"More disabled students are accessing education than ever before, receiving improved support and having better experiences and educational outcomes than in the past."

(Disability Rights Commission 2007)
Research Publication Notices

Research Reports
Many of the documents in this series are prepublication/preprint articles, which may subsequently appear (part or whole) in peer reviewed journals and books. In most cases they are draft documents, the purpose of which is to foster discussion and debate, prior to publication elsewhere, whilst ideas are still fresh. Further information about the research programme and other papers in this series can also be found at the following websites:
http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk or http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/leadership/cel/

Citation notice
Citation should conform to normal academic standards. Please use the reference provided or, where a paper has entered into print elsewhere, use normal journal/book citation conventions.

Copyright
The Copyright of all publications on work commissioned by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership is owned by Inspire Learning Ltd, from whom permission should be sought before any materials are reproduced. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission, provided that full acknowledgement is given.

Centre for Excellence in Leadership
The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) was launched in October 2003 as a key national agency, but now operates through a charitable trust formed by its operating company on 1 April 2006. CEL's remit is to foster and support leadership reform, transformation, sustainability and quality improvement in the Learning and Skills Sector. CEL's Research Programme is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) to whom all the results will be reported.

Disclaimer
These projects have been commissioned by, but do not necessarily reflect the views of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership.

Contact Details
Centre for Excellence in Leadership
Lancaster University Management School
CEL Research Office, Room B59
Gillow Avenue, Lancaster, LA1 4YX

Professor David Collinson
National Research Director
Tel: 01524 593147
Email: d.collinson@lancaster.ac.uk

© CEL – March 2008

List of CEL Practitioner Research Volumes
Since the practitioner scheme began in October 2004, over 100 projects have been funded, from which the volumes listed below have been published:
- Volume 1 – Researching Leadership in the Learning and Skills Sector: By the Sector, On the Sector, For the Sector (2005-06)
- Volume 2 – Developing Middle Leaders (2006-07)
- Volume 3 – Leading Quality Improvement (2006-07)
- Volume 4 – Leadership and the Learner Voice (2006-07)
- Volume 5 – Collaborative Leadership (2006-07)
- Volume 6 – Researching Disabilities (2007-08)
- Volume 7 – Leading Employer Engagement (2007-08)
- Volume 8 – Distributed Leadership (2007-08)
- Volume 9 – Leadership Development and Succession (2007-08)
- Volume 10 – Leadership Excellence (2007-08)
- Volume 11 – Personalising Learner Voice (2007-08)
Contents

Editorial Introduction
David Collinson, National Research Director, CEL 2

Disability for All: To train or not to train?
A matter of inclusion
Zoe Simpson, Stoke-on-Trent College 7

Improving the Chances of Employment: An exploration of the barriers facing young adults with learning difficulties
Nicki Quarterman, CoNEL 35

Further Information and Contact Details 60

List of Volumes in the Series 61
Researching Disabilities

Editorial Introduction, Professor David Collinson

Introduction

This is the sixth edited collection in the series of CEL volumes designed to showcase research produced by “practitioners” in the Learning and Skills Sector (LSS) on important leadership-related themes. It presents two CEL research reports that raise significant, but under-researched questions about leadership and disability in the LSS. Together, these papers demonstrate the importance of disabilities in FE colleges, the need for more awareness training for staff, students and employers, and the potential role of leadership in improving the situation for people with disabilities.

There is now extensive legislation on disability issues, including; the ‘Disability Discrimination Act’ (1995), the ‘Special Educational Needs and Disability Act’ (2001) and the ‘Disability Equality Duty’ (2006). Accordingly, as the first report by Zoe Simpson (Stoke on Trent College) emphasises, promoting disability equality is now everyone’s responsibility. Simpson’s research findings demonstrate a clear need and desire for disability awareness training for all staff and students at one FE college. It also describes the impact of the research on college policies and practices.

The second research report, by Nicki Quarterman (College of North East London), draws on critical theory to explore some of the barriers faced by young people with learning difficulties in accessing employment. In a survey of local employers, Quarterman found that, whilst respondents may hold a positive view towards disability generally, their attitude to specific impairments can be negative. Her report concludes that there is a need to work closely with employers to develop their awareness of people with learning difficulties, and also to demonstrate how workplace attitudes and culture may be adapted to accommodate a new employee with learning difficulties.
The CEL Practitioner Research Programme

These CEL reports by Simpson and Quarterman are drawn from the 2007-08 round of research commissioning. In the summer of 2007, the Lancaster research team launched Phase Four of the CEL practitioner research programme with a nation-wide tender process. As in previous years, this tender attracted an enormous response, providing further evidence of the very strong appetite that exists across the LSS to conduct research on the sector, by the sector and for the sector. For the period October 2007 to March 2008, the evaluation panel agreed to fund 35 practitioner research projects, based on the following research themes: Distributed Leadership, Employer Engagement, Equality and Diversity, Leadership Excellence, Leading Quality Improvement, Learner Voice, and Talent Management and Leadership Development.

The CEL practitioner research programme enables practising leaders and managers in the sector to undertake research on highly relevant and topical issues. It is the result of a personal initiative by the chief executive of CEL, Lynne Sedgmore, who was keen to encourage a community of “practitioner scholars” and to provide an opportunity for practising leaders and managers in the sector to engage with research. The main aims of the programme are to:

- support research that critically investigates leadership issues in the LSS,
- provide the sector and stakeholders with evidence-based and theoretically-informed research findings by addressing current issues,
- strengthen networks linking practice, research and policy to build awareness of the importance of practitioners engaging with the research process,
- disseminate research findings as widely as possible and communicate these in ways that are useful to recipients,
- encourage networking between researchers to build a sustainable research community within the LSS.

Since its inception, we have steadily increased year on year the amount of funding allocated to the Practitioner Project Scheme to cope with the large number of applications received through the annual tendering system.
The programme provides individual practitioner-researchers with the opportunity to develop their own original research question, reflect on current practice, and produce research findings that can both shape organisational change and improve future policy and practice. Each project begins with a clear plan to examine a particular research question informed by specific assumptions, methodologies and objectives. Practitioner researchers attend two workshops which provide support and guidance in undertaking the research, analysing the data, and writing-up final reports. The design of each workshop is a mixture of information-giving and network opportunities with space for dialogue and discussion. There is also an opportunity at each event to deal with any dilemmas or issues that may have emerged during the project.

Research is central to CEL’s mission. Concerned to enhance the inter-relationships between research, policy and practice, CEL seeks to increase the impact of research on leadership development and on sector policies and practices. Research impact can occur in numerous ways. By broadening the knowledge base of the sector, research can inform policy construction and implementation. The findings of research may change organizational structures, cultures, resourcing or delivery. More subtly, they might lead to changes in understandings, attitudes or practices (Nutley et al 2003). Hence in many ways, research provides evidence-based knowledge that is useful and usable for those in the LSS.

There are many leadership issues in FE, and in the LSS more broadly, that warrant investigation and analysis. Yet, research in this sector is still very much in its infancy (Hillier and Jameson 2003). This research programme and the series of edited volumes emerging from it enable employees in the sector to develop a research voice, to participate in the setting of research agendas and to define the key themes for leadership. In doing so, practitioners are actively engaged as researchers in the process of knowledge production. This strengthening of a research community in the LSS constitutes an important objective of the CEL research programme.

CEL created the practitioner programme with the intention that research can positively influence the sector and inform CEL’s teaching programmes. Equally, research engagement itself can constitute a learning experience, enhancing researchers’ own understandings and practices. The programme is therefore designed to foster the research-based skills and expertise of staff in the sector. This increased focus on research-based knowledge and experience is particularly relevant at the current time, as the UK government is keen for FE colleges to offer more degree-level/HE programmes.

Underpinning this CEL practitioner research programme is also the view that theory and practice are both very important and often mutually-reinforcing. Much of the debate about research impact focuses on the importance of “evidence-based” perspectives, but sophisticated empirical research should also be theoretically informed. Explicitly or implicitly, theoretical perspectives inform all empirical research (Fox, Martin and Green 2007). Suffice it to say here, that theory and practice are best viewed as inter-related and the CEL research programme seeks to encourage mutually-reinforcing relationships between theory, development, policy and practice.
Since the practitioner scheme began in October 2004, over 100 projects have been funded. In 2007, CEL published five edited volumes of evidence-based practitioner research, as follows:

- Volume 1 - Researching Leadership in the Learning and Skills Sector: By the Sector, On the Sector, For the Sector
- Volume 2 - Developing Middle Leaders
- Volume 3 - Leading Quality Improvement
- Volume 4 - Leadership and the Learner Voice
- Volume 5 - Collaborative Leadership.

To date, over 7,000 copies have been distributed across the sector with Volumes 1 & 4 already having to go to reprint. From the current phase (2007-08), we will be publishing another series of CEL practitioner research volumes.

Feedback received from the sector as a whole indicates that the CEL Practitioner Research Programme is beginning to have a significant impact, informing practice, influencing leadership development, helping to engage those working in the sector with research and building a sustainable research community. A key aim of the programme has been to disseminate the research findings as widely as possible and to communicate these in ways useful to recipients. Practitioners, stakeholders and policy makers are much more likely to engage with the research if it is relatively easy to digest, useful and practical. Therefore the research is disseminated in comparatively small, readable reports that are designed to facilitate the implementation of evidence based research into practice.

The CEL programme provides practitioner researchers with space to reflect on current practice, to explore how other organisations work and how they could improve their performance as individuals, teams and in organisations. It can also facilitate staff development in the LSS. For example, CEL research publications are being used on leadership and management programmes and as professional development for staff, with some colleges giving accreditation for participation in a research project as part of their CPD.

For organisations, the research has encouraged new collaborative partnerships and the sharing of good practice. CEL has found that engaging practitioners with the research process has given the sector a sense of ownership, as well as increasing awareness of the importance of research and how it can influence and improve policy and practice. In these ways, the CEL practitioner research programme is helping to facilitate more reflexive, critical and reflective learning cultures within the LSS.
References


Executive Summary

This report examines leadership and disability in the FE sector. It describes a research project which explored the views of staff and students to determine whether mandatory disability awareness training is required for all staff and students within a college establishment. Firmly rooted and led by staff and student suggestions, the research sought to improve the ways in which learners who have a disability are supported, to promote a positive culture and to foster inclusion across the college. A combined quantitative and qualitative research methodology was adopted, utilising both closed questionnaires and semi-structured focus group interviews, with a total sample size of 129 participants. The research demonstrated a clear need for disability awareness training for all staff and students. All of the students involved and the majority of staff felt that they themselves would benefit from disability awareness training. Additionally, the investigation found many areas of good practice and some areas which require further development. Finally, the report outlines how these research findings have had an immense impact upon college policy and practice.

Introduction

Promoting disability equality and knowing and meeting the requirements of individuals with disabilities is now everyone’s responsibility; hence the title of this investigation: ‘Disability for all’. This report is relevant across the entire FE sector, since the investigation is embedded within the broader context of a whole plethora of disability legislation, which applies to all educational institutions, and includes; the ‘Disability Discrimination Act’ (1995), the ‘Special Educational Needs and Disability Act’ (2001) and the ‘Disability Equality Duty’ (2006), which are all concerned with eliminating discrimination that individuals with disabilities may face and improving the provision they receive.

Therefore, the investigation was primarily concerned with obtaining the views of a cross section of staff and the ‘learner voice’ within the college, via a bottom up approach, in order to answer the main research question: ‘To train or not to train?’, examining whether mandatory disability awareness training is required for all staff and students across the college.
Consequently, the aim of the investigation was to research a number of issues, particularly:

- To ascertain what the current provision and disability awareness is like, and how it can be further improved.
- Whether there is a training need for all staff and students.
- To investigate the possible benefits of disability awareness training and other alternative methods, which could be adopted to promote disability awareness and inclusion across the college.

In short, the project addressed four specific sub-questions, which were:

1) Is mandatory disability awareness training required for all staff and students?
2) Are guidelines required for staff on how to effectively support students with disabilities?
3) What are the potential benefits of a college wide approach to disability awareness?
4) What possible topics could be included in the disability awareness training?

The issue of providing training for both staff and students has been a recurring one, raised by the college’s ‘Students with Disabilities Group’, specifically the group felt that a college wide approach to disability awareness would promote inclusion and generate a positive culture. Additionally, many staff from within the college’s Learning Support Department also recommended mandatory disability awareness training to improve the already successful support of our students at the college. Therefore, this project was extremely relevant to, and led by the people that matter the most, the learners themselves and the college staff.

Further justification for the investigation stemmed from the results of a previous CEL practitioner project, conducted at the college entitled, ‘Equality & Diversity: Listening to the Learner Voice’ (Drennan, 2007). This found that many students felt that there was a lack of disability awareness throughout the college amongst both staff and students. Therefore, a key objective of the research was to empower a range of different learners and staff to have their say, with regard to the issue of promoting disability awareness, and on what they wish to happen within the college, and furthermore to encourage their active involvement in leading future change.
Research Framework

Across the education sector much has been achieved to improve the experiences of individuals who have a disability; this may be a result of the legal requirements placed upon educational institutions within the disability discrimination legislation, which aims to eliminate discrimination towards disabled people. In particular, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995) has three main requirements for education institutions to: “firstly; prohibit discrimination against disabled people, secondly; to ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place, thirdly; to ensure equal participation in learning and public life” (Disability Rights Commission, 2007: 17).

In recent years, there have been a number of amendments to the education provisions outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995) and three have had a major impact upon reducing the barriers that may prevent disability equality. The first amendment was the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001) which specified that “disabled people cannot be discriminated against or receive less favourable treatment for a reason related to their disability and that educational institutions must look ahead to provide the necessary adjustments which disabled people are likely to require” (Disability Rights Commission, 2007: 21).

The second modification involved broadening the definition of what constitutes a disability as the law now protects individuals with long-term health conditions such as, cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV and other impairments and conditions including physical and or sensory impairments, mental health difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The Disability Rights Commission (2007: 18) specify that the impairment must have a “substantial adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and have lasted for at least twelve months, or likely to last for twelve months or more.”

The third adaptation has been the introduction of the Disability Equality Duty (2006) which placed a duty on all public sector bodies to actively promote disability equality across the whole of an institution, via the implementation of a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), which demonstrates what improvements the institution will make and how progress will be measured.

Building disability equality into policies and practices from the onset and eliminating disability discrimination within education is crucial, since “skills and qualifications are a crucial determinant of individuals’ life chances” (Disability Rights Commission, 2007: 10). Recently, the Disability Rights Commission reported (2007: 6) that “more disabled students are accessing education than ever before, receiving improved support and having better experiences and educational outcomes than in the past”. Statistics from the Learning and Skills Council (2006) also revealed an increase in the number of disabled students who are accessing further education and training, specifically, in 2004/5 there were 477,417 students with learning difficulties and or disabilities compared to 336,537 in 2001/02. However, many individuals with disabilities are “still experiencing barriers to education and employment, key challenges have yet to be overcome and much more remains to be done” (Disability Rights Commission, 2007: 6).
A study conducted by Byron (2005: 92) of 381 medical students at Bristol University found that “students were nervous about meeting disabled people and although well intentioned were patronising in their attitude”. A report from the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning (NIACE, 2008: 13 & 7) also found “widespread discrimination in attitudes to disabled staff” and poor understanding and support from their employers and managers. The report specified the need to move from “a culture of compliance with the law, towards a culture of disability equality in which inclusion is automatic for all disabled staff and students”. They recommended “disability equality training at all levels” for all staff across the education sector.

Consequently, this research project was concerned with obtaining the voice of both students and staff in order to develop distributed leadership throughout the college and empower the ‘learner voice’ which is “not just about listening to learners – it’s about learners acting as citizens and co-designers of education provision” (Ravenhall, 2007: 16). By participating, those at the centre of the organisation, the learners and staff, have a greater voice and chance to; raise awareness, improve the ways in which individuals who have a disability are supported, to promote disability equality and to foster inclusion across the college. It is hoped that aside from impacting upon college policy and practices, the report will encourage ‘best practice’ and further research across the FE sector, as Foster (DfES, 2005: 8) noted in his review of FE “where student views are clearly valued and acted upon; then this is a scenario for whole college success”.

**Research Methods**

This investigation obtained the opinions and attitudes of a total of 129 participants, which included the following groups from within the college:

- 10 staff from the Learning Support Department
- 93 staff from 3 faculty areas:
  - Construction and Engineering (51 staff)
  - Caring Faculty (23 staff)
  - Skills 4 Life (19 staff)
- 24 students from 4 separate areas:
  - The ‘Students with Disabilities Group’ (9 students)
  - An access to HE group (5 students)
  - A sports science group (8 students)
  - A cookery group (2 students)
- 2 staff members who both have a disability
All participants were asked for their opinions and attitudes on a range of differing issues relevant to each group, but two main questions were asked to all of the groups, which were:

1) Is mandatory disability awareness training required for both staff and students?
2) Would disability awareness training be beneficial?

A combined quantitative and qualitative methodology was adopted, since combined approaches gather “different kinds of data on the same topic, which allows the researcher to see the topic from different perspectives” (Denscombe, 2003: 132). Quantitatively, two different anonymous closed questionnaires were distributed to staff. The first a postal questionnaire, which consisted of 11 yes or no ‘tick box’ questions was distributed to and completed by all of the 10 learning support staff. The second closed questionnaire comprised 3 yes or no ‘tick box’ questions and was completed by a total of 93 college staff from within the 3 faculty areas, whilst they were attending a staff development training session. Overall, both closed questionnaires were chosen to obtain measurable quantitative data, where comparisons and trends could be drawn from the findings.

Qualitatively, a total of 24 students from four separate groups participated in a semi-structured focus group interview within their individual group. A further two semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with 2 members of college staff, who both have a disability. Three separate interview schedules were used for each group, since some of the questions were not always applicable. Most of the questions were taken from the postal questionnaire utilised with the learning support staff. One interview schedule consisting of 20 questions was devised for the participants from the ‘Students with Disabilities Group’. A further schedule of 20 questions was used with the remaining 3 student groups and the final schedule included 12 questions for the two members of staff. Each interview was tape-recorded and a standardised format of questions was used for each group, but not necessarily in the same order to allow the ease of conversation and to enable the participants to discuss their opinions in detail.

A pilot study was conducted, to examine the wording and layout of the questions, for both the closed questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. Throughout the investigation it was essential that ethical principles (Bell, 2005) of confidentiality and anonymity were respected and maintained. Therefore, every participant was made aware that all responses would remain anonymous. Furthermore, each postal questionnaire sent out to every member of the learning support staff included a covering letter explaining the purpose of the research. Additionally, all 93 faculty staff were debriefed and provided with a ‘ballot box’ to place their completed responses. All interviewees were debriefed and signed an informed consent form, for permission to tape-record their responses and use anonymous excerpts or comments within the report.
Quantitative data obtained from the two closed questionnaires was recorded into Excel to produce visual representations (bar charts) of the responses for each question. The findings were analysed by observing patterns that occurred in the responses and trends were identified informing generalisations made in light of the main research and sub-questions. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed onto separate Word documents; this made the identification and analysis of recurrent key themes within the transcripts easier to identify.

The closed postal questionnaire distributed to 10 staff from the Learning Support Department and the additional closed questionnaire distributed to 93 faculty staff, both had the strength of being a relatively inexpensive way to obtain staff responses. A low response rate is the most common limitation of the postal questionnaire (Bell, 2005); however, this was not experienced during the investigation, as all of the questionnaires were completed. It could be argued that the high response rate was due to the fact that the project was relevant to the staff, an investigation into their workplace.

A further strength of both closed questionnaires was that interviewer bias, the effects of the presence of the researcher was avoided as they were self-completed. Additionally, by restricting each answer to fixed yes or no responses, the data was easier to record, analyse and compare. Therefore, increasing reliability “since each respondent answers the same standardised questions in the same order…any differences in response reflect real differences between respondents” (Haralambos & Holborn, 1995: 837).

Despite the increased reliability of the closed questionnaire data, a major limitation of fixed responses exists, specifically, there was no scope for respondents to qualify or expand on their answers. Furthermore, it was impossible to know whether respondents were honest, but the anonymity of the questionnaires may have encouraged truthful responses, increasing the validity of the data obtained.

The semi-structured interview method enabled all interviewees to provide in-depth responses on their own terms. Therefore, it could be argued the validity of the responses was increased. Additionally, the presence of the tape-recorder may have altered the responses provided (Bell, 2005: 164); since the interview situation is always artificial. Furthermore, the transcription process was extremely time-consuming. However, the semi-structured nature of the interviews meant that the responses could be compared, aiding the analysis of the responses into specific categories reflecting the key ideas. Despite the limitations, the interviews were an invaluable method of obtaining individual thoughts and feelings.
Research Findings

Chart 1: Learning Support Staff Results

The findings from the learning support staff questionnaire reveal that 7 out of 10 staff (70%) felt that the college had a positive culture towards disability. This may have been aided by the college’s ‘Disability Day’ held in April 2007; since 9 support staff (90%) felt the event had promoted disability awareness. With regards to the level of bullying at the college towards students who have disabilities and/or learning difficulties, the results were more mixed; as 6 had not witnessed any bullying (60%), whereas 4 respondents (40%) had witnessed incidents. Furthermore, there was absolute agreement by all 10 staff (100%) that all students should attend mandatory disability awareness training. Additionally, 9 staff (90%) felt that there is a limited understanding amongst tutors across the college of the roles of both Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and Communication Support Workers (CSW); this reflects the studies by Byron (2005) and the Commission for Disabled Staff in lifelong learning (NIACE, 2008) which both found a lack of disability awareness and negative attitudes amongst students and staff.
9 out of the 10 Learning Support staff (90%) felt that tutors spoke to them, rather than to the student they were supporting who may have a disability and/or learning difficulty. Additionally, when asked if most tutors adapted their teaching to meet the needs of the student; 6 staff (60%) said no, whereas only 4 staff (40%) said yes. These two concerns are further highlighted by 9 staff (90%) who felt there was not enough understanding amongst tutors of the diverse needs of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

Additionally, all 10 Learning Support staff (100%) felt that:

1) A set of guidelines on how to effectively support students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties would be beneficial for all staff.

2) That mandatory disability awareness training is necessary for all staff; this reflects one of the main recommendations by the Commission for Disabled Staff in lifelong learning (NIACE, 2008: 13) for “disability equality training at all levels”.

3) That the learning support staff themselves would benefit from disability awareness training.
Chart 3: Faculty Staff Survey Results

Questions 1 - Is mandatory disability awareness training necessary for all staff?

Chart 3 demonstrates that the majority, 82 out of the 93 staff (88%), from the three faculty areas felt that mandatory disability awareness training is necessary for all college staff.

Chart 4: Faculty Staff Survey Results

Questions 2 - Is mandatory disability awareness training necessary for students?

Chart 4: Faculty Staff Survey Results
In total, 63 out of the 93 staff (68%) from across the three faculties felt that mandatory disability awareness training is necessary for all students.

Interestingly, within the Skills 4 Life and Caring faculties there was a stronger majority in favour of student training with 91% and 74% respectively, compared to the Construction and Engineering faculty where the percentage of staff was split more closely with 55% saying yes and 45% saying no.

**Chart 5 Faculty Staff Survey Results**

![Chart 5 Faculty Staff Survey Results](image)

Chart 5 reveals that the vast majority, 83 out of 93 staff (89%) within the three faculties, would find disability awareness training beneficial. Reflecting the views held by 9 out of 10 learning support staff (90%) who felt that tutors do not understand the diverse needs of students with disabilities and or learning difficulties (Chart 2, question 8).

**Interview Findings**

The findings from the semi-structured focus group and one-to-one interviews are categorised under the following 10 sub-headings:

1) Enrolment
2) Accessing support services
3) Physical accessibility
4) Bullying
5) College culture towards disability & student interaction
6) Accessing the student union and canteen
7) Do all students need disability awareness training?
8) Do all staff need disability awareness training?
9) Would a set of guidelines on how to support students with disabilities be beneficial?
10) Benefits of a college wide approach to disability awareness & other methods of promoting disability awareness.
Enrolment

The students on the ‘Access to HE’ course and those on the ‘Sports Science’ course were enrolled by their tutors, following interview, and both groups found the process had no problems. The ‘Students with Disabilities Group’ and the ‘Cookery’ students came into college themselves to enrol and all had assistance from either the college’s communicators and/or the enrolment staff. All of the students found the staff helpful, however the majority of students commented on the enrolment form – comments were:

“The print is too small, which makes it hard to read.”

“The writing is too small for people with sight problems, they wouldn’t stand a chance.”

The two staff interviewed also raised concerns regarding the enrolment form and one commented:

“The disability box is not clear enough, the form is too small and more information is needed on what is a disability.”

Accessing support services

All of the focus groups were asked if they knew how to access a range of the college’s support services including:

- Learning Support
- Mentoring Support
- Counselling
- Financial Support

The ‘Students with Disabilities Group’ and the ‘Cookery’ students knew about all of the support services whereas the ‘Access to HE’ and the ‘Sports Science’ students stated that they did not know how to access these services and comments included:

“I know how to access EMA but not the others because I wasn’t told about them.”

“No not really, the counselling service I just happened to walk past the other day and see it.”
Physical accessibility

All four focus groups raised the same issues concerning accessibility, specifically, relating to a lack of automatic doors, their comments were:

“In the New Library Building…there are no buttons to press to open the doors – so automatic doors would be a good idea.”

“There are too many doors that are not automatic and there are not enough lifts around the college.”

Bullying

Twenty two students out of the twenty four stated that they themselves had not experienced or witnessed any bullying however, the remaining two students who have a disability commented:

“People laugh at my signing and ask me to tell them what the rude signs are.”

“I am being bullied at the college, I get called names.”

Additionally, both members of staff had not experienced bullying themselves but one stated that:

“I have got one deaf student in my group who is always being bullied at the college.”

College culture towards disability & student interaction

There were mixed feelings amongst all interviewees with regard to whether the college had a positive culture towards disability. Two of the focus groups, the ‘Access to HE’ students and the ‘Students with Disabilities Group’ both felt that the college promotes disability and has a positive atmosphere. Their comments were:

“Everyone gets on quite well, there are a few that keep themselves to themselves.”

“The students are very friendly.”
Whereas some of the ‘Sports Science’ students felt that students do not interact well, others disagreed. One student within the ‘Cookery’ focus group highlighted the bullying they were experiencing by other students. Comments included:

“People don’t mix very well.”
“People stay in their own groups.”
“Yes we all get on.”
“In the canteen students who see me signing laugh at me and I don’t like it.”

Alternatively, the 2 members of staff had fairly positive comments:

“Not sure…better than it was before, people are far more aware of people’s disabilities and needs.”
“They (referring to the college) take notice if something is not right; do their best to change but the college needs pushing.”

Additionally, 11 out of 24 students considered themselves to have a disability and when they were asked if people saw them as a person, or their disability, 4 were either not sure or chose not to comment and 7 students gave mixed responses:

“See me.”
“Because I can’t hear I don’t know.”
“If they see me signing they know I am deaf.”
“See my disability, people stare and make me feel uncomfortable.”
“People see me and put the disability aside.”
“They see me.”
“They see my disability, I notice this in their body language and through their speech, I see them say he is deaf. I get labelled as being deaf and nothing else.”

The two staff members felt that people saw them not their disability and their comments were:

“They see me as a normal person because my disability is hidden. I have been here over 10 years and staff talk to me even though they know I am deaf.”
“For me, they see me.”
Accessing the student union & canteen

Surprisingly, all 24 students stated that they do not use the student union because:

- “It’s always full.”
- “It’s too small.
- “It’s boring, there’s not enough to do.”
- “It’s a pain in the bottom to get there in my wheelchair, as the corridor is too narrow and there are too many doors.”
- “It’s more aimed at younger people; I’d feel a bit daft going in.”

Alternatively, 22 out of the 24 students do use the canteen; however two did make further suggestions which included:

- “A coffee room is needed for older students.”
- “A sign is needed on the tables that are for people with disabilities, as non-disabled students sit at them and then the wheelchair user has nowhere to sit.”

The remaining 2 students who are both wheelchair users do not use the canteen. One stated that he chooses not to use the canteen even though he considers the access to be “alright” because:

- “I get a lot of stares in there, it makes me feel uncomfortable.”

For the other student access in the canteen is a problem as he commented:

- “It’s hard to get around when there are too many students in.”

Do all students need disability awareness training?

All 24 students and the 2 staff members felt that all students should receive disability awareness training.

Student comments included:

- “Training will open their eyes to what disabilities there are and how it affects different people, learning, physical, mental, all should be covered even if it is only a little bit of training.”
- “Students need a basic understanding and more awareness.”
- “Yes it would raise our awareness more, make us realise what they go through and experience.”
Staff comments included:

“People need to know about disabilities, the problem is students would probably think why do I need to learn about disabilities.”

“Yes, because some don’t understand why some are different and I have seen some looks and glares from ‘normal’ students towards those with learning difficulties.”

All 24 students and the 2 staff members stated that they would find training on disability awareness beneficial because:

“It would be really good to be able to empathise with people with disabilities.”

“I would like to learn more about other disabilities.”

“I would find it very useful in helping me understand what others may experience.”

“It would open my eyes to other disabilities and how they cope and the problems they have.”

“I would find it useful to update my knowledge.” (Staff member)

“I don’t know everything about disabilities.” (Staff member)

The students had many suggestions as to what could be included in the disability awareness student training which included:

“How to approach deaf students, as I saw someone approach a deaf student by slapping them on the back.”

“Awareness of hearing, sight, physical, mental, it should be the main types of disability.”

“Basic deaf awareness and awareness of other disabilities let them have a go in a wheelchair so they know what it is like.”

“General disability awareness of visual, physical impairment and mental health difficulties too.”

“Braille and sign language.”
Do all staff need disability awareness training?

All 24 students and the 2 members of staff felt that every member of staff should receive disability awareness training.

Student comments included:

“Training would help staff have more understanding.”

“I think training would help them to improve their confidence.”

“Training will make the individual with a disability feel comfortable.”

“All staff should be aware of students with disabilities.”

Staff comments were:

“Some tutors don’t understand at all.”

“There are a lot of people who can’t handle disabilities and they don’t know what to say to them. If you have a disability and are going into a class, the student will be at a disadvantage as staff try to over compensate, making it uncomfortable for the student with a disability.”

Once again the students were asked what they thought should be included in the disability awareness training for staff and their ideas included:

“More awareness of mental, physical and all other disabilities even if it is only basic training.”

“How to cope with students who may have disabilities.”

“The way that the rooms are set out as when we first started the rooms were hard to access, as there was 30 of us in a room and when you have someone who has got crutches who is disabled it is awkward for them getting in and out.”

“A bit of deaf awareness definitely...some basic signs.”

“How to interact with students who have disabilities, how to talk to and interact with them.”

“They can’t know everything but the basics are needed, even just basic communication, for example staff need to know that they need to go slower.”
Would a set of guidelines on how to support students with disabilities be beneficial?

Twenty two students felt that a set of guidelines would be beneficial for tutors, as one student commented:

“I think that tutors would find it useful.”

However, the remaining 2 students thought that staff would throw the guidelines away, their comments were:

“I think that they would throw a leaflet away.”
“Training would be better because staff would throw leaflets in the bin.”

Interestingly, the 2 members of staff also felt that a set of guidelines would be thrown away, as they both commented:

“The leaflet would probably be thrown out.”
“They will just file it away with all the other policies.”

Benefits of a college wide approach to disability awareness & other methods of promoting disability awareness

A number of benefits of a college wide approach to disability awareness were identified by the 24 students and the 2 staff and their comments included:

“There would be a better atmosphere and people would have more confidence about interacting with disabled people.”
“I think that we will all be able to relate to people who have disabilities better.”
“I think you would have more disabled people coming to the college, if the college was more disabled friendly and aware of the problems they have got. If the college was more disabled friendly it would travel through word of mouth to the disabled community.”
“I think everyone would benefit…people would be more accepting and get on.”
“Everyone would look after each other and we would feel like a proper community.”
“People would be more helpful to each other.” (Staff member)
“It would make a positive atmosphere for potential students to come to the college. Any awareness needs to be posted everywhere. There is nothing that says ‘we care’ about disabilities.” (Staff member)
The students and staff identified a range of other possible methods which would promote disability awareness, aside from disability awareness training, the main ideas were:

“More posters, more leaflets.”

“Talks in the tutorials.”

“We could have a magazine, like a student magazine where we could have articles and things in about disability.”

“We could have more posters/signs both inside and outside the college.”

“Go out into the community, to tell the public what the college offers.”

“More signs are needed across the college.”

“A workshop on deaf/blind awareness and communication techniques.” (Staff member)

“All tutors need to do level one British Sign Language as part of their continuing professional development…as there is always a chance of a deaf student coming in. Even just a bit of knowledge can help.” (Staff Member)

**Conclusion**

This research project suggests that mandatory disability awareness training is necessary for all staff and students. Of the 129 participants, 118 felt that all staff should receive disability awareness training and 99 participants felt that all students should also be trained. A number of reasons as to why staff and students should be trained were given; the most prominent explanation was that both staff and students have a limited understanding and awareness of disability, even not knowing how to communicate and the terminology to use. Therefore, the participants felt that a college wide approach to disability awareness would result in a range of potential benefits, most importantly; the college would feel like a proper community.

All of the learning support staff and the majority of the students felt that a set of guidelines would be beneficial for all tutors to have, whilst a minority felt that they would be thrown away. Nevertheless, it is possible that they may be a valuable resource for many college staff.

Four main benefits of adopting a college wide approach were identified, specifically that:

a. Individuals would be more helpful to each other.

b. More interaction between students would occur and the college would become more of an inclusive environment to study.

c. There would be a positive atmosphere.

d. More individuals with disabilities would enrol at the college.
The students and staff interviewed recognised that the key aim of any disability awareness training should be to provide individuals with a general awareness of disability. Five main areas which should be covered in the disability awareness training were identified:

- Basic communication and interaction techniques.
- The impact of the physical environment e.g. classroom layout.
- Physical disabilities including visual impairment.
- Hearing impairment and deafness.
- Mental health.

The main research finding from this investigation is that the majority of participants involved in the research felt that mandatory disability awareness training is required for all staff and students. The results have also found many areas of good practice within the college, for example, the presence of a positive culture towards disability, aided by the continuing awareness raising sessions held at the college, such as the disability day held in 2007 and planned again for April 2008. Furthermore, the majority of students identified positive experiences with their tutors and all of the students found the college staff helpful during their enrolment.

Additionally, the investigation has found a number of areas which require further development, including the design of the enrolment form, since many students commented on the size of the print being too small. A further area noted for improvement concerns the physical accessibility of the college, specifically; the majority of the students suggested that the college requires more physical adjustments to be made, including an increase in the number of lifts available and accessible doors. However, the college aims to address the issue of accessibility as part of its current construction of a complete new re-build.

The impact this investigation has had, and will continue to have, has been immense and as such, conducting the research was an absolute pleasure. Not only has the research produced thought provoking evidence, which has been well received by the college’s Senior Management, the results have also had an impact upon college policy and practice.

Firstly, with reference to policy, several research findings which included areas of concern relating to; enrolment documentation, physical accessibility, bullying and the college culture, have been included as target areas for improvement in the college’s ‘Disability Equality Scheme’ (DES). Whilst this highlights the impact of the project, it also reaffirms the college’s commitment to continual future improvement.

Secondly, the implementation of the project itself has raised disability awareness and has therefore had an enormous impact upon the practices and attitudes of many individuals across the college; this is most evident in the high numbers of students and staff interested in attending and participating in the college’s ‘Disability Day’ to be held in April 2008, to promote disability awareness and develop inclusion.
Furthermore, the immediate impact of the project is also evident within two of the main proposed future recommendations, which were; to provide disability awareness training for students and for staff, for which I successfully began the implementation of 8 disability awareness sessions for students, and one session so far, for members of staff.

Additionally, the investigation has implications for both the college and the wider FE sector, since the investigation contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics, more specifically, the role of distributed leadership whereby, leadership is shared and everyone is responsible for working towards a common goal. This investigation has clearly demonstrated how students and staff can act as effective agents of change in promoting and achieving disability awareness for all.

**Recommendations**

In light of the research findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations can be made:

1) To ensure mandatory disability awareness training is implemented across college to all staff which includes the following areas:
   a. Basic communication and interaction techniques
   b. The impact of the physical environment e.g. classroom layout
   c. Physical disabilities including visual impairment
   d. Hearing impairment and deafness
   e. Mental health

2) To include the ‘learner voice’ within the disability awareness training for staff, by including learner comments relating to disability issues and to consider the active involvement of students who have disabilities within the training itself.

3) To consider the continuation of the disability awareness training for students, of which 8 sessions have already been delivered.

4) To promote disability awareness within every student induction via:
   a. Informing students of the support services available e.g.
      - Learning Support
      - Counselling Services
      - Mentoring
      - Financial Support
   b. Informing students of the focus groups e.g. the ‘Students with Disabilities’ group.
   c. Informing students of specific staff they can go to for information, advice and guidance relating to disability issues.
5) To ensure that disability awareness is included in regular tutorials to:
   - Raise awareness
   - Promote inclusion
   - Encourage disclosure

6) To move the Students Union to a larger and more accessible location and actively promote the Student Union to students who have disabilities; this will require continuous monitoring and evaluation.

7) To encourage and actively promote a college wide approach to disability awareness by changing attitudes via:
   a. More awareness days
   b. Poster campaigns
   c. To consider the possibility of introducing signage that carries a mission statement relating to disability e.g. ‘we care about disability’.

8) To consider developing a set of guidelines for tutors, on how to effectively support students with disabilities, which will also include the help available to staff and who they can contact if they have any queries/concerns.

9) To consider the possibility of incentives for staff to complete specialist training e.g. British Sign Language.

10) To continue to develop the ‘learner voice’ and continue to consult differing learners on key issues such as the ‘Students with Disabilities’ group surrounding disability e.g. construction of the new build.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the learners and staff who participated in the research and gave up their time. Additionally, I send a big thank you to all of my colleagues within the Learning Support Department for their support, involvement and patience throughout the investigation.

References


Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning. (2008, March) From Compliance to Culture Change, Leicester: NIACE.


**Keywords**

**Disability** – “A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) covers individuals with health conditions including cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV from the point of the condition being diagnosed (Disability Rights Commission, 2007: 9 & 19).

**Inclusion** – “Inclusion is seen to involve the identification and minimising of barriers to learning and participation and the maximising of resources to support learning and participation” (Corbett, 2001: 11).

**Leadership** – The following definition of leadership is the most relevant in relation to this research project as the project has utilised a collaborative leadership approach between students and staff whilst focusing upon generating a culture based upon distributed leadership. Leadership can be defined as “The ability to present a vision so that others want to achieve it, it requires skills of building relationships with other people and organising resources effectively...the mastery of leadership is open to everyone” (O’Connor, 1994: 9).
APPENDIX 1: Closed Questionnaire for Learning Support Staff

Please place a tick in each appropriate box, answer all questions and feel free to add any further comments at the end – thank you.

1) Does the college as a whole have a positive ethos/culture towards disability?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

2) Do you think that the college’s ‘Disability Day’ promoted disability awareness?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

3) At any time, have you witnessed bullying towards students who have a disability or learning difficulty?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

4) Do you think that mandatory training, on disability awareness would be beneficial for all students during their induction?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

5) In your opinion do tutors understand the roles of an LSA/CSW?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

6) Do you find staff talk directly to you, rather than the student?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

7) Do most of the tutors adapt the way that they teach to meet the needs of your students?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

8) Do you feel that there is enough understanding amongst tutors, of the diverse needs of students with disabilities?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

9) Would a set of guidelines for staff, on how to effectively support students with disabilities be beneficial?
   YES ☐       NO ☐

10) Do you think that mandatory training on disability awareness is necessary for all staff?
    YES ☐       NO ☐

11) Would you find training on disability awareness beneficial?
    YES ☐       NO ☐

Feel free to add any additional comments on any of the above issues:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
APPENDIX 2: Covering Letter for LSA Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

I am currently conducting a piece of research on the college through an external funding agency The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL). The project is about leading diversity and equality with its focus on disability for all, specifically to investigate whether compulsory disability awareness training is required for both staff and students.

Therefore, your opinion is vital to this investigation, to help the college improve the ways in which learners and staff alike, who have a disability are supported and to promote a positive culture across college.

Throughout my research it is essential that the ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity are respected and maintained. Therefore, your responses to this questionnaire will remain strictly confidential and anonymous and will only be used for the purposes of this research project.

Please could you complete the enclosed, short questionnaire, which should only take a few minutes of your time and place it in my pigeon hole.

Thank you for your time; your comments are very much appreciated.

Zoe Simpson.

APPENDIX 3: ‘Tick box’ Questionnaire for Faculty Staff

Please tick the appropriate boxes for the following 2 questions:

1) Do you think that mandatory training on disability awareness is necessary for both:

Staff  Yes ☐ No ☐

Students  Yes ☐ No ☐

2) Would you find training on disability awareness beneficial?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX 4: Informed Consent Form

Student Informed Consent Form

The aims of the project:

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) project is about leading diversity and equality with its focus on disability for all, specifically to investigate whether compulsory disability awareness training is required for both staff and students.

Therefore, your opinion is vital to this investigation, to help the college improve the ways in which learners and staff alike, who have a disability are supported and to promote a positive culture across college.

If you would like to have your say please complete the section below:

I ____________________________ am happy to be interviewed in a group interview, where I shall be asked a number of questions relating to the above project.
I understand that the focus group interview will be tape-recorded and my comments may be used for research purposes, but that my name will not be passed on to anyone and that all details will be locked away.

Student Name ___________  Signature ___________  Date _________
Staff Name ____________   Signature  ___________  Date _________

APPENDIX 5: Interview Schedule 1 – used with Students with Disabilities Focus Group

1) How did you find the enrolment procedure?

2) Did you need help filling in the form, if you received help who was it from?

3) Do you know how to access the college’s support services such as learning support, counselling, mentoring and financial support for example?

4) Do you think that a college open-day or open evening would be a good idea just for individuals with disabilities or learning difficulties?

5) What are your experiences like with other students in general?

6) Do you use the students union?

7) Do you feel comfortable using the canteen?

8) Have you or do you know someone who has been bullied because of a disability or learning difficulty?

9) On the whole do people see you or your disability?
10) Do you feel that compulsory training is required for students during their induction?

11) Do staff adapt their teaching if students have a disability or learning difficulty?

12) If disability awareness training was set up for students what do you think should be included in the training?

13) Would you find training on disability awareness beneficial, if so how?

14) What are your experiences like with your tutors?

15) Do you feel that compulsory training is required for all staff within the college?

16) If disability awareness training was set up for staff what do you think should be included?

17) Do you feel that a set of guidelines for staff on how to effectively support students with disabilities would be beneficial?

18) Do you think that the college’s ‘Disability Day’ promoted disability awareness?

19) Apart from disability awareness training what other possible methods would promote disability and inclusion across college?

20) What are the potential benefits of a college wide approach to disability awareness?

**APPENDIX 6: Interview Schedule 2 – used with the Access to HE Focus Group**

1) How did you find the enrolment procedure?

2) What about the enrolment form?

3) Did staff go through it with you?

4) The College has got a range of support services like counselling, learning support, financial support etc do you know about those services at the college and would you know how to access them if you needed to?

5) So you all feel confident that you could find information out if you needed to?

6) Do you know anyone who is being bullied because of a disability or a learning difficulty?

7) What do you think the culture of the college is like at the college, do we promote disability?
8) What about student interactions, do you mix well, does everyone get on?

9) What about the student union, do you use the student union and their services?

10) Do you think then we need something in place for older students?

11) Do you think that a college open day or an open evening for individuals with disabilities or learning difficulties would be a good idea?

12) Do you think that disability awareness training is required for staff at the college for all staff and also students as well during their induction?

13) What do you think about training for students then?

14) What about for staff, do you think that all staff should be trained?

15) What kind of things should be included in the training for staff?

16) What are your experiences like with your tutors do you think they adapt the way that they teach to suit individuals who may have disabilities?

17) Do you think a set of guidelines for staff on how to support students with disabilities would be beneficial?

18) Apart from disability awareness training what other things can we do to promote disability awareness across the college?

19) What do you think the benefits are of a college wide approach to disability awareness?

20) Do you think you would benefit from a session on disability awareness?

APPENDIX 7: Interview Schedule 3 – used with 2 Staff Members

1) Do you think the college has a positive culture towards disability?

2) Have you ever completed a college enrolment form, if yes what do you think of the form?

3) Have you ever witnessed bullying towards students who have a disability or learning difficulty?

4) Do you think that the college’s ‘Disability Day’ promoted disability awareness? If so why?

5) On the whole do people see you or your disability?

6) Do you think that mandatory training, on disability awareness would be beneficial for all students during their induction, if yes why?
7) Do you feel that there is enough understanding amongst college staff, of the diverse needs of students and staff who may have a disability?

8) Would a set of guidelines for staff, on how to effectively support students with disabilities be beneficial? If yes, how?

9) Do you think that mandatory training on disability or disability awareness is necessary for all staff, please explain the reason for your answer.

10) Would you find training on disability awareness beneficial, if yes how?

11) Apart from disability awareness training what other possible methods would promote disability and inclusion across college?

12) What are the potential benefits of a college wide approach to disability awareness?
Improving the Chances of Employment: An exploration of the barriers facing young adults with learning difficulties

Nicki Quarterman, College of North East London

Executive Summary

Opportunities for employment of young people with learning difficulties are acknowledged as being generally poor, with exact figures of actual employment difficult to identify. This research project aimed to explore some of the barriers faced by young people with learning difficulties in accessing the employment market. Nearly all previous research focuses on supported or sheltered employment, and adapting the person with a disability to the work situation. This study adopts a critical theory paradigm, and reverses the existing research perspective in this area by considering how the work situation may be adapted to the person with a disability. Such an approach firmly conceptualises the issue of gaining employment for young people with learning difficulties within the social model of disability, arguing that it is not solely the person that needs to ‘fit’ into a work system, but that the work system also needs to change to accommodate the young person’s strengths.

The study gathered information from local small and medium sized enterprises on three attitudinal measures – general attitudes to disability, attitudes to specific impairments and attitudes to workplace factors. It found that whilst employers may hold a positive view towards disability generally, their attitude to specific impairments may be negative. The overall conclusion of the study is that there is a need to work closely with employers to develop their awareness of people with learning difficulties, and also demonstrate how workplace attitudes and culture may be adapted to accommodate the successful integration of a new employee with learning difficulties. Such work needs to be both practical, in terms of simple interventions in the workplace, but also needs to address attitude change in employers and their workforce. It is also important to recognise that an intervention focused on employers and the workplace would represent a significant step-change in the current approach to supporting young people with learning difficulties into work.

Introduction

This research report considers the barriers to employment for young people with learning difficulties in a single London Borough. It is framed within a critical theory paradigm, and has two main research questions. Firstly, what do employers perceive as the barriers to employing people with learning difficulties? Secondly, how closely do the occupational sectors available in Haringey match the aspirations of the future cohort of employable young people with learning difficulties? Research was conducted using a questionnaire methodology, for both employers and young people with learning difficulties.
This research project explored employers’ perceptions of barriers to employing people with learning difficulties in small businesses. The project was specifically focused on small businesses in response to the changing nature of employment within the UK. The overall purpose of the research was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding the economic activity of people with learning difficulties. This group is acknowledged throughout the literature as being vastly under-represented in the employment arena, and it may be noted that many interventions to date have focused on improving the ‘employability’ of people with learning difficulties rather than removing the social, cultural, economic and structural barriers to employment.

This research reversed the current theoretical approach by identifying the barriers perceived by employers, using these to inform interventions, which may in turn, reduce the impact of these barriers on the employment of people with learning difficulties. Adopting such an approach firmly conceptualises the barriers to employment within a social model of disability, that is, that the majority of such barriers are socially and culturally constructed; in this case, through the social attitudes reflected in the individual employer’s attitudes and practice. This approach differs from previous research because it looks at how the social attitudes of employers may be changed, rather than trying to fit the person with learning difficulties into existing social inequalities.

A review of the available literature indicated an expected trend of smaller companies replacing larger ones as the UK’s economy moves to a more flexible and highly skilled workforce. Most employees no longer have the aspiration of a ‘career for life’. As globalisation increases, through improving communication and transport links, large companies will break down into smaller units that may be based anywhere in the world (Beyer & Kilsby, 1996).

Part of the UK’s response to this economic challenge is to focus on increasing the skills base of the working-age population. Strategies such as Skills for Life and Train to Gain seek to improve the nation’s skills. However, whilst in the education sector some thought has been given to the training and development of people with disabilities, very little of this has carried through to the employment sector. Consequently, many people with disabilities are gaining more skills and qualifications that they are unable to use in the employment market. UK statistics suggest that there around 6.7 million people of working age who are disabled (National Statistics, 2004). A more recent survey commissioned by the Disability Rights Commission (2004) suggested the number of people with disabilities in the UK was closer to 10 million. Within this figure, the Valuing People green paper (HMSO, 2001) estimated around 1.2 million people have mild to moderate learning difficulties, and 210,000 have severe or profound learning difficulties.

Data on the learning difficulties population of the UK is scarce, and tends to be subsumed within a generic “disabled” category. In the previously mentioned study, the majority of respondents immediately thought of someone in a wheelchair or with a physical impairment when hearing the word ‘disability’ (DRC, 2004). However, it is generally recognised that people with disabilities are “…chronically underemployed
and unemployed”, with around two-thirds of the current figure estimated not to be working (Schriner, 2001; Stephens et al, 2005). It would therefore be reasonable to assume that people with learning difficulties are subject to the same under or unemployment, and arguably, that this group may be disproportionately affected within the overall category of disability (Baron, Wilson & Riddell, 2000).

The Disability Rights Commission, in its survey of the attitudes towards disability of small and medium enterprise (SME) found that three broad categories could be distinguished amongst the 1000 businesses surveyed. These were suggested to be: “The Good Neighbours”, “The Thoughtless Neighbours” and “Nuisance Neighbours”. Broadly, the former represented companies with a very positive attitude to employing people with disabilities; whilst the latter two were concerned over claims of discrimination, and viewed disability in a negative light respectively. Within these three categories, only 15% of the SME’s fell into “The Good Neighbour”.

Much of the research and practice on the subject of learning difficulties and employment has focused on either sheltered or supported employment. Sheltered employment is used less frequently as a result of social critique by disabled researchers, who have strongly highlighted the exploitative nature of these settings (Leach, 2002). Supported employment has been increasing in popularity since the 1980’s. It is based heavily on the principles of social role valorisation (Wolfensburger, 1998). Social role valorisation is based on the principles of normalisation, the underlying theory for the deinstitutionalisation of people with learning difficulties. There is a strong emphasis within this approach of ‘normalising’ the person with learning difficulties, which is somewhat at odds with other disability theory.

Within a supported employment approach, the emphasis is on systematically teaching the person how to do the job, and how to fit into a work environment. However, there is limited consideration of wider societal attitudes within this approach, making it a highly localised strategy (Corbett & Barton, 1992). The success of a supported employment intervention is dependent on a number of factors specific to the individual case, for example, the efficacy and enthusiasm of the job coach, the attitudes of the potential employer and other employees, the nature of the job and the workplace culture amongst others (Wilson, 2003; Fillary & Pernice, 2005; Eraut, 2000; Roulston & Warren, 2006). Hagner (2000) surveyed workplace culture from a disability perspective, and found that low workplace culture corresponded with low opportunities for inclusion within the workforce for people with disabilities. Workplace culture is concerned with ‘the way things are done’ in a specific environment. Hence, low workplace culture may be defined as an unwillingness to change established practice, a lack of social support or a lack of clarity over job roles and responsibilities. Schutz (1976) identified the difficulties for people with learning difficulties in assimilating into the workplace culture, specifically that many of the unseen aspects of this culture need to be made explicit for someone with a learning difficulty. There must be someone in place to establish these ‘rules’ explicitly, either in the formal or informal role of ‘job coach’.
An alternative paradigm is that of Critical Theory, first developed by Horkheimer in 1937, which concentrates upon critiquing and changing society as a whole. Oliver (1998: 1448) has suggested that using critical theory within disability research firmly locates the problems faced by people with disabilities as “…a product of an unequal society”. Critical theory underlies the Social Model of Disability, which has been successfully used to conceptually the barriers faced by people with physical disabilities as socially constructed (Baron et al, 2000). Whereas an approach based on social role valorisation has been translated into fitting the individual to the job, a critical theory approach would imply fitting the job to the person. Herein lies a significant contradiction in disability research to date, captured by Wilson’s (2003) point that a real job is one that would otherwise be done by a non-disabled person. Whilst one would agree that the nature and quality of work carried out by someone with a learning difficulty should be comparable with that of a non-disabled person doing the same work, it creates unnecessary barriers to imply that work should be carried out using the same techniques and methods in both situations. Hence, there is a danger of misinterpreting ‘real jobs’ into a statement in which the person with a disability fits into an inaccessible system, rather than the system being adjusted to fit the person.

The aim of this research is then to answer two key questions. Firstly, what effect does attitude to disability have upon the employment of people with learning difficulties? This question arises from the identification both of the invisibility of people with learning difficulties within the larger social group of people with disabilities, and the DRC (2004) study identifying the generally poor attitudes towards disability shown by a large proportion of small and medium sized enterprises. The second question asks what effect do workplace factors have upon the employment of people with learning difficulties? This question is drawn from previous research that has identified that the success of a work placement is due, in part, to the job tasks, workplace attitudes to an individual with a disability and the general workplace culture.

**Research Framework**

This study used a critical theory paradigm to frame the research. Horkheimer (1982: 244) described critical theory as any theory that seeks “…to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them…”. Critical theory underpins the social model of disability by challenging the social, economic and political circumstances of disability rather than focusing on the specific impairments of an individual. Horkheimer (1995: 21) explains this further, suggesting that critical theory must first explain what is wrong with the current social reality, identify the actions to change it and provide achievable goals for social transformation. In this research study, a critical theory approach is used to explore the social reality of employers with regard to employing people with learning difficulties. The subsequent findings are used in combination with the views of young people with learning difficulties to suggest ways in which the situation may be improved; that is, the actions for change and goals to measure the progress of such change.
Research Methods

Employers

A between-participants design was used to investigate two distinct research questions:

1. What effect does attitude to disability have upon the employment of people with learning difficulties?

2. What effect do workplace factors have upon the employment of people with learning difficulties?

Through postal questionnaire, employers were asked to indicate whether they currently, or had ever in the past, employed someone with a disability. They were then asked to complete three separate scales measuring their attitudes towards disabled people. The first scale measured general attitudes to disability; the second scale measured general attitudes to a specific impairment. Finally, the third scale measured workplace factors. Within the general attitudes to disability scale, there are two sub-scales: blatant prejudice (6 items) and subtle prejudice (6 items). The Attitudes to Specific Impairments scale contains two sub-scales, one looking at attitudes to people with learning difficulties, and the other looking at people who use wheelchairs. Both sub-scales contained 5 items, repeated with different impairments. In the last scale, Workplace Factors, there are three subscales, one considering attitudes towards capacity to complete a task (5 items); the second looking at the workplace attitude to disability (5 items) and the third measuring workplace culture (6 items). Each scale was scored using a Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘1’ – “I agree very much” to ‘6’ – “I disagree very much”. Some items were reverse-scored. On each scale, a high score indicated a negative attitude and a low score indicated a positive attitude.

A random sample of 137 small businesses was drawn from an existing database of local employers within the Borough, held by the Employer Engagement Unit at College of North East London (CoNEL). The sample was stratified by occupational sector, with the final random sample including a representative proportion of companies from each sector available within the database. There were five sectors identified within the database: Public Services, Retail, Construction, Business / Administration and Religious. To further clarify occupational sector, respondents were asked to indicate the sector they felt their business fell into from the categories used by the National Statistics Office. Each questionnaire was numbered in order to allow an analysis of non-respondents as well as respondents, although this information was generalised to occupational sector and postcode area to ensure the anonymity of both respondents and non-respondents.

To provide an incentive for participation to local employers, a lottery draw was included as part of the questionnaire pack. Employers were asked to return the questionnaire using pre-paid and addressed envelopes, and to indicate if they wished to be included in the lottery draw. A cover letter was also included, explaining the purpose of the
study, its voluntary nature and issues of confidentiality around the data collected. A copy of the questionnaire and covering letter is included in Appendix One.

A second data collection was initiated after a very poor response to the postal questionnaire. A further 30% sub-sample was drawn from the initial sample of 137 companies and these companies received a follow-up visit or phone call, during which a trained interviewer administered the questionnaire.

**Young People with Learning Difficulties**

An adapted structured questionnaire methodology was used with this sample. The sample was drawn from existing students attending discrete learning difficulties provision at a local college. Eight young people were asked to complete the questionnaire. The sample consisted of 5 males and 3 females, all of whom were identified as having severe learning difficulties on their Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Each subject was required to select a job they would most like to do from a selection of eight images that represented the employment sectors on the Employer’s Questionnaire. The images were selected to be as accessible as possible to the subjects, and also to represent a job within each sector that would be within the subjects’ realm of experience. Each image was presented within a group of three to ensure the subject was able to make a considered choice.

As each image was chosen, it was removed from the selection and placed in a rank position (for the full methodology, please see Appendix Two). Figure 1 below gives a pictorial overview of the process.

![Figure 1: Pictorial Overview of the Process](image)

**First set of 3 images**

**Second set of 3 images**
Figure One: Selecting preferred occupations

Once the grid had been filled, each row of three images was removed in turn, and the subject was asked to choose in order of preference again. In this way, choices were rank ordered.

Research Findings

In the interests of clarity, the results of each data collection will be presented separately. Findings from the employer questionnaire are presented first, followed by the results of the young people with learning difficulties.

Results of Employer Questionnaire

A response rate of 8% (N=12) was obtained overall, with 3.5% (n=5) returned from the postal survey and a further 4.5% (n=7) gathered through telephone or face-to-face interviewing.

Demographics were collected as part of the questionnaire. Seven respondents were male; 5 were female. The respondents ranged between 27 and 59 years of age; the majority of respondents fell into the 40 - 50 years bracket. The ethnic backgrounds of the respondents was mixed; over half the respondents self-identified as ‘White-British’, whilst two respondents declined to answer. Most of the responding companies had been in operation for more than 4 years, with some having an established history of operation in the area. Only two companies had been in operation for less than two years. The respondents represented a variety of sectors. Three companies defined themselves within the public sector; responses were received from two companies within each of the education, retail and manufacturing sectors.

The remaining three respondents identified their sectors as ‘hotel and restaurants’, ‘transport’ and ‘construction’. The final demographic collected described the number of employees in the company. Four respondents said their company had more than 20 employees; a further four had between 5 – 10 employees. Three companies had less than 5 employees, and the final respondent had between 11 – 15 employees.
Analysis of Data:

The distribution of scores for each scale and subscale is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Standard Deviations for Main Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>General Attitude</th>
<th>Attitude to Impairment</th>
<th>Workplace Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td>22.25</td>
<td>40.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Standard Deviations for Sub-Scales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Prejudice</th>
<th>Attitude to Impairment</th>
<th>Work Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blatant</td>
<td>Subtle</td>
<td>Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>17.92</td>
<td>10.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Standard Deviations for the three scales shows that the range of data is quite broad. For the subscales, the standard deviation is generally lower, but still indicates a wide spread of data.

The questionnaire responses were analysed using a correlational analysis (Pearson’s $r$). Table 3 shows the correlations between the three attitude scales and the demographics of interest, specifically whether the respondent currently employed someone with a disability (CurDisemp), had employed someone with a disability in the past (Pastdisemp), sector and time in operation (timeop). The results show significant correlations between currently employing someone with a disability and attitude to impairment ($r = 0.739$, $p<0.01$) and also with attitude to employment ($r = 0.842$, $p<0.01$). Those respondents who indicated that they currently employed someone with a disability were also the only respondents to state they had ever employed someone with a disability. This accounts for the perfect positive correlation between these two items, and effectively leads to the duplication of correlation scores with other items for both.

Attitude to impairment, general attitudes to disability and attitude to employment scales all showed strong positive correlations, suggesting that as a more negative attitude was held on one scale, negative attitudes were also found on the other two scales. First-order correlations were conducted on the main scales in order to investigate this relationship further. The results may be seen in Tables 5 – 7; however, this analysis showed that attitude to employment correlated significantly to both general attitudes to disability ($r = 0.630; p<0.05$) and to attitude to impairment ($r = 0.60; p<0.05$), but that attitude to impairment was not significantly correlated to general attitudes to disability ($r = -0.12$).

A further correlational analysis was carried out on the subscales. The results of this analysis may be seen in Table 4. This analysis showed a significant, positive correlation between the subscales on the attitude to impairment scale; that is, a negative attitude towards physical disability corresponded with a negative attitude towards learning difficulties. Learning difficulties correlated significantly with all three attitude to employment subscales, the physical disability subscale did not show a significant correlation to job factors but did significantly correlate to the other two subscales.

Work culture correlated significantly to the blatant prejudice scale ($r = 0.683; p<0.05$) whilst work attitudes correlated significantly to the subtle prejudice scale ($r = 0.664; p<0.05$).

**Results of the Young People with Learning Difficulties Questionnaire**

Data were collected from 9 young people with severe learning difficulties. Retail, education and finance represented 60% of the most preferred employment option. These were conceptualised as working in a shop, working with children and working in a bank respectively. The second most preferred option was the hotel / restaurant sector, which was conceptualised as working in a kitchen. The third most preferred options were retail and transport. The remaining order of preferences may be seen in Appendix Three.
Of the sample, 60% demonstrated a match between two separate images related to the finance sector, namely matching a picture of a person counting money with an image of a popular bank. However, neither of the two respondents who selected ‘finance’ as their most preferred employment option were able to match the job skill with the sector image. Of the overall sample, 60% were also able to match the two images associated with the retail sector; and of the two respondents who selected retail as their most preferred employment option, both were able to match the job skill with the sector image. All respondents were able to demonstrate a match between job skills and sector image for education.

In the second most preferred employment option – hotel / restaurant sector, 56% of the respondents were not able to match the image of a chef with someone serving food; whilst 44% were able to demonstrate this match. Only one of the five respondents selecting hotel/restaurant sector fell into the latter category of matching. The third choice preferences, retail and transport showed a similar profile. Of the two respondents selecting retail as their third preference, only one produced a successful match. However, those respondents who chose transport as their third preference both demonstrated a match between job skill and sector image.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Main Scales with Key Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CurDisemp</th>
<th>GenAtt</th>
<th>AttoImp</th>
<th>AttoEmp</th>
<th>Pastdisemp</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>timeop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CurDisemp Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>.739(*)</td>
<td>.842(**)</td>
<td>1.000(**)</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GenAtt Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.585(*)</td>
<td>.777(**)</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>-.318</td>
<td>-.404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AttoImp Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.760(**)</td>
<td>.739(**)</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AtttoEmp Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.842(**)</td>
<td>-.296</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td></td>
<td>.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastdisemp Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.193</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.548</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>timeop Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(** significant at p<0.01; * significant at p<0.05; two-tailed)
### Table 4: Correlation Analysis of Sub-Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BlatantPrej</th>
<th>SubtlePrej</th>
<th>PhysDis</th>
<th>LD</th>
<th>Jobfact</th>
<th>WorkAtt</th>
<th>Workcult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td>.683(*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SubtlePrej</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.306</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>.664(*)</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>.286</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PhysDis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.754(**)</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.691(*)</td>
<td>.605(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.632(*)</td>
<td>.741(**)</td>
<td>.671(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jobfact</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.720(**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WorkAtt</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.690(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workcult</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* significant at p<0.05; ** significant at p<0.01; two-tailed)

### Table 5: First-Order Correlation Controlling for Attitude to Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>AtttoEmp</th>
<th>AtttoImp</th>
<th>GenAtt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.973</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: First-Order Correlation Controlling for General Attitude to Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>GenAtt</th>
<th>AtttoEmp</th>
<th>AtttoImp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>AtttoEmp</th>
<th>GenAtt</th>
<th>AtttoImp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A high response rate is essential to allow generalised inferences to be drawn from the study and the overall response rate to this study was disappointingly low at 8%. Hence, the conclusions drawn from this data must be treated with caution due to the extremely small sample size. However, despite this limitation, the data collected did generate some interesting results that suggest this area is worthy of further study. It is also of interest to consider the demographics of the non-respondents, as this may guide further investigation into the area. For clarity, the discussion is divided into three sections; firstly, a discussion of the respondents and non-respondents; secondly, consideration of the employer’s questionnaire and finally, a discussion of the young people’s responses.

It was anticipated that a number of factors would affect the response rate to this questionnaire. Such factors may include the large proportion of people living and working in Haringey who have English as a second or third language, the time available to very small businesses to complete a questionnaire, motivation to participate in social research in an area of social deprivation, and finally, the social acceptability of the research topic. The demographics of the respondents seem to support difficulties around language and time available as key factors in completing a postal questionnaire. Over half the respondents who participated identified themselves as ‘white-British’, compared to 33% of the respondents (N=3) who identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority group. A possible interpretation of this is that the questionnaire was more likely to be completed by people with English as their first language. Difficulties around language were supported during face-to-face and telephone interviews, as the interviewer reported back language difficulties for each of the three respondents, and for some non-respondents. This also matches the population demographics for the Borough.

Additionally, 66% of respondents (N=9) described the size of their company as falling into the ‘5 or more employees’ category, compared to only 33% in the ‘less than 5’ category. Considering the make-up of the overall sample (N=137), this suggests that the larger companies are disproportionately represented in the respondents. One possible conclusion from this, therefore, is that the larger companies were able to more easily find time to complete the questionnaire compared to very small companies.
Perhaps the most interesting outcome of the data collection was the number of companies who declined to participate rather than simply not responding. Following the initial poor response, the data collection methodology was amended to include face-to-face or telephone administration of the questionnaire. Of the original sample, 30% were contacted in this way. Although this generated a further 8 responses overall, the majority of companies contacted were unwilling to take part in the data collection. Companies that declined to take part included local doctors and dentists, solicitors, and a large number of cafes and small retailers. A variety of reasons were given for non-participation; amongst the most frequent were a lack of time; disinterest in the topic or the owner not being available. Some companies appeared to feel threatened by the topic, and in some cases, even suggested that the interviewer was an official checking up on disability rights. These types of responses tended to come from medical practices (e.g. doctors, dentists etc) and larger retail companies.

**The attitudes of employers to disability and learning difficulties**

The results indicated that employers who did not currently, and had not in the past, employed someone with a disability, were likely to demonstrate a more negative attitude towards specific impairments and work-related factors. Interestingly, these same employers did not show a significant correlation to general attitudes. This may reflect the difference between a socially held attitude, identified on the General Attitude to Disability scale, and a more personal view located in relation to specific impairments. This would also correspond with negative attitudes toward work-related factors, suggesting the respondent may be more likely to believe that someone with a disability would be less likely to manage work tasks or be less accepted in the work environment. An investigation of the relationship between general attitudes to disability and attitudes to specific impairments with work-related factors demonstrated that both general attitudes and attitudes to specific impairments strongly correlated with work-related factors, but did not correlate with each other. Hence, it would appear that attitudes to specific impairments were isolated from a general attitude towards disability. Further analysis would be required to establish the exact interaction between these three factors.

Companies that were currently employing someone with a disability showed a more positive attitude towards specific impairments and workplace factors. These companies could possibly be described as falling into the DRC’s (2004) category of ‘good neighbours’, in that they showed a positive attitude towards employing people with disabilities. These findings suggest that further work needs to be done with employers to change their attitude towards individuals with learning difficulties specifically, rather than addressing a general attitude towards disability.

The findings of the study suggested some disparity between the attitudes towards people with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties. Ability to carry out tasks significantly correlated to attitudes towards those with learning difficulties, but not with attitudes towards those with physical disabilities. This may indicate an underlying recognition that most limitations created by physical disability can be overcome through environmental adaptations, but that this is not the case with
learning difficulties. The strong relationships identified between workplace attitudes and workplace culture for both disability factors suggested that even with the recognition that physical disability may be overcome, acceptance into the workplace and the capacity to change ‘the way things are done’ continue to present barriers.

To some extent, this possible interpretation is supported by the findings, which significantly correlated the blatant prejudice subscale to the workplace culture subscale. This would suggest that those people with the most overtly negative attitudes towards disability would be less likely to see their workplace culture changing to accommodate someone with a disability. This would include things like the times of breaks or the elements that make up a job. These findings, in part, are supported by the case study presentations of Wilson (2003) who described the most successful placement of a person with a learning difficulty being defined by the company’s willingness to create the job around the person, rather than fit the person to the job.

The subtle prejudice subscale significantly related to the workplace attitude subscale, and again, this seems to support the previous suggestion that accepting someone with a disability into the workplace presents a challenge. The subtle prejudice subscale presented views that could be interpreted as being of a ‘for their own good’ nature, for example, believing that internet shopping is good for someone with a disability. Similarly, the workplace attitude subscale described beliefs about the impact a person with a disability may have in the work environment, for example, whether someone with a learning difficulty would make a reliable employee. Again, Wilson’s (2003) case studies of young people with learning difficulties in work illustrate a possible example of subtle prejudice combining with workplace attitudes. Wilson presents the case of ‘Sarah’, whose work was celebrated whilst she was on work experience, but after 5 years and pressure to move her into a paid job, her employer began to find reasons why Sarah could not perform the same tasks as other employees.

Whereas the blatant subscale / workplace culture relationship could be described as more absolute, the subtle prejudice / workplace attitude relationship is perhaps more insidious. It is more likely to be reflected upon internally, rather than explicitly stated, and therefore, is perhaps likely to be more undermining to the success of someone with a learning difficulty in the workplace. It is far easier to challenge a blatant prejudice than a subtle one.

**What do young people with learning difficulties want to do?**

The sectors preferred by the small sample of people with learning difficulties as future employment routes were varied, but amongst the top three choices, retail and the hotel / restaurant sectors were the most popular. Responses from employers reflected 16.7% from the retail sector and only 8.3% from the hotel / restaurant sector. Again, the small sample size prevents an accurate analysis of the degree of match between the aspirations of young people and the availability of employers within the relevant sectors, locally. Generally, however, retail and hotel / restaurants comprised 24% of the overall respondents, second only to public service respondents, who accounted for 25%. This would suggest a reasonable match between the availability of appropriate sectors for local young people with learning difficulties to access.
Although this seems initially positive, a closer analysis of these respondents demonstrated that they each scored highly negative attitudes on all 3 scales. So, whilst there are companies operating within the sectors that young people with learning difficulties identify as employment routes, there are clearly issues about the willingness of the employers within these sectors to take on a young person with a disability.

**CONCLUSION: Where do we go from here?**

Despite its methodological difficulties, this study has demonstrated some interesting relationships between small and medium sized employers and their attitudes towards people with disabilities, specifically learning difficulties.

Employers who had never employed a person with a disability showed more negative attitudes, predominantly towards specific impairments and work-related factors; whilst those who currently employed someone with a disability showed more positive attitudes towards disability and work-related factors. This suggests that the task facing those organisations supporting young people with learning difficulties to find work is not just about teaching them work and employability skills, but is also about changing the attitudes of the local employers towards learning difficulties. The relationship between work-related attitudes, a general attitude and specific attitudes to impairments suggest that attitudinal change is needed at a personal rather than societal level.

This study has generated several opportunities for further research. Firstly, there is a clear opportunity to repeat the study on a larger scale, to improve the quality of data. A larger-scale study would benefit from covering a wider geographical sample, in order to address issues around inner-city versus rural differences. Secondly, there is a significant need to work with local employers to effect attitude change towards specific disabilities and work, particularly around attitudes to people with learning difficulties. Such work would need to focus on addressing the workplace attitudes and workplace culture to encourage employers to find flexible solutions to engage young people with learning difficulties in the workforce, within the financial restrictions of a small or medium sized enterprise. Previous research has demonstrated that employers with positive attitudes are prepared to restructure tasks and practices to support a disabled employee, but that such employers are few and far between.

**Providing a local solution**

At CoNEL, there is an opportunity to take forward a practical intervention through the LSC funding of a retail premises onsite to be run by young people with learning difficulties. In order to change the negative attitudes towards work-related factors shown by local employers, the retail outlet offers an opportunity to demonstrate the skills and capabilities of young people with learning difficulties in the workplace. A programme of employer engagement is planned, whereby local employers will be invited to visit the shop in order to see the young people at work. Pre and post visit attitudes to learning difficulties will be measured through a short questionnaire, in order to assess whether a personal experience of young people with learning difficulties demonstrating competence in work tasks may affect the attitudes held by local employers.
References


APPENDIX 1: Covering Questionnaire to Employers

7th January, 2008

INVITE TO PARTICIPATE IN A LOCAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Sir / Madam,

You are being invited to take part in a research project looking at the different barriers that affect the employment of people with learning difficulties.

The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete. A stamped and addressed envelope is included for you to return the questionnaire.

Your company has been chosen at random from the small enterprises in Haringey. You do not have to complete this questionnaire if you do not want to, but your contribution would be very valuable. If you would like more information about the project, please call the number below.

All information you provide will be completely confidential and anonymous. It will not be possible for any answers to be identified with a particular person or company.

To thank you for completing the questionnaire, there is an opportunity to enter a prize draw for a case of champagne. The contact details you provide here will be separated from the questionnaire as soon as we receive it.

I would like thank you very much for participating in this research project.

Nicki Quarterman
020 8442 3856
This section collects some general information about you and your company. The information will not be linked to your name or your company’s name at any time.

General Information

About You:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>☐ Male</th>
<th>☐ Female</th>
<th>Ethnicity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Role:</td>
<td>☐ Male</td>
<td>☐ Manager</td>
<td>☐ Employee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you describe yourself as disabled?</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you describe anyone that you know as disabled?</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About your Company:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What sector best describes your business</th>
<th>☐ Manufacturing</th>
<th>☐ Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Hotels &amp; restaurants</td>
<td>☐ Banking / Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Public service</td>
<td>☐ Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Retail</td>
<td>☐ Transport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many people does your company employ?</th>
<th>☐ less than 5</th>
<th>☐ 5-10</th>
<th>☐ 11-15</th>
<th>☐ 16-20</th>
<th>☐ more than 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long has your company been in operation?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you currently employ anyone with a disability?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever employed someone with a disability?</th>
<th>☐ Yes</th>
<th>☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please turn to the next page.

General Attitude Scale Toward Disabled People

Listed below are a number of statements that are said to describe what people think about disabled people. Usually, what we think about individuals depends on how well we know them. However, we would like to know what you think in general. Please read each statement carefully and then circle the answer that best describes how you usually feel.

Residential care is usually the best option for disabled people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Disabled people have a responsibility to seek employment if they are able to do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Disabled people have a right to do government sponsored vocational training schemes even if they are unlikely to get a job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Disabled people should be required by law to have genetic testing to see whether they would pass their impairment onto their child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Attitude Toward Impairment Scale

Listed below are a number of statements that are said to describe what people think about different disabled people. Usually, what we think about individuals depends on how well we know them. However, we would like to know what you think in general. Please read each statement carefully and then circle the answer that best describes how you usually feel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a disabled person as a colleague would mean the non-disabled person would be given extra work and responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled people should be protected from situations that are likely to cause stress or anxiety to themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A restaurant owner should be allowed to refuse service to a disabled person if they upset other customers because of their impairment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet shopping is good news for disabled people as it means they can avoid poor facilities for people with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled people are happiest when working alongside other disabled people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled people should be charged for care services if they are employed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is wrong for a disabled couple to have children as they would be unable to raise the child safely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled people should take as much responsibility for their own actions as any other adult citizen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All disabled people over the age of 18 should have a right to vote in political elections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled people feel proud to identify with other disabled people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attitudes to Employing Someone with a Learning Difficulty

Listed below are some statements which are said to describe what employers think about employing people with learning difficulties. We would like to know what you think in relation to your own company. Please read each statement carefully and then circle the answer that best describes how you feel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People with learning difficulties have a right to do government sponsored vocational training schemes even if they are unlikely to get a job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential care is usually the best option for people with learning difficulties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with learning difficulties should be protected from situations that are likely to cause stress or anxiety to themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A restaurant owner should be allowed to refuse service to a person learning difficulties if they upset other customers because of their impairment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is wrong for a couple with learning difficulties to have children as they would be unable to raise the child safely.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in wheelchairs have a right to do government sponsored vocational training schemes even if they are unlikely to get a job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential care is usually the best option for people in wheelchairs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in wheelchairs should be protected from situations that are likely to cause stress or anxiety to themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A restaurant owner should be allowed to refuse service to a person in a wheelchair if they upset other customers because of their impairment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is wrong for a couple in wheelchairs to have children as they would be unable to raise the child safely.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please check to make sure you have answered every question.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

If you would like to be entered into the prize draw for a case of champagne (6 bottles worth approximately £100.00), please give a contact name and number below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree a little</th>
<th>Agree somewhat</th>
<th>Agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things happen quickly around here. Someone with a learning difficulty would not keep up.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people here would like to help someone with a learning difficulty to learn the job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is possible to work here if you cannot read and write very well.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone with a learning difficulty would make friends quickly here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People here would be willing to change the way they did their own job to help someone with a learning difficulty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone with a learning difficulty would always need help to work here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would not be appropriate for someone with a learning difficulty to deal with members of the public.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs here would be too hard for someone with a learning difficulty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear who does what job here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people have worked here for a long time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most tasks here are quite simple. It would be easy for someone with a learning difficulty to learn them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree very much</td>
<td>I disagree somewhat</td>
<td>I disagree a little</td>
<td>I agree somewhat</td>
<td>I agree very much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People here are friendly and help each other out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Breaks and lunch always happen at the same time every day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Someone with a learning difficulty could work here if they had someone to help them learn the job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Someone with a learning difficulty would be a reliable employee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I disagree very much</th>
<th>I disagree somewhat</th>
<th>I disagree a little</th>
<th>I agree a little</th>
<th>I agree somewhat</th>
<th>I agree very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This will be separated from your questionnaire and placed into a draw with other respondents.

**YES! Enter me into the prize draw!**

Contact Name: __________________________

Contact Number: _________________________
APPENDIX 2: Preferred Occupations Questionnaire

Preferred Occupations Questionnaire

Age: 

Participant Number:

☐ This work is looking at the kind of job I might like in the future. I know that my answers will be used to help employers make jobs more accessible to me. I am happy to take part in the activity.

☐ I am happy to be identified by name so that my answers can be used to help me find work experience at college

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Awareness</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Job Skills</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Shop assistant (retail)</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Shop assistant (retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop (Manufacturing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop (Manufacturing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking (Hotel / restaurant)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking (Hotel / restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office (public sector)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Office (public sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education (working with children)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Education (working with children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport (bus)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transport (bus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finance (bank)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finance (bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free choice (gardening or care)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free choice (gardening or care)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidance for Interviewers

Job Awareness

Interviewer script:

“I am going to show you some pictures of different jobs. I would like you to choose the job you would most like to do each time.”

- Present a set of 3 random pictures.
- “Choose the job you would most like to do”
- Place selected image onto the scoring grid, square 1.
- “Choose another job you would like to do”
- Place selected image onto square 5.
- Place the final image onto square 9.

Repeat the above process until all pictures have been placed on the scoring board, where the top row is the first choice of each set, the middle row is the second choice, and the bottom row is the last choice of each set.

Interviewer script:

“Now, I’m going to show you the same pictures again, and I would like to choose the job you would most like to do each time.”

- Take the three pictures from the top row of the scoring grid.
- Present them in a random order.
- “Choose the job you would most like to do”
- Place chosen image onto square 1 of the scoring grid.
- “Choose another job you would like to do”
- Place selected choice onto square 2.

Continue this process for each row, until all images have been represented.

Scoring:
Record the grid number next to the occupation name in the scoring grid provided.

Job Skills
Repeat the two-stage process described above, following the script exactly.

Scoring:
Record the grid number next to the occupation name in the scoring grid provided.
APPENDIX 3: Rank ordered preferences for employment – young people with learning difficulties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>retail</th>
<th>finance</th>
<th>manufacturing</th>
<th>public sect</th>
<th>hotel/rest</th>
<th>construction</th>
<th>education</th>
<th>transport</th>
<th>gardening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 2 1 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1 0 0 0 5 1 0 0 0 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>2 0 1 1 1 1 1 2 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>1 1 1 2 0 1 1 2 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>0 1 1 2 2 1 0 1 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>0 0 4 0 0 2 3 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>2 2 0 1 0 0 1 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>1 2 0 2 1 1 0 0 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>0 1 2 0 0 2 1 1 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further Information and Contact Details

Research and development are central to CEL’s organisational mission and we seek to encourage mutually-beneficial interrelations between theory, development, policy and practice. We recognise that there are many innovative and effective leaders and leadership practices in the Sector that warrant investigation, analysis and wider dissemination of best practice. A particularly distinctive feature of the CEL practitioner programme is that it enables staff working in the sector to participate in the setting of the research agendas, to define highly relevant issues for leadership and undertake to investigate and research these key themes.

We would like to engage with existing networks within the Sector and develop a wider practice-led research community contributing to current debates on leadership and other related issues.

If you would like to receive further information on the Research Programme, please contact:

Professor David Collinson
National Research Director
Centre for Excellence in Leadership
Lancaster University Management School
CEL Research Office, Room B59
Lancaster
LA1 4YX
Tel: 01524 594364
Email: d.collinson@lancaster.ac.uk

Further information is also available at:
http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk
http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/leadership/cel/
Research Publication Notices

Research Reports
Many of the documents in this series are prepublication/preprint articles, which may subsequently appear (part or whole) in peer reviewed journals and books. In most cases they are draft documents, the purpose of which is to foster discussion and debate, prior to publication elsewhere, whilst ideas are still fresh. Further information about the research programme and other papers in this series can also be found at the following websites:
http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk or
http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/leadership/cel/

Citation notice
Citation should conform to normal academic standards. Please use the reference provided or, where a paper has entered into print elsewhere, use normal journal/book citation conventions.

Copyright
The Copyright of all publications on work commissioned by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership is owned by Inspire Learning Ltd, from whom permission should be sought before any materials are reproduced. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission, provided that full acknowledgement is given.

Centre for Excellence in Leadership
The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) was launched in October 2003 as a key national agency, but now operates through a charitable trust formed by its operating company on 1 April 2006. CEL's remit is to foster and support leadership reform, transformation, sustainability and quality improvement in the Learning and Skills Sector. CEL's Research Programme is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) to whom all the results will be reported.

Disclaimer
These projects have been commissioned by, but do not necessarily reflect the views of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership.

Contact Details
Centre for Excellence in Leadership
Lancaster University Management School
CEL Research Office, Room B59
Gillow Avenue, Lancaster, LA1 4YX

Professor David Collinson
National Research Director
Tel: 01524 593147
Email: d.collinson@lancaster.ac.uk

© CEL – March 2008

List of CEL Practitioner Research Volumes

Since the practitioner scheme began in October 2004, over 100 projects have been funded, from which the volumes listed below have been published:

- Volume 1 – Researching Leadership in the Learning and Skills Sector: By the Sector, On the Sector, For the Sector (2005-06)
- Volume 2 – Developing Middle Leaders (2006-07)
- Volume 3 – Leading Quality Improvement (2006-07)
- Volume 4 – Leadership and the Learner Voice (2006-07)
- Volume 5 – Collaborative Leadership (2006-07)
- Volume 6 – Researching Disabilities (2007-08)
- Volume 7 – Leading Employer Engagement (2007-08)
- Volume 8 – Distributed Leadership (2007-08)
- Volume 9 – Leadership Development and Succession (2007-08)
- Volume 10 – Leadership Excellence (2007-08)
- Volume 11 – Personalising Learner Voice (2007-08)
More disabled students are accessing education than ever before, receiving improved support and having better experiences and educational outcomes than in the past.

(Disability Rights Commission 2007)