between FE and HE institutions.
- Raised awareness of HE progression opportunities through work-related learning routes following focussed activity directly with learners.
- Development of a broader understanding of likely career opportunities after studying for a certain degree.
- Raised awareness of BP aims and objectives amongst staff.
- Enhanced data gathering analysis and usage in certain institutions - for example Progression to HE data will be available from UCAS reports by end of September for tutors across one institution. In some institutions the availability and use of data was reviewed and data was used more effectively to target past students e.g in one organisation all past completers who didn't progress to HE over the previous two years were mailed an invite to an appropriate event.

## Student focussed Activities:

Certain institutions have laid on specific activities and visits for students under the direction of the Advocate e.g HE evenings, Opportunities evenings, Vocational seminars (lunchtime sessions), attendance at university open days, visit to Sheffield Arena UCAS convention. Other visits have included Sheffield Hallam University, Doncaster College (High Melton site), and the new University Centre, Barnsley. Lunchtime talks were given about particular job areas – many relating to our vocational courses. "Centigrade" forms were completed by vocational students in one institution so as to better inform tutors of student attitudes and to



help inform the UCAS application process. Case studies from different vocational areas have been displayed around a college. Other partners have developed a planned menu of progression as part of HE enrichment and during tutorials, offering careful guidance to help students choose from all available options. These planned progression activities have been developed as part of a wider programme and information concerning them was circulated to students via a college magazine.

**Staff Development:**

Enhanced teaching staff awareness has been a feature of the Advocate work. Subject group work was carried out with teaching staff and staff have attended occupational seminars with their students. INSET sessions were used to update staff on new HE developments. Awareness of issues concerning progression and widening participation has been targeted through articles in staff newsletters and through staff meetings/liaison.

In certain of the partner institutions cross college working was facilitated - for instance staff meetings were organised across curriculum areas to decide on materials required for the programme of Advocate events.

In one college the Advocate activity led to the establishment of a Careers Group who oversaw the development of careers information sheets for specific curriculum areas. This was augmented by the development of a mentoring scheme.

**Evaluation**

Impact of Advocate activities has been largely through self evaluation and through activity feedback, backed by data on participation. Across the partnership, responses to the Advocate activities were positive and indicated that the programmes gave learners the opportunity to broaden their experiences and enhance their personal development. The wide variety of events have been targeted at specific WP cohorts. The self-analysis evidence indicates increased awareness of progression routes, increased positive attitudes and aspirations, increased awareness of higher education including vocational routes, increased awareness of progression routes, across the range of target groups of students.

BP has commissioned an external evaluation of the BP Advocate role. An interim report highlights:

- *The role of advocate has helped raise consciousness amongst vocational tutors and students to the possibilities of progression.*
- *Advocates have had a positive impact on the perception of those tutors who have been directly involved with the activities and events promoted over the life span of the programme.*
- *The advocates have contributed to the development of new initiatives within a number of colleges. This has led to the embedding of these initiatives within vocational areas for the future.*

The full evaluation report on the impact of the Advocates' programme will be available from October 2006.



## CURRICULUM SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

### Target Group

College and HEI staff working to support the WP agenda in specific project areas

### Quantitative Measures

Establish curriculum groups in IT/  
Digital Technology  
Business, Sport, Leisure  
Management, Cultural Studies.  
To meet at least twice

### Qualitative Measures

Where relevant include HE, FE  
staff, LEA vocational pathway  
practitioners and key employers  
groups

It has been a long standing area of work for the Project to hold joint HE and FE staff groups, which have a good reputation for bringing partners together to explore curriculum issues, provide staff development opportunities, share understanding of widening participation and to support individual Project activities. This section highlights some of this activity.

### Aims and Objectives

- Provide and facilitate opportunities for staff supporting learners into HE from specific curriculum areas.
- Support Project activity with curriculum groups of resource managers and practitioners in HEIs and FECs .
- Make links with other activities developed through Excellence Challenge initiatives particularly for providers of new vocational pathways through schools.



### Activity Outcomes

Between 2003-2006, established group meetings were held each semester with additional meetings to report on Project activity. The purpose of the group meetings is to update practitioners on widening participation activities and disseminate information and updates from individual members. In addition feedback on project activity and further developments have been discussed.

Regular groups in the following sectors have been held:

- Health and Social Care;
- Early Years;
- Engineering & Construction;
- Business & Computing;
- Access to HE

In total 57 curriculum group meetings have been convened. Partners



from both local universities and from across the FE partnership have regularly attended.

Some of the groups also had attendance by representatives of employers' groups and training providers.

Groups for Sport & Leisure and Cultural Studies are less well established although BP has facilitated some discussion meetings between partners to address particular admission and credit transfer arrangements.

A workshop was held for a Proposed Foundation Degree for Biomedical Scientists in Industry and the Health Professions on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004, Sheffield Hallam University for FE-HE staff and local employers. This FD has been validated and is being provided locally.

## Evaluation

The Groups have always been received well by partners as a source of networking and sharing updates. Because of new developments in the sub-region with consortia Centres of Vocational Excellence there has been less need for joint HE-FE groups as members are now attending CoVE steering groups. Building Pathways 'Access to HE' issues were held as a standing item on the OCN Access Advisory Group. (The contribution of group working to curriculum development and activity is well recognised and it is appropriate to note this here.)



## Looking Forward:

Curriculum working groups will be a feature of the SYLLN, and provide an established forum for the CoVEs to continue development. They have provided relevant networking opportunities consequently there is less need for project activity. However there remains a need to coordinate dialogue between FE/HE staff and vocational learning teachers in schools so this will be explored further in the Aimhigher continuing activity



# COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Communication and dissemination activity has been an important aspect which has reinforced the partnership element of the BP Project and assisted in broadcasting the information, research, resources and good practice developed. These activities have included a number of successful conferences attended by local, regional and national delegates.



## Aims and Objectives

- Build on existing links with other WP projects across region and sub region.
- Annual BP Conference -dissemination event- particularly related to progression.
- BP Website
- Cross regional distribution of newsletter
- Curriculum groups
- Occasional seminars
- Links with Action on Access, regional and national WP.

## Activity Outcomes

- BP conference 2004, *Vocational Pathways to Higher Education* at The Source, Meadowhall, Sheffield, Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004.
- BP conference 2005, *Vocational Learning, Employer Engagement and Widening Participation* at The Source, Meadowhall, Sheffield Thursday 21st April 2005.
- Building Pathways Project / Sheffield Hallam Learning & Teaching Institute Workshop 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2006, The Hubs, Hallam Union Building, Sheffield: *Teaching and Learning: supporting vocational learners' transition between FE and HE.*
- Newsletters and Briefings produced in Autumn 04, Spring 05, Autumn 05 and Spring 06 to provide updates on activities and for distribution at external events and group meetings.
- Many presentations have been made to workshops and conferences nationally and locally, including for DFES, Action on Access, LSC, Local LEA/Schools' network including Young Apprentices Conference, Careers and Guidance Network, SY Aimhigher, FE college partners and other bodies involved in vocational education and policy making. In addition BP has facilitated workshops annually at local HEI conferences on WP and Teaching & Learning issues.

## Evaluation

**Conference 2004:** 92 delegates + 19 people facilitating the main presentations and workshops.

Representatives from the following organisations attended:

- Schools
- FECs





- HEIs
- Aimhigher co-ordinators
- LEAs Learning Partnerships
- Training Providers
- Connexions/Careers
- LSDA
- Community Centres
- LSC
- DfES
- RDA

\*86% found the event excellent or very good

### 2005 conference (47% return)

- 53 delegates attended with eleven people facilitating the main presentations and workshops
- 76% of evaluations completed found the event excellent or very good.
- Representatives from organisations such as HEIs, Aimhigher, Learning Partnerships, Training Providers, Connexions, LSDA, Community Organisations, the LSC, the DfES and the Regional Development Agency attended with the addition of some NHS Trusts as employer representatives and employer presenters

### Teaching & Learning Seminar 2006:

36 delegates attended the event. Of completed evaluation forms received 83% found the event satisfactory or good and increased their knowledge of vocational learning issues (an 80% return).

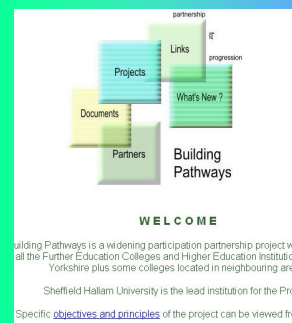
**Newsletter and Briefings:** Around 500 of each edition produced and distributed across the sub-region and at regional and national events.

**Building Pathways Website:** Updated with new design applied Summer 2005. Expanded from approximately 14 page views (containing information and activity records and document repository) to around 35 pages, with new links, photos and features covering events and partnership activities.

**Building Pathways Sharepoint** Online Discussion Forum and Document Archive initiated, Summer 2005. Initially this was set up to assist Advocate Activity, but other colleagues working on Pathways projects given permission to access. Weekly postings of news items, relevant articles and links, regularly updated by the Building Pathways Team.

## Looking Forward

The outcome of continuing projects will be disseminated. Website and Sharepoint will continue. Developments and updates will be co-ordinated with the work of the South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the Building Pathways Project is due to the dedicated commitment of the staff and partners who have participated in and/or offered advice and guidance on specific activities. It is important therefore to acknowledge the contribution of the following people to the overall success of the project:

**Project Co-ordination:** Judith Smith, who has provided leadership, direction and strategic oversight to the Project and laid firm foundations for the incarnation and development of the South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network.

**Project Development:** David E. Berry, who in particular has taken responsibility for all the pathways publications, for the Apprentices CD-Rom contents, database development, website & sharepoint communications and overall liaison and support across all the Project's activities.

**Project Administration:** Marianne Ross, for all aspects of office and financial procedures, the organising and servicing meetings, general communications and efficient and friendly point of contact for the Project.

Jed O'Neill, Director, South Yorkshire Aimhigher  
Jean Watson, Administrator, South Yorkshire Aimhigher

Shaun Long, Open University HE Guidance Support Network

Building Pathways Planning Group representatives and BP Advocates based in partner colleges:

Mike Cuthbert and Brian Crossland, Barnsley College  
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Peter Hymans and Carole Colvin, Doncaster College  
Ali Ghalib, Longley Park College  
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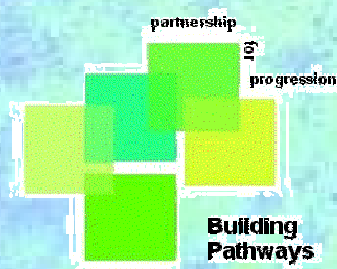
## THE BUILDING PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIP

Barnsley College  
Chesterfield College  
Dearne Valley College  
Doncaster College  
Grimsby College  
Longley Park 6th Form College  
Northern College  
North Nottinghamshire College  
Rotherham College of Arts and Technology  
Sheffield Hallam University  
The Sheffield College  
The Open University  
Open College Network  
Thomas Rotherham College  
University of Sheffield  
Wakefield College  
West Nottinghamshire College

## IMAGES

Cover Illustration, "Pathways", **Pg5**, Newburgh Engineering Rotherham Plant - Vocational Learner, Hubs - HE in FE event activity, **Pg6**, HE in FE Fair logo, HE in FE - drum troupe, flyer T& L event in conjunction with SHU LTI, **Pg8**, Hallam Volunteers in SHU visualisation suite, Hallam Volunteers '3D' team 2006, O&M student ambassadors with FEC student tour 2004, **Pg 9**, LTI / BP staff development event 2006, **Pg10**, flyer for "Understanding more about B/TECs" in conjunction with University of Sheffield, UoS / BP event in Hubs March 2006, **Pg12**, Apprentices Aim Higher CD-Rom, Cover of BP Report Employer Views of Apprentice Progression, **Pg13**, Cover of BP Report Advanced Apprentice perceptions of Higher Education, Doncaster College Construction student being interviewed for CD-Rom, **Pg15**, Valuing Learning Logo, **Pg16**, "Fast Forward" Logo, Valuing Learning Credit Transfer Process Poster for participating colleges, Valuing Learning strap Line - Making your Credit count, **Pg18**, Library picture, student ice breaker activities **Pg19**, UoS / BP Activate programme publicity flyer examples, **Pg21**, HE in FE database distribution disks, Front cover CD insert, **Pg23**, Engineering Careers Seminar underway, example pathway diagram from careers seminar brochure "Pathways. Profiles, Progression", **Pg24**, Example flyer, Careers Seminar Series, Example Case study Careers Seminar Series "Pathways Profiles Progression" booklets, Cover examples "Pathways Profiles Progression" booklets **Pg26**, Advocates conference, Whirlowbrook Hall Sheffield May 2005, **Pg27**, HV's preparing student activities, Ambassador student engagement, **Pg 28**, ambassador awareness raising activities, FEC students await Hallam masterclass, **Pg29**, progressing Travel & Tourism student, Elaine Waser, contributor at LTI/BP event March 2006, Welcome screen BP sharepoint **Pg30**, Engineering vocational progressor Corus Engineering Steels, Rotherham, **Pg31**, Engaging student volunteers, Hubs 3D Celebration Event - students & parents evening, **Pg32**, Example BP newsletter, **Pg33**, BP Exhibiting at Hallam Arena 'Hot Metals Cool Futures' Engineering & Metals event Nov 2005, BP website homepage. Images courtesy David E. Berry, Building Pathways except Pg18(top) licensed library picture

Aim higher...



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