

connexions

LINCOLNSHIRE & RUTLAND

**EVALUATION OF THE  
LINCOLNSHIRE CONNEXIONS PILOT**

**REPORT 8: REVITALISING THE NRA**

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# 1. PREFACE

1.1 I am indebted to all those who have participated in this project and the enthusiasm, hard work, commitment, expertise and vision that they have brought to it. Thanks is especially due to all the young people who have given their time, energy and enthusiasm, to all the organisations and staff involved and of course the project team:

Mike Niblett	City of Lincoln Community College
Peter Robinson	Lincolnshire Careers and Guidance Services
Emma Titley	Lincolnshire Careers and Guidance Services
Dave Bensley	Sir William Robertson High School
Jonathan Palmer	Sir William Robertson High School
Pete Thompson	Sir William Robertson High School
Fiona Angel	Walton girls High School
Simon Rapley	Walton girls High School
Steve Yates	Walton girls High School
Denise Benettello	Youth Service
John Wills	Youth Service

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Revitalising the NRA project involved the active participation of young people encouraged by teachers, support staff and youth workers. The perceptions of the young people at the start of the project were assessed through structured group interviews.
- 2.2 Young people were able to express their views about the Progress File materials, the use of computer software developed as part of the project and the recording of achievement process in general.
- 2.3 The project directly involved three schools and two youth centres with approximately 80 young people participating.
- 2.4 The project has focussed upon young people:
- taking ownership of the recording achievement process
  - using the Progress File materials
- 2.5 A key part of the project was to develop a floppy disc version of the NRA summative document.
- 2.6 Each school has held workshops to introduce the young people to the NRA on Floppy or CD and to enhance their understanding of the recording of achievement process.
- 2.7 Software developed during the project as well as commercially available software and the Progress File materials on CD ROM and in booklet form were used by young people in a variety of situations.
- 2.8 In addition to workshops held for young people by the schools and youth centres involved in the project, a one day joint workshop was held to allow YPs to sample the Progress File materials and to comment on recording achievement and the project generally.
- 2.9 Feedback from young persons workshop:
1. An internet NRA was not favoured due to concerns about security.
  2. All young people should use the Progress File materials.
  3. Progress File materials should be more widely available e.g in libraries.
  4. They preferred using the Progress File materials as a computer based version.
  5. Although they preferred the Progress File materials on computer to the paper version they still felt the presentation was too boring and could be improved
- 2.10 Recommendations
1. In the short term the use of the NRA on Floppy should be extended to other pilot schools.
  2. Development of the internet version of the NRA should continue and its use extended as soon as practical.
  3. Interagency links and developments should continue.
  4. The current offering of Progress File materials on CD ROM falls far short of what is possible and what is expected by young people.

5. The DfEE needs to address a number of issues relating to the anticipated introduction of Progress File and the distribution, presentation and availability of materials.

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

#### **3.1 Context**

The National Record of Achievement (NRA) has been recognised as a process through which young people and people in general are able to recognise their achievements and to become more motivated to work towards their aspirations. It is a means through which young people learn to record their achievements and to make realistic plans for the future. It can be of great benefit in raising self esteem in those who lack confidence in their own abilities. Although the NRA was launched in 1991 as a process and summative document for 'all' it has become largely entrenched in the school system and has failed to attain its full potential. In 1997 the DfEE announced that it would re-launch and rename the NRA. Since that time 'Progress File' has been piloted in a number of schools across the country and it is expected that a decision will be made in Autumn 2001 for a possible launch in 2002. During the intervening years there has been reluctance to develop the recording of achievement process further for fear that it will be replaced. The state of development of NRA, at the start of the project, in the schools that became directly involved is summarised in Appendix 1.

#### **3.2 Rationale**

Although Progress File is likely to replace NRA the processes involved remain unchanged. Progress File will give new impetus to the recording of achievement process as well as providing useful support materials. Connexions is about re-engaging young people and providing improved advice and support. It has been shown that NRA can act as a motivator and additionally it provides a means of recording information on achievements, aspirations, progress and experiences. The quality of advice given to young people will depend on how fully the adviser knows of and understands these aspects of a young person's development. It was considered that NRA could provide the key to re-engaging young people and to providing a means of storing personal information and making it easily accessible to advisers. What was required was to revitalise the process, to encourage ownership by the young person of their NRA, to ensure that it was accessible when required and that the summative document could be readily and easily updated.

#### **3.3 Aim**

The aim of the project was to:

Increase client usage of NRA/Profile as a tool to record and share personal progress by:

1. increasing cross-organisational awareness and usage of NRA
2. increasing clients' perceived relevance of NRA
3. increasing ease of access/updating of NRA

3.4 Appendix 2 shows the details of the project plan that was followed in order to achieve this broad aim. A key part of the project would focus on the development of IT packages to enable the young person to not only update their NRA more readily but also to make the written information more accessible and portable.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The project involved the active participation of young people encouraged by teachers, support staff and youth workers. The perceptions of the young people at the start of the project were assessed through structured group interviews. This approach, it was considered, would provide a more accurate assessment than either written questionnaires, since some of the young people involved would have needed help in completing these, or one to one interviews which may have been too threatening to the interviewee to ensure a good response. The questions asked during these interviews (Appendix 3) were carefully adhered to in order not to influence the answers given by the young persons. Using this method it was still possible, however, to ensure that the young persons fully understood what was being asked and to provide clarification if required. It was at times also necessary to provide information where this was not forthcoming in order to progress the interview further. If, for example, the interviewees did know what Key Skills were then the concept was explained before they were asked why they thought Key Skills might be important. Careful notes of the response were made in order that these could be compared with similar interviews held approximately five months later towards the end of the project.

4.2 In order to obtain the views of young people a workshop was held for some of the young people involved in the project and through group discussions they were able to express their views about the Progress File materials, the use of computer software developed as part of the project and the recording of achievement process in general. Additional written feedback was obtained from young people as a result of work carried out with them at their school or youth centre.



Student Workshop

4.3 Three workshops were held for the staff involved as well as invited representatives from other agencies and organisations (Appendix 4). The first workshop concentrated on evaluation of software programs currently available for the support of the NRA process. The second session elicited opinions with regard to the use and relevance of Progress File materials and the final workshop focussed on the successes of the project and the way forward. This enabled an ongoing dialogue with a range of agencies.

4.4 These methods ensured a dynamic approach to the project that utilised reflective practice to review and modify the aims of the project throughout.

4.5 Software developed during the project, as well as commercially available software and the Progress File materials on CD ROM and in booklet form, were used by young people in a variety of situations. Their views were noted more formally during the workshop sessions and less formally by feedback via their mentors.

## 6. FINDINGS

### 6.1 Management & Planning

(a) Strategic Plan

A major planning issue was to squeeze what was intended as a 12month project into the space of effectively 7months. Given that the aims of the project included trying to alter young peoples perceptions and to develop and use software required a carefully monitored approach with clear targets. Agreement was reached on roles and outcomes and specific contributions of all the schools and youth centres involved at the start of the project and this was the basis of a strategic plan (see Appendix 2). Regular meetings were held at which targets were reviewed. This tightness ensured that the milestones were met or exceeded at every stage.

(b) Resources

Financial resources for the project were adequate but human resources were stretched. This was in part because it was not the only Connexions pilot project and some staff were involve in more than one project. There was a strong commitment by staff and managers and without this the project could not have achieved so much in so short a period. The involvement of learning support staff and IT Technicians in all schools has been key in ensuring the success of the software and internet developments.

(c) Achievements

Despite the late start the project was able to meet its aims within the time and budget available.

(d) Multi-agency work

(i) The project involved directly schools, the Youth Service and Careers Advisers. Contacts were developed with Social Services and the Education Department. Currently Social Services and the Education Department are developing a Personal Education Plan (PEP), as part of their statutory requirements, for each young person in care. This PEP will need to contain details of the young person's achievements and aspirations. Such information should already be part of a young person's NRA and it is fully intended that links will be made between the NRA and the PEP.

(ii) In one school the governors were involved in reviewing young peoples NRA in a one to one situation. This had the dual purpose of exposing the young person to an interview type situation with someone they did not know and at the same time helped to impress upon the governors the importance of the recording achievement process.

(iii) Presentations about the project were made to a local Education Business Partnership and their feedback was both informative and supportive. Employers welcomed the idea of being able to view a video of a student in their own 'natural' surroundings talking about a subject in which they were interested and in particular the skills they have gained and how this might relate to the workplace.

- (iv) The work of the project has been disseminated to some other schools, special schools, library service, colleges and trainers and their views sought. The Lincolnshire TEC has provided support for the project through the NRA Validation Board.
- (v) Where possible, the project has tried to build upon existing practice or developments rather than trying to replace what is already in place. This is illustrated by the contact with Social Services and the direct involvement of the Youth Service.
- (vi) The project has shown that the understanding of the benefits of recording of achievement is far from universal. Whilst those in schools, careers service and the youth centres involved in recording of achievement may have a firm grasp of its value, others are less well informed. There is an ongoing need to educate all, and not least the young people, in the importance of the recording of achievement process in developing skills, including the Key Skills, and qualities that they need to be successful throughout their lives.

### (e) Service delivery

Three schools and two Youth Centres volunteered to be involved directly in the project (see Table 1) as well as Lincolnshire Careers and Guidance Services. Other agencies were also approached to provide feedback on the work that was undertaken.

#### Schools

- (i) The three schools selected three very distinct student groups to be involved in the project:

- a whole year group
- a GNVQ group
- a group of special needs students

- (ii) This diversity has added to the value of the project and has vividly highlighted that the recording of achievement process transcends ability or age boundaries. Indeed, when participating in the joint workshop session, it was remarkable how homogenous the diverse groups appeared to be. Each school has held workshops to introduce the young people to the NRA on Floppy or CD and to enhance their understanding of the recording of achievement process. Support has also been provided in PSE/Tutorial time and during GNVQ lessons. In all cases, not only were the project coordinators, tutors and teachers involved in this process, but also the IT Technicians and in one school support staff.

- (iii) City of Lincoln Community College

Working with a whole year group this tested the viability of introducing the NRA on Floppy to a unselected group with minimal support i.e. no more than is usually provided for the recording achievement process. The NRA on Floppy was introduced to the young people together with their Teachers/Tutors at a single forty minute long presentation. At the end of the presentation they were given a disc and it was requested that they should make use of it. Although at the end of the project period some had not used the disc:

*"It was surprising how many had."*

Additional input was given to the young people in the form of a talk in the period immediately prior to their Work Experience, to emphasise the use of recording achievement to record, review and action plan. The trial period was relatively rushed (only four months). It was felt that it would be more appropriate to introduce the NRA on Floppy in the short term in Y9 and in the longer term in Y7 in order to accustom them to the process of recording at an earlier stage and thus allow more time for them to develop their skills in this area. The project revitalised the school's thinking about NRA and it is intended now to develop it further. A dedicated area will be set up to allow students better access to IT facilities for recording their achievements.

(iv) Walton Girls High School

This was a small group of Y11 students with a range of special needs including one with communication problems, one partially sighted, one with English as a second language and others with low self esteem brought about by their social background. The group was supported by a teacher and two classroom assistants both of whom had little knowledge of recording of achievement process prior to the start of the project. They were however invaluable both in the support they gave the students and the feedback they provided in terms of the project. Initially there were problems with withdrawing the students from PHSE lessons to participate in the project but ultimately the students themselves became more motivated to carry on the process in their own time thus demonstrating their ownership of it.

*"Everyone should do this!"*

(v) It has greatly benefited this group of students in raising their self esteem and the use of IT has overcome the inhibitions and difficulties several of the group had when it comes to writing and recording.

*"I hope that this kind of disc is used in the future by different schools all around the world. The disk will make things easier for myself and others and makes me more confident."*

(vi) The project has worked well with this small group and the main difficulty envisaged with extending it to more students would be a lack of access to sufficient IT resources.

(vii) William Robertson High School

This involved a group of students following a GNVQ course in Leisure and Tourism. They had a good level of IT skills as did their teacher. All were involved in NRA in PHSE lessons but in addition they were given a full day off timetable to concentrate only on the recording of achievement process. Often, objections are made to such an event since it involves students being away from their normal studies in an examination year. The day was however a great success and student comments were favourable:

*"What we did was 15 weeks worth of PSE lessons."*

*“I did enjoy the day because I understand more about our NRA.”*

- (vii) They themselves were adamant that the day had in no way affected their studies adversely and may have in fact contributed to them and Tutors stated that they noticed a difference in attitude between those who had participated in the day and other students who had not. Students liked the CD and ability to store visual images as evidence of their achievements. It is certain that had the NRA been compiled in the conventional paper format then some of the group would not have been motivated sufficiently to have achieved as much.

*“Success is getting kids excited. We wouldn’t have got some to do the traditional version.”*

- (viii) The approach adopted certainly engaged the less motivated but the project needed a lot of committed people including support staff. In addition this particular group were able to combine some of the recording achievement work with their GNVQ studies.

(f) Youth Centres

- (i) The leaders in the two youth centres have worked met individual young people to help them compile a Personal Statement and other sections of the NRA. The Youth Service had always been active in recording the achievements of young people with respect to the work at the centres. This was, however, an extended role in that they related this more closely to the NRA and became the primary support for the NRA process for the people involved. It helped the young people to recognise their own achievements.



*“It helped them identify skills and achievements that they didn’t know they had”*

YP with Youth Worker

- (ii) Some of these young people had already left school and it was encouraging to find that they were willing to undertake this activity in the setting of the Youth Centre. For some, this was the only point of contact with the ‘establishment’ and it emphasises the importance of using all available avenues to re-engage young people.

(g) Careers Service

During the course of careers interviews an agreed Careers Action Plan is typed on a laptop. The young person will either be given or sent a printed copy of this action plan. A new Word template has been developed and is being trialled that will allow the Careers Action Plan to be immediately and easily saved to the young person’s NRA on Floppy. It is anticipated that this will help young people to see such guidance meetings as an integral part of the recording achievement process.

(g) National Context

(i) There has been some criticism that the project aimed to re-engage young people through the revitalisation of the NRA at a time when it seems likely that the NRA will be replaced by Progress File. The project has focussed upon re-engaging young people:

- developing an understanding of the concepts of recording achievement
- developing a better appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses
- using IT to record and present their achievements
- taking ownership of the recording achievement process
- using the Progress File materials

(ii) Procrastination often results from uncertainty. This project demonstrates that it is still possible to move forward within the bounds of that uncertainty and that lasting processes can be developed and that they contribute to the planned changes.

(h) TEC Validation Board

Lincolnshire TEC has supported and validated NRA through its NRA Validation Board. With the demise of the TEC no organisation has been required to take on the responsibility for supporting and developing the recording of achievement process. With the anticipated introduction of Progress File it is vital that the Dfee addresses this issue.

(i) Progress File Developments

At a workshop in February Sheila Roberts, consultant to the Dfee on Progress File, provided an update on developments. This assisted those attending to crystallise their thoughts and the outcomes are included in para 6.5

(j) UFI - Life Long Learning Log

Contact with the East Midlands Coordinator for UFI revealed that a Life Long Learning Log has been developed that is accessible via the internet. It would appear somewhat anomalous that this should have been developed in isolation from the development of NRA/Progress File. Indeed when information was sought from the Dfee at the start of the project with regard to any projects currently developing IT solutions for NRA/Progress File it the Life Long Learning Log was not mentioned.

## (k) Software Development

### Existing packages

Three commercially available software packages were purchased and evaluated by the project team during a workshop session. One of the packages failed to load and run on the computers being used. A summary of the evaluation of the other two packages can be found in Appendix 5. One school decided to purchase and trial the Pearson Digital package with its students. The package has been installed on the school network and is currently being used and evaluated by young people.



## NRA on floppy

A key part of the project was to develop a floppy disc version of the NRA summative document. The purpose of this was to allow young people to more easily update and review their summative document and to be able to send copies of it to employers/trainers/colleges prior to interview. It was essential therefore that the disc should be a 'stand alone' package that would run on any PC without first having to install additional software. This demand set strict limits on amount of information that could be included and the complexity of the software. A package called 'Illuminatus' produced by Digital Workshop was purchased. Using this software an initial version of the NRA on Floppy Disc was developed, by December, and distributed to all 80 young people involved in the project. Despite its limitations it was generally well received.

NRA on Floppy Disc

*"I think it is good to work with because you don't have to mess about with lots of paper because you have it there on disc."*

*"I do think they will become quite successful all around the country!"*

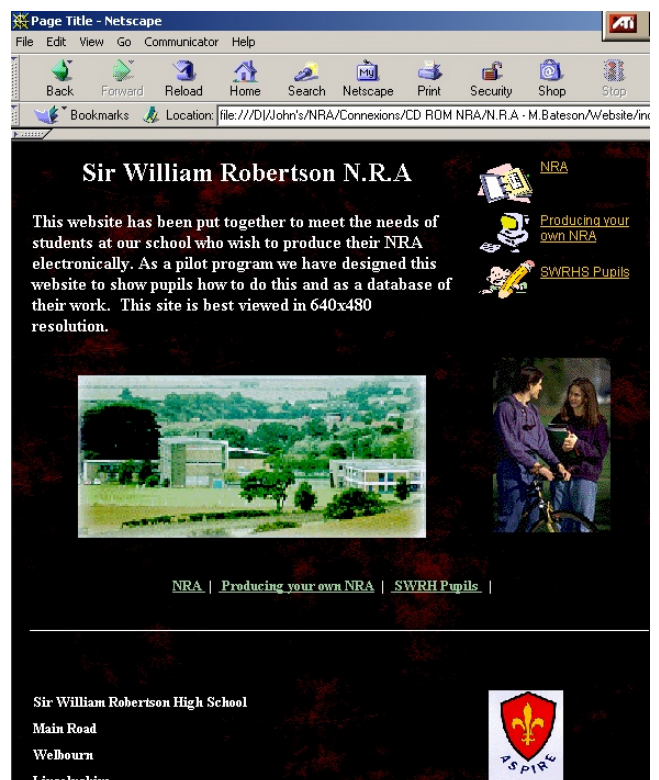
Subsequently additions and changes were made to the format, the pages available and the functionality of the package as a result of feedback from those involved in the project. A 'large type' version was also produced for one partially sighted young person.

## CD ROM

One school involved in the project has a 'no floppy disc' policy and was unwilling therefore to allow the use of the NRA on Floppy within the school. They agreed instead to pilot the idea using CD ROMs in the short term with a view to using the internet in the longer term (see para 5.3.5). The CD ROM version would have the benefit of allowing larger amounts of information to be stored, including videos, and providing for a more flexible presentation.

*"I like the IT bit that Mr B has put together. (reference to video on CD ROM)"*

The young people produced their NRA using Microsoft Publisher and NRA Word Templates (downloaded from the DfEE web site at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/nra/temp.cfm>) and then saved the pages in HTML format. This allows it to run on any computer with a web browser and be easily transferred to an internet version. The use of Publisher had the advantage that the students concerned were familiar with the software. However the conversion from Publisher to HTML whilst automatic was also problematic. After conversion it was necessary to re-establish many of the hyperlinks. Further development would therefore focus on identifying more suitable software. The view was also



expressed that the DfEE NRA templates, whilst useful, needed updating to provide Help bubbles or hyperlinks to Help.

A disadvantage to using a CD ROM is that it requires a CD ROM writer for the user to update their NRA. Currently these are not universally available on computers but this is likely to change within the next few years. A further issue with the CD ROM related to the attempts to save short videos made by the students to introduce themselves. Whilst current technology is available to compress video data to the extent that 30s of video requires only 8Mb of storage space (MPEG1) many computers do not yet have the ability to play this type of video file. The alternative file type (avi) has a size of 100Mb. This creates two difficulties:

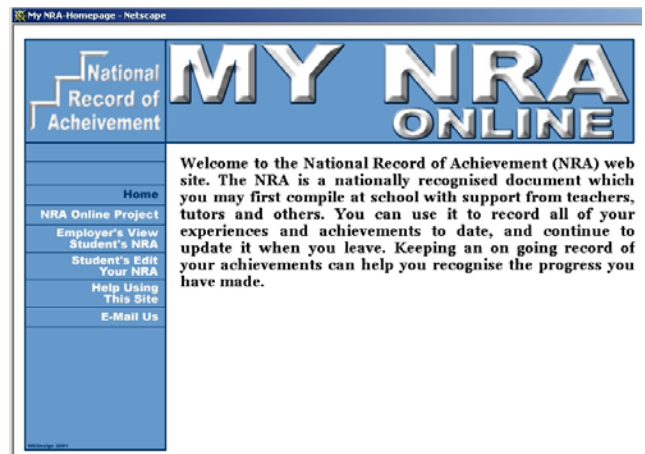
#### Home page of NRA on CD ROM

1. The time taken to store the file onto a CD ROM is much greater (5 minutes using a 2x CD Writer)
2. Older computers with slow CD ROM drives will not be able to transfer the data at a high enough rate to replay the video smoothly.

With advances in technology over the next couple of years both these issues will be overcome but at this point in time it cannot be ignored. It would currently be difficult to extend the NRA on CD to all students in the school as it takes 30 minutes to record the CD ROM and there were also issues with moving such large amounts of data across the school network.

#### Internet

A suggestion from an employer at a Sleaford EBP meeting was that the NRA summative document should be available on the internet. This would allow employers/trainers/colleges to view a young persons NRA before asking them for interview. With the support of the project Pete Thompson, IT Technician from The William Robertson High School, pursued this approach and currently a pilot version is up and running. This can be found at [www.My-NRA.org](http://www.My-NRA.org) (Log in to the



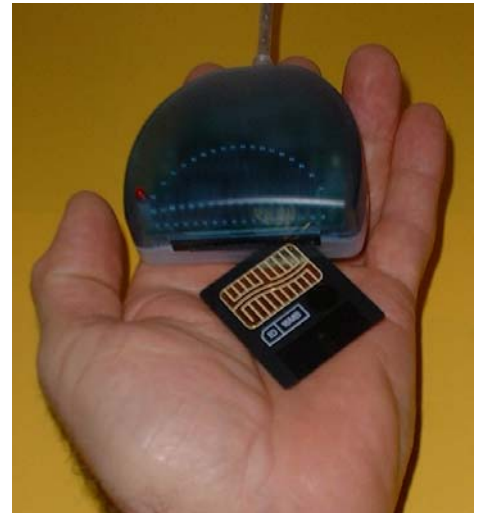
NRA Online

employers section using user ID: 'guest' and password: 'guest'). Third parties, including employers and teachers, who have witnessed a demonstration of the internet NRA were particularly impressed by its development so far. It is intended to continue development of this concept with a view to making it more widely available to young people from September 2001. Young people were less than enthusiastic about the idea of putting their NRA on the internet. Most of this seemed to arise because they assumed that anyone would be able to access their NRA and change it. In reality the approach adopted provides for two tiers of access. At the user level (Employer. College etc) access is available with a password provided and controlled by the young person. The user can only read but not amend the information. At the young person level access is via a password separate from and different to the user password and again controlled by the young person. The young person would then be able to edit their NRA and change the passwords if necessary. It has also been agreed that telephone numbers and addresses would not be included within the NRA Online. Only

email addresses would be shown. It was considered that the young person would normally contact an employer either by letter, email or phone and would then provide them with the password. Since contact has already been established there would be no necessity for the address or telephone number to be on the NRA Online. These issues need to be discussed and explained in detail to all young people who are participants. Students might be encouraged to visit the NRA Online site by including email facilities for all users, a bulletin board and possibly a chat room.

### Smart media

Other possibilities for storing the NRA summative document were considered. The future may well be in the more widespread use of 'smart cards'. Versions of these are already in use in mobile phones, digital cameras and on some credit cards. Within five years they may well lead us into the 'cashless' society. Connexions cards will be using this type of technology and it is important to consider this use in the wider context including the possible storage of information on aspirations and achievements. The advantage of such an approach is their small physical size coupled with the large amount of data (compared to a floppy disc) that can be stored. One school is currently piloting the concept with each young person having a 'smart media' card more normally used in digital cameras. Data is stored and amended on these by use of an inexpensive smart card reader attached to a computer. Since most computers do not as yet have such a reader it is a possible vision for the future rather than reality at present.



Smart Media and Reader

### Cost/Benefits

The comparison table (see Appendix 6) shows that there are real cost benefits in using an electronically stored summative document compared to the paper/plastic version. The greatest benefit, in terms of material costs, will be the use of the internet although the administration and upkeep of an internet based system together with the cost of access needs to be considered. Once re-writable CD ROMs become standard on most computers then CDs offer a cost benefit. This is also true for smart cards once they are more widely used and standardised. Against all of this must be set the cost of training of staff involved in the NRA process and will depend on their current knowledge and understanding. Increasingly young people are comfortable with accessing the internet and an internet version of the summative document would not necessarily pose problems for the average user. The young person would bring the expertise from home to school. Training would still be required, however for staff expected to support the recording of achievement process. On the other hand the CD ROM and smart card concepts would initially require a considerable degree of competence in the use of IT by both young people and adults involved in the recording achievement process.

### Utilities

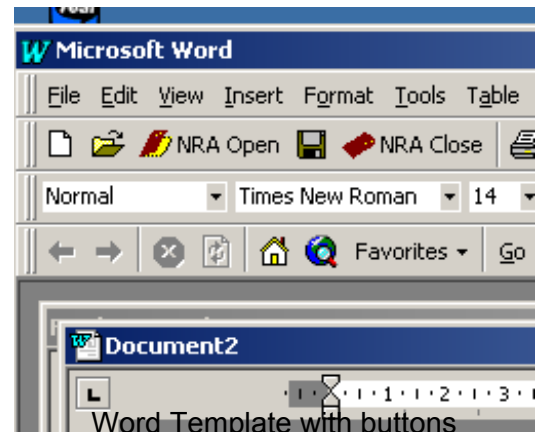
The NRA on Floppy Disc is particularly limited with regard to functionality e.g no spell checking or formatting for printing.

*A spell checker could be put on so you don't have to type what you want in another program.*

Word templates are being developed that use macros to automatically load and save the text from the floppy disc for editing and spell checking in Word. In addition this allows for much more presentable printed copies to be produced and for selected sections to be more easily emailed to employers and colleges.

A Word template with a macro is also being trialled with Careers Advisers to enable them to automatically save the agreed Careers Action Plan to the Young persons floppy disc.

A Utilities CD ROM has been produced to install these templates and to provide facilities for young people to make copies of their NRA on Floppy and to update it to the latest version. As a result of feedback from young people the CD ROM includes a number of different 'skins' for the NRA on Floppy.



*“The colour is a bit mundane. It would look better in blue or navy”*

These provide a choice of colour schemes and presentational style.

## 6.2 Student Perceptions

The project involved three schools and two youth centres with approximately 80 young people participating. The schools were:

**Table 1**

	Type of School	Number of YPs	Age Range	Group
The City of Lincoln Community College, Lincoln	11-18 urban mixed comprehensive	40	16-17	All of Y!2
Sir William Robertson School Welbourn	11-18 rural mixed comprehensive	16	15-16	Those following a GNVQ course in Business Studies
Walton Girls High School, Grantham	11-16 urban girls comprehensive	7	15-16	Special needs group
Earlsfield Youth Centre, Grantham	Youth Centre	2	15-16	-
Birchwood Youth Centre, Lincoln	Youth Centre	7		-

6.4.2 For further information about the groups of young people involved see Appendix 7.

### 6.3 Interview/Questionnaire

At the start of the project a sample of 22 YPs involved in the project were interviewed in groups to establish their understanding of the recording of achievement process. They were then re-interviewed towards the end of the project. A summary of their responses is given in Appendices 8 & 9.

The main points to note are:

- All those interviewed had a positive attitude towards recording achievement.
- The activities they had been involved in had heightened their awareness of the process.
- There was a much greater feeling of ownership and that the summative document is dynamic and can be updated at any time.
- In the period between the interviews the number of those unsure about their future had decreased from 25% to 0%. This is clearly a critical period for many young people.

### 6.4 Student Workshops

In addition to workshops held for young people by the schools and youth centres involved in the project a one day joint workshop was held to allow YPs to sample the Progress File materials and to comment on recording achievement and the project generally. The main comments from this workshop were:

- The majority preferred an IT approach both to the Progress File materials and to the summative document.
- The NRA on Floppy Disc was valued for its small size (portability), ease of use and the ability to update it. However the limitation of space for images is considered a big disadvantage.
- The CD ROM was favoured by the majority of YPs.
- An internet NRA was not favoured. Some were concerned about others being able to access it and change it and also about a lack of space. Although all NRAs on the internet would be password protected it is essential that this is fully explained to YPs if they are to have the confidence to use it. Similarly space would not be an issue.
- Access to the internet may be an issue.
- The NRA is too boring! There is no individuality – this refers to the look of the summative document both in its traditional folder format and the floppy disc version. They would like colour!
- All young people should use the Progress File materials.
- Progress File materials should be more widely available e.g in libraries.
- They preferred using the Progress File materials as a computer based version.
- The presentation of the Progress File materials on computer was too boring.
- Too much to read and not enough to do.
- There are layout and printing problems with the Progress File materials when used on the computer (see para 6.5.2.1).

### 6.5 Special Needs

Those with special needs were particularly pleased with the ability to compile a summative document on a floppy disc (easy to amend) and were happy using the Progress File materials on a computer.

6.5 Staff Comments

## 6.6 Progress File materials

Whilst the materials were generally considered to be useful, concern was expressed about the suitability of some of the special needs materials. There is also a need to try to ensure progression. Providing different booklets for different groups gives rise to overlap. The special needs materials may well be suitable for some pupils in mainstream school. In the light of these comments it is suggested that all materials should be grouped according to topic e.g Key Skills and provided on a single interactive CD ROM. This would allow young people to use them as appropriate and ensure that they did not need to repeat unnecessarily activities that they had already completed. All young people should be provided with a copy of the CD ROM.

Comments from Workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2001

- There will be a need for staff training
- Availability of materials needs improving– what happened to sale of materials at W H Smith?
- Special needs materials are ‘bitty resources’ and some are too abstract for sld/pml0 – need to write for specific groups.
- Easy pictures to tick for skills
- A lot of staff time needed to prepare appropriate resources
- Sufficient copies of the booklets are not available due to the distribution centre having out of date information with regard to student numbers on their computer system.
- The number of CD ROMs that can be obtained is limited to 5 copies and often the distribution centre has failed to recognise the existence of PFCD2!

### (a) Progress File Materials on CD ROM (PFCD2)

The following problems were encountered when using these materials:

- The pdf files take an inordinate amount of time to print.
- The default settings on some printers (HP) result in some pages printing completely black. This can be overcome by changing the printer settings but there needs to be advice included about how this can be done.
- The Word Processed versions are provided as one single file for each booklet and activities are divided across parts of pages as in the booklet. Page numbers of the Word document do not match the numbers shown on the pages themselves and in the index. A more appropriate approach would be to divide up each booklet into activities and save these as separate files. The extensive use of tables rather than text boxes makes it difficult for young people to enter text.
- The word processed files do not always appear correctly on the screen with some columns being ‘lost’ off one side. Whilst this can be overcome it is an annoyance. The pages do not always print off correctly.

### (b) Progress File

The summative stage is part of the process and should not be divorced from it. When young people write a personal statement it requires them to review their achievements. It is part of the formative process and helps them to understand what they have achieved and stands as a record of those achievements that can be used in the future to review progress. Progress File

needs to recognise the importance of having a dynamic summative document that helps to give ownership of the process to the young person. If it becomes nothing more than completing a series of pages in a booklet with tick boxes during a PHSE lesson then it will have failed in its purpose and will alienate young people.

The following specific points were made by those present at the workshop in February:

- Progress File requires an active approach from DfEE to succeed. It has to be supported and steered nationally. It can not just be left to schools.
- There must be increased availability of IT to all young people. They are competent to use it but access is sometimes limited.
- Use should be made of multi media resources. The current offering of Progress File materials on CD ROM falls far short of what is possible and what is expected by young people.
- There is a need for an awareness raising campaign

(c) NRA on Floppy

The use of the NRA on Floppy provides a means of dynamically updating the summative product and its physical size allows young people to keep it with them at all times. It is not left at home or locked in a school filing cabinet.

*“The concept is ideal. Everything is on disk in one place and nothing can be left to chance as all the necessary information prompts are in place and the presentation will be to a good standard.”*

(d) Those with special needs benefit by being able to present their achievements to the same high standard as other young people.

## 7. KEY LESSONS

- 7.1 Multi agency groups can work effectively together if projects build upon existing structures and practice.
- 7.2 Developing an understanding of the value of the recording achievement process at student and staff level is essential for success.
- 7.3 Development of Progress File should not be seen as a hindrance to the development of the recording of achievement process but an opportunity.
- 7.4 Instilling a feeling of ‘ownership’ for the recording of achievement is the primary goal if young people are to benefit from it fully.
- 7.5 All young people now have the IT skills and usually prefer this medium. Progress File needs to make full use of this skill.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

## 8.1 For Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland

- (a) Continue to monitor and develop the use of the NRA on Floppy with a view to extending its availability from September 2001
- (b) Develop the NRA on the internet ([www.my-NRA.org](http://www.my-NRA.org)) with the aim of offering this to a larger group from September 2001
- (c) Continue to evaluate current project and extend to:
  - full year group in current project schools,
  - extend to other pilot schools.
- (d) Hold a workshop/training session for staff and pupils in its usage and application.
- (e) Maintain contact with Social Services and link the PEP (Personal Education Plan) with the NRA on floppy disk and pilot usage in one area.
- (f) Pilot the use of the Word template with macros to allow Connexions Advisers to save Personal Action Plan to the NRA on Floppy.
- (g) The NRA on Floppy, as well as being a record of a young person's achievements and aspirations, should be considered as the primary source of information about a young person during a contact with agencies external to schools eg Connexions Advisers, Social Workers etc.

## 8.2 For DfEE

- (a) If Progress File is to replace the NRA in 2002 then a lead organisation for development and validation is required. The department needs to consider which organisation is to take the lead on this and how this will be funded.
- (b) Whilst the Progress File materials have been well received by YPs and teachers/youth leaders the department needs to take account of YPs' views with regard to presentation. The current CD ROM (PFCD2) has a number of problems, both for staff and YPs, associated with its use. A top priority is to address these problems and preferably replace the current CD with a truly interactive version more in keeping with current technology and expectations of YPs. The interactive version of the materials should also be available for use on the internet (not for download). They should consider the cost benefits of providing every young person with a CD ROM compared to providing every young person with a printed copy of the materials.
- (c) The department should reconsider its current policy on the availability of Progress File materials. Schools are limited to a specific number of copies which is often insufficient for a whole year group, Only 5 copies of the CD ROM version can be obtained.
- (d) If Progress File is launched in 2002 then the materials should be available not only through schools and trainers but also in Youth Centres, Public Libraries and booksellers.
- (e) Personal Adviser training needs to include the use of NRA/Progress File as a tool for reviewing and recording achievement and aspirations.
- (f) Purpose of the Life Long Learning Log needs articulating more clearly and its relationship to NRA/Progress File.

- (g) The department needs to liaise with DHSS with regards to the PEP (Personal Education Plan), that Social Services is required to produce for young people in care, and articulate more clearly its relationship to NRA/Progress File.

# APPENDIX 1

## Summary of Current Activity

When do the your students start compiling an NRA?

*Work related to NRA begins in Y7 but none of the schools actually begins the summative document until Y11.*

When do they first have a completed summative document available to them and how often do they update it? Where is the summative document kept?

*The NRA folder is kept by the form tutor although students are allowed access to them to add material and take to interview.  
In two of the three schools the NRA was only updated on specific occasions but in the third it is 'ongoing'.*

How many staff are involved in the NRA process and how?

*Form Tutors have the pivotal role in the NRA process although teaching staff provide subject statements. It is interesting to note that no mention is made of 'agreed' statements being produced. Careers, IT and support staff together with the Careers Advisor may also be involved.*

Is the Careers Adviser involved in the NRA process and if so how?

*See above*

What activities do students undertake to assist them in writing a Personal Statement

*Support for writing a Personal Statement is provided by form/year tutors.*

What activities do they undertake to assist them in identifying achievements in Key Skills?

*One school helped students identify their achievements in Key Skills through a Personal Audit.*

What activities do they undertake to assist them in producing an Action Plan and how often is this reviewed?

*All three schools claimed to help the students with Action Planning but in one case this only consisted of providing 'in-house' guidance.*

What use (if any) is made of the Progress File materials?

*None of the schools currently make use of any of the Progress File materials.*

What use is made of IT by the students e.g word processing; specific NRA programs; etc?

*Students in all schools use Word Processing for compiling their summative NRA.*

How are the students encouraged to use their NRA?

*All schools encourage students to take their NRA to interviews and one has 'high profile' presentation of the NRA to students in Y11! Only one school mentioned its use in setting targets.*

What is the students attitude towards the NRA process and the compilation of a summative document?

*All schools reported an overall positive attitude by students to the NRA.*

What is your experience of 'End Users' reaction to the NRA?

*The NRA was not generally seen to be valued by end users. Students were sometimes asked to bring the NRA to interview but often it was not referred to.*

## APPENDIX 2

### Strategic Plan

**ACTIVITY: Increasing client usage of NRA/Profile as a tool to record and share personal progress by:**

- increasing cross-organisational awareness and usage of NRA
- increasing clients' perceived relevance of NRA
- increasing ease of access/updating potential of NRA

TASKS/MILESTONES	People involved m=main	Time = days/hours	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>1. Multi-agency project team established</b> 1.1 Hold initial meeting 1.2 Follow up contacts 1.3 Progress meetings x3	<b>All</b>  <b>JD</b>  <b>Sch</b> <b>JD</b>	<b>2.5 days</b>  <b>1 day</b>  <b>4.5 days</b> <b>3 days</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<b>2. Identify at least 4 schools in which to focus the project</b>  2.1 Hold initial meeting 2.2 Contact/visit heads 2.3 Agree developments	<b>JD</b>	<b>2 days</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>					

**ACTIVITY: Increasing client usage of NRA/Profile as a tool to record and share personal progress by:**

- increasing cross-organisational awareness and usage of NRA
- increasing clients' perceived relevance of NRA
- increasing ease of access/updating potential of NRA

TASKS/MILESTONES	People involved m=main	Time = days /hours	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>3. Develop an I.T. based NRA</b>  3.1 Investigate existing software  3.2 Software workshop  3.3 Agree appropriate solutions and develop software	<b>JD</b>  <b>JD</b> <b>Schs</b> <b>Others</b>	<b>3 days</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
<b>4. Hold series of workshops for teachers /link orgs (3-one per term)</b>  4.1 National Developments/Software evaluation  4.2 Current progress  4.3 Evaluation/diss emination	<b>JD</b> <b>Schs</b>  <b>JD</b> <b>Schs</b>  <b>JD</b> <b>Schs</b>	<b>3 Days</b> <b>12 days</b>  <b>3 days</b> <b>12 days</b>  <b>3 days</b> <b>12 days</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>

**ACTIVITY: Increasing client usage of NRA/Profile as a tool to record and share personal progress by:**

- increasing cross-organisational awareness and usage of NRA
- increasing clients' perceived relevance of NRA
- increasing ease of access/updating potential of NRA

TASKS/MILESTONES	People involved m=main	Time = days /hours	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>5. Pilot I.T. based NRA with pupils with greatest need</b>  5.1 Implement solutions in schools 5.2 Workshops for pupils 5.3 Use with end users	JD Schs  JD Empls Trainers LCGS FE	4 days 4 days 2 days			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6. Produce reports on NRA usage in pilot schools</b>  6.1 Produce proforma 6.2 Schools produce reports 6.3 Discuss with school contacts and compile report.	JD } }Schs } JD	0.5da y  6 days 2 day	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

**ACTIVITY: Increasing client usage of NRA/Profile as a tool to record and share personal progress by:**

- increasing cross-organisational awareness and usage of NRA
- increasing clients' perceived relevance of NRA
- increasing ease of access/updating potential of NRA

TASKS/MILESTONES	People involved m=main	Time = days /hours	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>7. Workshops for clients on use of NRA as a transition document</b>  7.1 Agree format 7.2 Hold workshops 7.3	<b>JD</b> <b>Schs</b> <b>Others</b>	<b>2 days</b> <b>4 days</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>8. Workshop for 'end users' on NRA developments</b>  8.1 Identify end users 8.2 Agree format/organise 8.3 Hold workshop	<b>JD</b> <b>Schs</b> <b>Others</b>	<b>3 days</b> <b>4 days</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Appendix 3

### Student Perceptions Interview Questions

1. What do you know about record of achievement/NRA?
2. **if yes:** can you explain to me what it is?
3. What do your parents know about it?
4. Do you have a RoA/NRA?
5. If so what do you keep in it?
6. When did you start compiling your NRA/
7. How often do you review/update it?
8. Who helps you with this?
9. Have you ever 'used' it?
10. **else:** I will explain.
11. How do you think it could be useful/ might help you?
12. How do you think it would help you get a place at college/a job?
13. What do know about Action Planning? (If no then I will explain)
14. How do you think an Action Plan might help you to get a job/place at college?
15. Have you ever heard of Key Skills
16. **if yes then:** Can you tell me what they are?
17. **else:** I will explain what communication is?
18. Why do you think Key Skills are important?
19. How do you think RoA/NRA would help you improve your skill in communication?
20. What you want to do when you leave school?
21. Have you ever used IT to write your Personal Statement, Action Plan etc.

## Appendix 4

### Organisations Represented at Workshops

City of Lincoln Community College

Sir William Robertson High School

Walton Girls' High School

Lincolnshire Careers & Guidance Services Ltd

Birchwood Youth Centre

Earlsfield Youth Centre

Lincolnshire TEC

North Lincolnshire College

Lincolnshire Library Services

Yarborough School Lincoln

UFI East Midlands

Toynton College

Queens Park School

Walton Girls' High School

Dfee

## Appendix 5

### Software Evaluation

Package: **Profile: NRA and CV Writer** – Pearson Digital

Web Site: <http://www.pearsondigital.net/software/profile.html>

Cost: **£235 site license**

Good Points:

- Look nice
- Comprehensive and up to date
- Secure
- Information cannot be in wrong place
- Good career simulation package
- Help provided
- User friendly

Bad Points

- No print preview
- Can't take it away (i.e the software has to be installed on the computer to view the NRA)
- Slow to access
- Password protection becomes an impediment
- Could not use a 'real' form name (number of characters is limited)

Ease of Use:

- Moderately easy

Package: **PPF(Personal Progress File)** – Mirage Audio Visual Media

Web Site: <http://www.ukc.mirror.ac.uk/sites/www.mirage1.u-net.com/ppfpdld.htm>

Cost: **Personal Edition Free to download/Standard Edition - £100 site license**

Good Points:

- User friendly
- Bright colours
- Looks good
- Continuation pages
- Have to confirm details are correct before entering.
- Pages are well laid out
- Information on what to include for each page
- Lots of space on each page
- Has a spell checker

#### Bad Points

- Not easy to get into the first time you use it
- Writing is quite small (difficult to read for some)
- Does not ask for 'informal' organisations attended (e.g Youth Club)
- Too many characters for a password
- File naming complicated
- Old NRA page layout

#### Ease of Use:

- Easy

Package: **NRA Package** – Charters Software

Web Site: <http://www.pearsondigital.net/software/profile.html>

Cost: **£49 single user**

It was not possible to evaluate this package as it would not run on the machines being used.

## Appendix 6

### Comparison of Approaches

	<b>NRA Folder</b>	<b>Floppy Disc</b>	<b>CD ROM</b>	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Smart Card</b>
Physical size	Large	Small	Medium	N/A	Very small
Data Storage	4Mb (estimated)	1.44Mb	650Mb	Infinite	Up to 64Mb
Data Type	Text/Images/ Certificates	Text/ 4 images	Text/Images/ Certificates/ Video/Audio	Text/Images/ Certificates/ Video/Audio	Text/images/ Certificates/ Video/Audio
Reading from	Universal	All PCs	Most PCs	Many PCs	Few PCs
Writing to	Universal	All PCs	Some PCs	Many PCs	Few PCs
Extra Training	none	A little	Some	A little	Some
Cost of Equipment	0	PC	PC+ £100	PC	PC + £30
Cost of media	500p	20p	50p	approx 0	150p/Mb
Portability	High	Medium	Medium	Med/Low	Very Low

## Appendix 7

### Details of Young People Participating

#### Walton Girls High School

7 Y11 students all girls.  
Some have a statement of SEN.  
They may have low self esteem and confidence.  
They may find conformity and school systems challenging.

#### Sir William Robertson High School

16 Y11 students (mixed).  
GNVQ Leisure and Tourism group.  
A strong commitment to work related curriculum upon which NRA impacts.

#### The City of Lincoln Community College

40 Y12 students (mixed).  
Some are from disadvantaged backgrounds.  
Many have a relatively low level of academic achievement but have still chosen a sixth form curriculum.

#### Birchwood Community Centre

8 young people 14-17 (mixed).  
Some are 'drifting' having left school at 16.  
Very little in the form of academic achievements.  
Have not received a lot of praise academic or other achievements.  
Do not recognise their own achievements.  
Two are 'Young Carers' (They have the primary care role at home).

#### Earlsfield Youth Centre

2 boys aged 15  
Volunteered to be part of the project  
Attend a local single sex grammar school

## Appendix 8

### Summary of Student Perceptions at Start of Project

*A total of 21 students in three schools were interviewed in small groups. A standard set of questions was used for each group. The key points that can be drawn from this survey are:*

1. Students know about the summative document and appreciate its uses;
2. The attitude, towards NRA, of all those interviewed was positive;
3. Students do **not** recognise the use of the NRA process to assist them in understanding their strengths and weaknesses;
4. Students (apart from those following GNVQ courses) do **not** appreciate the need for Action Planning to help them improve their performance;
5. More effort needs to be made to raise student awareness of the importance of Key Skills (with the exception of those following GNVQ courses);
6. A feeling of 'Ownership' of the NRA was not apparent;
7. The process of producing a summative document occurs very late and reviews are infrequent;
8. The NRA process is not 'dynamic' but happens at specific points in time;
9. Parental awareness of NRA is minimal (based on student responses);
10. 25% of students did not yet know what they wanted to do when they left school;
11. End users are not likely to be aware of/enthusiastic about NRA;
12. Almost all students are comfortable with using IT to compile the summative statements.

#### **Student Perceptions Interview Responses:**

##### *What do you know about record of achievement/NRA?*

A folder  
Contains certificates  
Take to interviews  
Shows grades  
About your achievement  
All about yourself  
Tells employers what you are like  
Way to present what you have done

##### *What do your parents know about it?*

Knows I have one but nothing else  
Not a lot  
My dad has one  
Mum knows it's about achievements

##### *Do you have a RoA/NRA?*

Yes – we are told to collect things to put in them  
Not filled in – just started. Got the folder and sheets  
Yes  
Not sure  
No

*If so what do you keep in it?*

Certificates  
Personal statement  
What teachers think about subjects  
Grades  
Pages from Work Experience booklet  
Interests and achievements

*When did you start compiling your NRA?*

Beginning of Y10  
About 1 month ago (Y11)  
End of Y10  
3 weeks ago

*How often do you review/update it?*

Once in Y11  
Haven't written anything yet

*Who helps you with this?*

Form tutor  
Teaching assistant  
Careers Advisor  
Careers Teacher

*Have you ever 'used' it?*

Yes (3 students) for a job interview but they didn't really look at it.  
Yes (2 students) for college interview  
No

*How do you think it could be useful/ might help you?*

Shows what you are capable of  
People can see what you are like  
To show past experience at interviews  
Jobs you've done  
Helps you when you do a CV  
Lets employers know good points  
Tells you about yourself  
Helps you get a job  
Shows skills

*How do you think it would help you get a place at college/a job?*

Because its got your certificates in  
Don't know  
Shows what you can do or have done  
Tells them about you.

*What do you know about Action Planning?*

What you plan to do in the future  
What A levels/GCSEs you need to do.  
Done a lot in GNVQ  
Break down tasks and see how you can improve  
Set dates for completing things  
Never heard of it.

*How do you think an Action Plan might help you to get a job/place at college?*

Don't think it would  
It shows the direction you want to head in.  
Planning what you need to do to find out information  
Shows you are organised  
Plan ahead  
Plan your interview  
Plan what you need to do to get the job or place at college

*Have you ever heard of Key Skills?*

Yes

*Can you tell me what they are?*

No, don't know what they are  
IT, Number, Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving

*Why do you think Key Skills are important?*

Get to use them in everyday life  
Need them to communicate with other people – work with other people.  
Show what you are capable of.  
What you use in everyday life if you get a job

*How do you think RoA/NRA would help you improve your skill in communication?*

A lot of IT work  
A way of communicating - presentation  
Don't think it would  
Have to write down what you have done  
Work Experience requires communication

*What you want to do when you leave school?*

Further/Higher Education - 10  
Employment/Training - 5  
Don't know - 6

*Have you ever used IT to write your Personal Statement, Action Plan etc.*

Yes - 20  
No - 1

## Appendix 9

### Summary of Student Perceptions at End of Project

A total of 18 students in three schools were interviewed in small groups. A same standard set of questions was used for each group as was used previously. The key points that can be drawn from this survey are:

1. Students know about the summative document and appreciate its uses;
2. The attitude, towards NRA, of all those interviewed was positive;
3. There was some appreciation in some students of the use of the NRA process to assist them in understanding their strengths and weaknesses;
4. There was an appreciation by some students of the need for Action Planning to help them improve their performance and clarify their aspirations;
5. All students were able to 'name' some of the Key Skills but few appreciated that they were the generic skills needed in everyday life and that it is important to develop these.
6. There was a greater feeling of 'ownership' of the NRA;
7. Evidence of the consequences of producing a summative document very late was apparent i.e not available when required;
8. The NRA process is more dynamic with some students being aware that the responsibility to update/review their NRA lies with them and should occur as and when necessary. Some still seemed to think that PSE lessons are the time to do this;
9. Parental awareness has improved slightly (based on student responses);
10. All students now knew what they wanted to do when they left school;
11. End users are not likely to be aware of/enthusiastic about NRA;

#### Student Perceptions Interview Responses:

##### *What do you know about record of achievement/NRA?*

Holds personal information  
Shows achievement  
What you have done since Y10  
What you have done since Y6  
It gives you a job  
Stores things  
Shows what you are capable of  
For certificates  
Record progress  
Show employers what you are like  
Track your own progress  
Collection of all stuff you've been doing  
Take to interviews  
Achievements  
About yourself  
Put a CV in it  
Personal history

*What do your parents know about it?*

Know I've got one and what it is  
Know its on floppy disc  
Knows it shows progress  
Not a lot – know I've got one  
A little bit more because I've been talking to them about it.  
My dad's got one

*Do you have a RoA/NRA?*

Yes – folder and floppy disc (18)

*If so what do you keep in it?*

Certificates  
Personal statement  
Things about yourself  
Photos  
Own personal achievements  
Action Plan  
Employment details  
Attendance  
Personal information

*When did you start compiling your NRA?*

Beginning of Y10  
October/November (Y11)

*How often do you review/update it?*

Every time I get something  
When I'm forced to  
Sometimes in GNVQ lesson if I have time.

*Who helps you with this?*

Form tutor  
Teacher  
Teaching assistant  
No one  
Friend  
Each other

*Have you ever 'used' it?*

Got asked for it for a college interview but hadn't completed it (1)  
Asked for it for college interview but it was in holiday so couldn't get hold of it. (1)  
Took it (disc) to a college interview (3)  
To sign up for the army (1)  
Mock interview (1)  
Job interview and college (1)  
Yes for a job interview but they didn't really look at it.(2)

College interview but didn't look at it (1)  
Will use it for interview at end of April (1)  
On Futures Day

*How do you think it could be useful/ might help you?*

Helps you remember things  
Tells people what you are like  
Tells you about yourself  
Helps you get a job  
Shows skills  
Qualifications  
Keep your information together  
Somewhere to put certificates

*How do you think it would help you get a place at college/a job?*

Shows IT skills  
Not necessarily  
Contains evidence of what you are capable of  
Tells them about you and your qualifications  
Shows what you have achieved - employers, teachers and self  
Tells them about your past and what you are like

*What do you know about Action Planning?*

Plan what you plan to do in the future  
Gets you organised – set targets  
Plan what you want to do in the future – tomorrow or in ten years

*How do you think an Action Plan might help you to get a job/place at college?*

It shows the direction you want to head in.  
Shows you are organised and enthusiastic  
Helps you understand what you need to do  
Points you in the right direction

*Have you ever heard of Key Skills?*

Yes

*Can you tell me what they are?*

No (1)  
What we did on the computer  
Things you are good at  
IT, Number, Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving, Improving Own Learning  
Most important skills need for a job

*Why do you think Key Skills are important?*

Might be needed in your job  
Need them for everyday life  
Everything needs Key Skills

*How do you think RoA/NRA would help you improve your skill in communication?*

Discuss things in a group

Notice what you have done and what you could do better

*What you want to do when you leave school?*

Further/Higher Education - 13

Employment/Training 5