

Reaching out to young people: Making the linkages between new initiatives?

Deirdre Hughes
Centre for Guidance Studies
(CeGS)
University of Derby

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The Connexions Context

- Changes in clients
- Changes in staff
- Changes in organizations
- Changes in technology

Question

What difference has the work of
Connexions actually made to the
outcomes for young people?

Focus

- Central theme 'impact' and in particular what makes impact happen and the circumstances that support it?

Key priorities

- Within the context of a universal service to reduce the number of 16 - 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET). By 2006, progress will be judged on by the proportion making successful transition into further learning at 16, the proportion staying on at 17 and the proportion of 16 -18 year olds who are either in learning or work.

Emerging issues related to Connexions work (strengths)

- appreciation of having multi-agency teams from different disciplines;
- involvement of young people in the planning and policy making;
- joint training and sharing of policies and practices between organisations and initiatives;

Strengths (cont'd)

- clarity in relation to Connexions Managers role;
- good use of outreach methods
- some staff love the work and have a determined commitment to make Connexions succeed.

Areas for further development

- understanding by other organisations of Connexions is still generally poor;
- achieving greater clarity in relation to the Personal Adviser's role;
- the role of careers guidance and career guidance specialists within Connexions;

Areas for further development

- ambivalence in the minds of Personal Advisers about the systems of categorising priority need, with in some cases, a lack of understanding about how managers have defined the categories;

Areas for further development

- addressing problems over the timing or methods of decisions about priority;
- a lack of time and resources to provide a truly universal service (frustration at the inability to follow up or sustain progress of those who become P3);
- staff shortages and/or high turnover of staffing;

Areas for further development

- the package of appropriate benefits e.g. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and more flexible and expansive learning and work options. (The latter generally viewed by managers as largely a Learning & Skills Council responsibility).

Service Issues

- The enormity of cultural change
- The contested understanding of the PA role
- Professional resistance
- The pivotal role of schools
- Management information and databases
- Diagnosis, assessment and the choice of priorities
- The power position of PAs

Impact

- Conceptual complexities i.e. what constitutes impact and how it is understood.
- Empirical difficulties i.e. measuring or capturing it - of being able to identify when impact has occurred.
- Explanatory complexity i.e. developing adequate explanations, which can account for the observed impact - which can say why it happened and how it happened, when it happened.

Conclusion

- Connexions is achieving impact!
- Policy priorities i.e. Universal and/or targeted?
- Sustainability of current arrangements in the context of the recent Green Paper?
- Time and resources required to fully assess and measure impact?

For Additional Information

www.derby.ac.uk/cegs/

Thank You