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**The South Norfolk School Refuser Programme – collaborations in education.
An exploration of the use of music-making activity within a structured group response to school refusal including the evaluation of the benefits across the curriculum and the implications for practice development for teachers and community music tutors.**

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Authors' note: during our discussions to prepare this paper it was agreed that the term "school refuser" was not an accurate description of all the young people who have, and will have, participated in this project. It was therefore agreed that the term "children out of school" be used instead. However, in true journalistic tradition, we have retained the original term in the title of the paper in order to attract your attention.

> *No one knows precisely how many children are out of school at any one time because of truancy or exclusion. But each year at least one million children truant, and over 100,000 children are excluded temporarily. Some 13,000 are excluded permanently. (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998, p.1)*

The golden opportunity?

How often do real practice development initiatives happen across multiple disciplines, particularly when those involved are from both the voluntary and statutory sectors? The answer is not very often and this is why Community Music East Ltd. (CME), an independent voluntary organsation that provides community education through the process of music-making, jumped at the opportunity to be involved in such a project in the heart of rural East Anglia.

This initiative represents an innovative collaboration between the Visiting Teacher Services from both the Norfolk and Suffolk County Council Education Departments, CME and the Kerrison Back-to-School Project who work with children who are "out of school", a term that describes both children who are non-attenders and those who are excluded.
It is very unusual that such agencies are prepared to get involved in activity where the precise outcomes are not pre-determined let alone where the individual professional practitioners are

prepared to examine the nature and quality of their contribution as well! This two year music workshop programme aims to enhance the existing curriculum for these children out of school by supporting creative projects using music which develop structural, technical and analytical skills. The music-making, which actively involves students, teachers and tutors, has two broad aims. Firstly, the development of ability, self-confidence, knowledge and experience which will assist the individual's future educational, vocational and social participation and achievement. Secondly, the meaningful evaluation of the process that will enable significant experience and knowledge generated by the practitioners to be effectively shared with each other and colleagues.

A bit of context

Whilst there has always been a number of young people who need educational support out of school the figures have been steadily growing in recent years. This claim is borne out by the recent report "Truancy and School Exclusion" (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998, p.8) which states that the number of exclusions in England and Wales has grown by a factor 4.5 between 1990 and 1997. As

* local management of schools (LMS) becomes more established,
* local authority funding allocations from central government are increasingly cut and
* the possibility of ring-fencing education funding within these grants is consistently reduced,

schools are under increasing pressure to survive through the delivery of an increasingly uniform and inflexible curriculum which tolerates less and less varied levels of ability and engagement and marginalises an increasing number of pupils. Pressures on schools include the need to reduce costs, primarily staffing costs, and a growing demand to present themselves as attractive to parents of potential students and engage in a growing competitive marketplace often driven by the so-called "league tables". These pressures have led to an increase in the number of pupils who find themselves "out of school".

For our purposes the children who fall into this category do not include those who are disabled. Rather they would tend to be classified as those whose true potential cannot be met by an increasingly constrained school system. These categories might include:

- the excluded: those whose behaviour might have been deemed "inappropriate". Those with behavioural difficulties, a specific term, would be referred to the Behaviour Support Service (probably as a consequence of being excluded from school) but there is clearly an area occupied by those individuals whose behaviour might not be appropriate and, consequently, who conciously become excluded by behaving in this way.

- non-attenders: those who demonstrate phobic tendencies
	- those who have been ill for some time and need assistance, both educationally and emotionally, in order to return to the school system.
	- those who are emotionally overloaded including children who have a history of abuse, young carers, the bereaved and the depressed.

Programme objectives and timescale

Since 1985 CME has worked extensively in many environments and contexts that involve the support and stimulation of vulnerable people. This work includes specific projects involving children

out of schools as well as in-school projects, including activity that integrates disabled children and those with behavioural problems with mainstream pupils.

CME has also instigated many projects that have been concerned with the development of good practice in the field of community education. The development of an effective model of collaborative practice will be the objective of this programme. This intention will be achieved by the operation of a series of projects involving children out of schools over a period of at least two years, which practically demonstrate the outcomes and benefits of such an approach. The results will be reported and will include co-ordinated evaluation by all concerned that will reflect the range of perspectives. In CME's experience it is necessary to incorporate active evaluation in the practical work in order to create a culture of enquiry that is stimulating and informative for all involved. In this way the young people who participate, even if only for a project within the programme, also derive specific analytical benefit that enables them to assess their own achievement and personal growth and identify their development of both particular and transferable skills.

In order to develop an effective and revealing document of the activity that will inform further work and become a useful model for others the programme employs an evaluation consultant to facilitate the development of action research methods and techniques and to assist in the production of the report. The proposed timescale is a two year programme with effect from the beginning of the 1998-99 academic year (September 1998) preceded by a pilot project during the summer term of 1997-98 (April to July).

Sharing understandings?

This paper will examine the initial development of the programme and the emerging evaluation and documentation processes. The authors are particularly keen to explore effective means of identifying progression in individual student development, group progress and reflective professional practice that will provide valuable insight and resonance for other practitioners.

As we write the evaluation of the pilot scheme has been completed and data is being gathered and deliberations are taking place with regard to the evaluation of the first academic term of 1998-99. These documents and procedures represent our source information for turning the desired objective, collaborative evaluation, into a reality and it is how we understand these realities that make this process so delicate, challenging and, at times, quite scary. This discussion is represented here as we reveal our different perspectives on the work and what it means to us as three different actors acting in three different ways. The experience base from which each of us is working is described by Kelly (1963) as follows:

> *"Experience is made up of the successive construing of events. It is not constituted merely by the succession of events themselves. A person can be a witness to a tremendous parade of episodes and yet, if he fails to keep making something out of them, or if he waits until they have all occurred before he attempts to reconstrue them, he gains little in the way of experience from having been around when they happened."*

"Making something out of" any events will, of course, recognise and involve some degree of subjective understanding, an individual worldview informed by social, political, educational, cultural and economic circumstances to name but a few; the biography of each actor. Therefore, we have agreed that this presentation will be guided by the description of professional practice offered by

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Elliott (1993) in his "key premises underlying the practical science perspective" of professional development of teachers. The essential references are:

> *The practical situations public service professionals confront in relation to their "clients" are increasingly experienced as problematic inasmuch as their particularity, complexity and fluidity makes them difficult to predict, laden with value issues and dilemmas, impossible to stereotype and resistant to clear cut and fixed solutions.*
>
> *Professional knowledge consists of repertoires of experienced cases which are stored in a practitioner's long term memory and represent his or her stock of "situational understandings".*
>
> *Wise professional judgements and decisions rest on the quality of the situational understandings they manifest.*
>
> *Professional judgements and decisions are ethical and not simply technical in character.*
>
> *Systematic reflection by practitioners in their practical situations plays a central role in improving professional judgements and decisions.*

We have also agreed to consider a range of themes that our "situational understandings" have collectively identified in the context of a couple of "critical incidents" (after Tripp, 1994). We say "after Tripp" because we recognise his definition

> *I extend "critical incident" to include the commonplace events that occur in the everyday life of the classroom (Tripp, 1993). Such incidents are rendered critical by the author by being seen as indicative of underlying trends, motives, and structures, and are often presented to teachers in the form of a dilemma in which they have a choice of at least two mutually exclusive courses of action.*

but would also stress that we have identified these incidents as critical because we believe that they frame opportunities to develop our practice in ways that specifically, and as quickly as possible, benefit the students as well as ourselves. In this way our approach is attempting to move from reflective to reflexive practice (Schon, 1983) and this, we imagine, will occur in the way we understand our implicit practical knowledge and how we use it and make it explicit for ourselves and others.

The story so far

The pilot took place with an established group of students who had already identified an enthusiastic desire to take part and offered the partnership an effective period of practical collaboration in which to identify appropriate working procedures and define the need for suitable staffing levels and resources. In many ways the pilot group members were ideal for this process, in that they knew each other reasonably well, the CME activity was new to one and all and the tutors were new and different adults in the environment. They also knew that they were all leaving in July and that this might be as enjoyable a way as any to spend their last three months of statutory education.

In the first term of the main programme the new academic year group presented a very different dynamic. Emily's notes[1] for the draft second evaluation report explains the contrast:

> *The pilot had involved 6 students in their last term before they reached school-leaving age. The group was made up of three girls and three boys who were all emotionally unable to attend school: though they manifested this in different ways. The two-year programme started with a very different group. Originally we had one girl who was recovering from severe ME and three boys, one of whom also had ME for a number of years. These young people came from different year groups, the boys had been together as part of a group at Kerrison: the girl had not attended Kerrison before. This contrasted with the pilot group who had all been at Kerrison for at least a term and saw themselves as friends.*
>
> *The music programme ran with these four young people for four weeks. Then two excluded pupils from Suffolk joined the group, their behaviour was much more challenging and drastically changed the dynamics of the group. For the first time the members had to deal - not only with their own fear of failing and exposure – but with a real risk of being ridiculed by one of the new group members, who often cope with their own fear by attacking others.*

For the first cohort music was an agreed group activity that was part of a broader curriculum which they all shared to some degree. The first cohort was all from one county, Norfolk, and therefore shared a common experience of the operations and structures of one education authority. However, the second cohort is drawn from both Norfolk and Suffolk, two authorities with different approaches to dealing with children out of school. For these young people the music is the only sustained group activity for all the group members.

An approach to understanding

So, with two very different groups how were we to understand the evidence that could be drawn from the incidents we had decided were critical? What might enable us to review programme benefits and practice developments so far? We felt a useful approach could be to set out a series of themes as a framework by which we could assess the incidents and the learning. No priorities have been agreed for the following list.

1. Overall aims and objectives – our understanding of these for ourselves, how we expected others to interpret them and how we thought they actually applied them.
2. Continuity – the progression of work and the implications of interruptions and disruptions.
3. Workshop methodology and practice – the intentions of the activity, its educational benefit to individuals (students, teachers and tutors) and the benefit to the curriculum.
4. Ongoing review and planning.
5. Consent – the implications and understandings for groups and individuals.
6. The voices of the students.
7. Evaluation.
8. Life histories - the context of individual experiences and understandings for participants and practitioners.
9. Assumptions – on what basis do we question the perceptions of others?

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[1] These notes are derived directly from Emily's daily journal of events at Kerrison.

Having adopted this approach we did realise that there was a silent consensus (expressed mainly through puzzled and anxious glances at one another) that we might not be able to recognise and frame responses in every case.

Critical incidents

1. The cowboy condom song

At a point roughly midway through the pilot term Mark and Ian, the two CME tutors, decided to perform this song to the group. The song had previously been used by Ian when doing youth work and was identified as a useful means of imparting information on sexual health and safe sexual practice, particularly in the context of AIDS. The tutors had mentioned their intention to the other staff after the previous week's workshop. This extract from the Pilot project evaluation report[2] (p. 6) offers a perspective on the incident:

> *.. the tutors recalled that they had decided to do this song in an attempt to defuse the rising level of sexual innuendo they were discerning in the pilot group. However, they had been very surprised by the students' embarrassment in reaction to the song, which had reminded them that they were still seen as "adults". An additional factor was that the tutors had "performed" this song, which was not something they would normally do in a workshop situation, and their taking advantage of the ensuing discussion to impart health education was a step outside their usual role of music facilitators.*

Another perspective is offered by the notes made by Mark within the framework of the CME course plan document as part of the formative preparation for the evaluation report. The incident took place at the point in the pilot where he and Ian had proposed to explore some "themes" such as "change, endings, life, relationships and/or any issues as identified by the group". Mark's version is as follows:

> *Most of these themes were underlying ones anyway particularly change and endings (school). I don't think Ian and I specifically set out to actively explore them but just to bear them in mind and suggest them or deal with them as appropriate. Example Cowboy Condom Song…used here as a response to the "bawdy conversations" and "lewd remarks" that were a part of the sessions with the purpose of opening up the subject and perhaps more importantly…to create or maybe impose a (more) serious, adult, equal, uncomplicated, straightforward interaction with the students.*

The issue that made this incident critical for the tutors was the way the group responded with what they interpreted as silence and diffidence. The decision to perform the piece they say was made in order to
> *create or maybe impose a (more) serious, adult, equal, uncomplicated, straightforward interaction with the students*

and neither of these, possibly conflictual, objectives were actually achieved. Both at the time and afterwards the tutors were left with a range of anxieties as a consequence. Their first thoughts were that they had miscalculated the result and this questioned their judgement. This also made it difficult

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[2] The writing of evaluation reports is consistently a difficult business for practitioners. It is for this reason that this programme has incorporated the services of an evaluation consultant to assist and stimulate the evaluation process. In the case of the first (pilot) report the consultant, Barbara Walker, did much of the drafting work.

to gauge how to continue the session and was tempered with the concern that the general focus and motivation of the group to complete the writing and recording tasks they had all agreed to might have been affected and, maybe, undermined.

Emily's view of the groups' response describes a very complex relationship between the group members. This group seems to have created a very safe but sexually charged group identity. The girls enjoyed being with the boys and enjoyed being treated both with affection and sexual appreciation. It worked perfectly from both sides; neither wanted the complication of anyone actually pursuing a sexual relationship with anyone else as that would have altered the dynamic of the group. Their response of silence to the performance of the song Emily interprets as 'Why? Why is he [Ian] singing this song? What is his perception of me/us that he has chosen to do this? What is he trying to say? What does he want of me/us? How does he view these sessions if he thinks this is an appropriate thing to do? What have I/we done to prompt this?'

In the circumstances, if these interpretations of the groups' response were accurate, it would appear that Ian and Mark's concerns would be entirely justified. As it turned out the group remained committed to the project and they appear to have allowed this indulgence and carried on to complete their task with patience and enthusiasm. There is a biographical perspective, a combination of experience and worldview, on this incident that Ian (and Mark) bring to bear. In their general professional practice they work from a strong desire to educate and change. In most circumstances they work with individuals and groups who are prepared to engage with them and, most importantly, to trust them. It is the feeling that the group did not trust them and engage in this process because they asked them to that is a significant factor in why they were so thrown and are so puzzled.

2. The Bridge

The Bridge is a piece that was developed within a session with the second cohort where the meanings (guessed and actual) of specific words provided the basis for improvised music activity. The intention was to make a creative musical interpretation of words as part of a group improvisation. The underlying rhythmic structure was a familiar form for the group and the words were chosen by the tutors and picked by the participants in a random, "out of a hat" way – some of the words used were "juxtaposition", "empathic", "defenestration", "pragmatic" and "malcontent". This activity was building on the previous session where Italian "proper"musical terms had been introduced because it was expected that their "foreignness" would make them easier to experiment and improvise with. (There was also a link made by the tutors that some of the group were reading the Merchant of Venice at the time.) Once the common rhythmic base had been established each person was to create a "bridge" across the circle by musically interacting with one other participant based on one of the words. When each individual had built a bridge with every other individual in the group the piece came to an end.

Ian describes this as an exercise that demanded a fairly high level of focus and concentration, in the first instance to maintain a steady rhythmic input and then in the interaction with other individuals in the second stage. The challenge in stage two comes from the fact that several "bridges" are being built simultaneously, the group becoming a collective of duets, each one trying not to be distracted by any of the others. Add to this the fact that the piece requires eye contact between each and every individual in the group it might then, for some, be regarded as both socially as well as musically challenging.

This incident was critical for Emily because she felt at the time that the activity was not appropriate for the group in both process and content. The second cohort was a very disjointed group, drawn from two different counties and two different out of school education systems. The group contains a mixture of ages and a combination of non-attenders and excluded children. As previously mentioned the music workshop was the only activity involving them all. Another factor of concern was that until around this time activities involved all attendees present, but two changes to this precedent had just occurred. The first was that one of the children had successfully made the case that because of his tinitus he should have the option to leave the group and go and do something else, most likely on his own with the computer. The other development was that because of their worsening behaviour two other members of the group had been temporarily excluded from Kerrison. In the context of what the Kerrison Back to School project is trying to achieve such a development has significant implications for the professional, and possibly personal, confidence of the staff.

Emily's notes on the incident record the following:

No A or T [the two children excluded two weeks before] – both had talked to me at length about the sessions: they said they were 'boring', they had 'no musical content', they did 'the same thing over and over again', and that they didn't 'want Mark and Ian…they muck about like little kids…we want to be treated like adults'. I feel I very much had their words and dissatisfaction in my head as I participated in the session. I had felt vaguely uncomfortable about the previous session – I have a sense of inadequacy around foreign languages and we spent the previous session interpreting Italian musical terms – and then this session followed a similar pattern (interpreting largely obscure words). I developed an internal dialogue along the lines of 'if T or A were here what would they make of this?' 'Would I be able to say "No, this isn't boring, there's lots of musical content, we're not doing the same thing over and over again"?'

And as the session continued I felt more and more acutely a sense of comfortable adults enjoying themselves playing with words and patting themselves on the back. I think I started to feel angry and not part of things. Then we were given the word "bridge", and I felt slightly more comfortable as I thought that it was a really relevant and rich word for discussion, and accessible for both adults and young people. But then our instruction for the musical interpretation we were going to attempt included a requirement to meet someone's eyes and play a 'conversation'. I had found musical conversations difficult but possible (we had done it several times before), but catching someone's eye was still very uncomfortable for me. My feelings of anxiety were different depending on whether it was an adult or pupil – with adults I found it faintly embarrassing, and with pupils it seemed rather intrusive and I felt protective towards them and wanted to spare them any discomfort.

I think the instruction to perform a musical bridge with everyone was where it began to feel really quite difficult. I think I had a sense that I wasn't allowed to stop until I'd completed the task, and it felt like it might take quite a while and perhaps everyone else would finish before me (technically impossible I know!). It also threw up for me that I was more reluctant to meet some eyes and this left me feeling inadequate: somehow in my job I felt I shouldn't feel this. And then I did it - until the stress and anxiety inside me reached such levels that I felt that I was going to explode and I reasoned both that no one should have to put themselves through such discomfort to participate in a musical exercise, and that if I was finding it so awful then surely at least one of the young people must be suffering too, and that I could give them 'permission' to stop if I did.

I wrote in my journal. "*I wasn't confident but gave it a go but found it so excruciating that I couldn't talk myself into continuing – I gave up after hoping several times that we were drawing to a close.*"

I also wrote of the young people, *"I think they felt out of their depth, inadequate, lacking knowledge and skills – and then did not feel particularly satisfied at the result/end product – which might have made sense of their discomfort."* And *"I think the experience was drawn out, boring and probably left them feeling small, inadequate etc."* And lastly I wrote *"Ego trip for adults? Intellectual games for adults?"* I enclose these quotes as you asked me to – they were my immediate (as opposed to considered) response, I did not write them to share and so they may seem rather uncompromising!! They also are, of course, as much about myself, my experience (and my life history) as my perception of the young people.

This description reveals a very detailed and significant experience and reflects on the possibility that recent events (such as the exclusion of the two students whose criticisms of the activity are imagined here) and Emily's biography all have a part to play in her understanding of events. Since the session there is a mutually shared understanding that the student participants did not find this quite such a traumatic experience. It is even understood that for some it was a significant contributing factor to their decisions regarding their future. However, what it and the Cowboy Condom Song incident crucially demonstrate are gaps in communication, understanding and expectation between the professional practitioners involved and the need to find ways to test assumptions, improve communications and refine understandings.

Such feelings of confusion and uncertainty will be familiar to any educators undertaking collaborative initiatives and they will also recognise that distinguishing the differences and reconciling the practices of very similar philosophical positions is considerably more difficult than coping with opposites. In this case these "incidents", precisely because they have been identified as "critical" by the practitioners, indicate parallel rather than identical philosophies. All the practitioners have no trouble signing up to either the Kerrison Curriculum:

• valuing and respecting ourselves

• valuing and respecting others

• learning our choices are our responsibility

• recognising that everything has implications and consequences

or CME's vision statement:

• to promote opportunity through the process of music-making

so the issue then is to find ways to improve the practical dialogue in order to be more reflexive and effective.

It is worth noting here that the collaboration during the pilot had no history to depend upon and learn from. To all our knowledge these kind of collaborative initiatives involving multiple voluntary and statutory agencies are unprecedented and we are all learning how to cope and what to expect (Blake et al, 1999). For the practitioners as they moved into the main programme working with the second cohort what history they brought with them served to represent a particular success that they were to have some difficulty reproducing.

Themes revisited

For the professionals the outcomes sought were a move from:
"I can't therefore I won't" to "I can therefore I will"
(Virgo, 1999, p. 4)

In the light of recognising, exploring and discussing these critical incidents we can make the following observations that we intend to incorporate into the practical dialogue of running the programme.

1. Overall aims and objectives – our understanding of these for ourselves, how we expected others to interpret them and how we thought they actually applied them.

a. It is important to recognise that we may agree on principles but adopt different procedures

b. It is essential to reconcile different procedures with jointly understood educational and behavioural objectives

2. Continuity – the progression of work and the implications of interruptions and disruptions.

a. It may be that the more solid and established a group becomes the harder it is to accommodate dramatic changes or interventions. If so it may be necessary to consider the nature and purpose of such interventions as well as their objectives in order to assess how best to achieve them – i.e. if both the content of a session, working on or listening to a song introduced from elsewhere by the tutors, and the form, an unprecedented performance to the group by tutors, are changed.

b. It is important to recognise that the erratic attendance of group members can contribute to a lack of group identity, as well as a lack of group cohesion and progression which can make it difficult to build on skills, follow a project through and develop feelings of ownership in students and practitioners. This in turn, can affect the morale of tutors and give a sense that what they offer is not valued. This issue also affects the morale of the group – i.e. if they've made an effort to turn up where's everyone else? They thought it was quite good but as no one else seems to be bothering to come perhaps it was rubbish.

3. Workshop methodology and practice – the intentions of the activity, its educational benefit to individuals (students, teachers and tutors) and the benefit to the curriculum.

a. It may be appropriate to demonstrate procedures and explain and discuss their purposes to fellow colleagues.

4. Ongoing review and planning.

a. It would be valuable to regularly discuss overall curriculum directions in order to explore whether specific cross-curricula themes might be developed and how these might be co-ordinated.

b. It would be valuable to have regular staff session reviews – (i.e. have the reviews we meant and planned to have but always found it difficult to have adequate time for).

5. Consent – the implications and understandings for groups and individuals.

a. It is important to recognise that the students ability to know what they want, say what they want and understand the full implications of their requests or decisions is very limited. We need to carefully structure activities and dialogues in order to develop their ability to meaningfully input into decisions about what we all do and how we do it, and through this process develop effective autonomous experience.

6. The voices of the students.

a. If we acknowledge that allowing the students to be heard is probably one of the most complex and challenging things that we will attempt within the music workshop then this process will need constant monitoring and evaluation to assist their ability to voice their opinions, gauge our response to them and to establish with the students how this helps or hinders them.

7. Evaluation.

a. In order to evaluate we need to have a very detailed picture of the activity which involves all the perspectives including the young people themselves. Having a multidisciplinary team who, between them, have worked with the young people over a period of time in different settings is invaluable. The young people must be part of the evaluation but the practitioners must bear in mind that involving them meaningfully is a delicate job. Much evidence will be anecdotal and subjective and may not fit neatly with what is usually seen as evidence of success and achievement.

8. Life histories - the context of individual experiences and understandings for participants and practitioners.

a. It would be valuable to recognise the different biographies of practitioners as well as students and to incorporate these different perspectives in to the planning and evaluation processes. We must never underestimate the huge part this aspect plays as an influence on individual experiences and understandings, and also the dynamics within the group.

9. Assumptions – on what basis do we question the perceptions of others?

a. Assumptions may be made and risks may be taken provided that they are based on a shared understanding of colleagues and evaluated properly as above. Trust may be a reasonable expectation from the group and from colleagues as long as we are prepared to earn it. Trust must never be taken for granted.

Conclusions

For all of us the process of thinking about the work in this way has involved us in very delicate negotiations that go to the heart of our professional and, sometimes, personal confidence. We have learnt how personal histories play a huge part in forming our professional identities and inform the methods and approaches we adopt as practitioners. In a situation such as this programme where so many different agencies are involved, each with their own distinct philosophy however close that might seem to others, it is very easy for individually understood assumptions and expectations to play a major part in informing discrete practice. Working with other professional practitioners makes the dynamics very complicated, and needs delicate handling from all sides, but is essential if we are

to make our understandings truly situational, as Elliott would have it. Working with this particular client group is very challenging mostly because they can be so unresponsive – they often exhibit "passive aggression" as one colleague puts it - but to have any hope of their ownership, their trust, and their participation in group building we have to "get in there" somehow. The only hope we have of doing this and achieving a truly qualitative learning experience that we, and they, can identify is to develop a complex collaborative professional practice.

Finally, the problems of exclusion are clearly growing and, at least, there is now a significant intention from the British government that the issue should be tackled effectively. The *"overarching targets"* of the published strategy on truancy and school exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998, p.22) are that:

> *there will be a reduction of one third in the number of both permanent and fixed-term exclusions from the current level; and*

> *all pupils excluded from school for more than three weeks will receive alternative full-time and appropriate education.*

There are also several references to the effectiveness of contracting and collaboration with the voluntary sector throughout the country. If this is to be an increasing opportunity and demand in this area then we as the professionals and agencies involved in delivery must be able to effectively and valuably educate these students, effectively evaluate the benefits and effectively defend the actual methods and approaches used if and when it should be necessary.

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