Exploring the Post 16 transition experiences of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

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Overarching Abstract

Transition from secondary school to Post 16 education is a significant event in the educational lives of young people. The impact of this is further heightened for students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This paper begins with a systematic literature review which explores what is known about the experiences of young people with ASD during this process. Through qualitative synthesis and thematic analysis of the studies identified key themes were highlighted. These were 'Independence', 'Role of the family', 'Purpose of education', 'Curriculum content', 'Supports for learning', 'Concerns about the future', 'Relationships' and 'The process of transition'. The review highlighted issues around the nature and perceived purpose of the transition process, and the opportunities that it presents as a learning opportunity on the topic of change as well as a facilitator for it. Two contrasting metaphors of transition as a rollercoaster and as a vehicle were also identified within the studies. The empirical research which followed, aimed to gain insight into students' perspectives on the transition experience, process and their role within it. This was carried out via online qualitative questionnaires with Year 12 students. Questionnaires were chosen in order to provide an appropriate and comfortable mechanism for individuals with ASD to express their views. Questionnaire responses were received from students in both specialist 6th form provision and mainstream 6th form colleges. The responses of these students were then coded and analysed using thematic analysis. Several themes were identified within three super ordinate themes of 'help', 'social communication' and 'environment'. Students' identification of independence in terms of being alone and without help was a particular area of interest and further ideas around how their concept of independence could be developed in more beneficial ways are discussed. This paper also includes a bridging document which explores how the findings from the systematic review led to the empirical piece of research and considers the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the research.

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Declaration

This piece of work is being submitted towards the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology (DAppEdPsy). This work has not been submitted before for this or any other course, and is all my own work. It contains no material previously published or written by another author except where due reference is made.

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Chapter One - Systematic Literature Review

"What is known about the experiences of young people identified as having an Autistic Spectrum Disorder during their transition from school to post 16 provision? : A Systematic Literature Review of recent research in this area."

Abstract

Transition from secondary school to post 16 education is a significant event in the educational lives of young people. For students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) this is heightened in terms of how it contributes to attitudes and understandings about themes such as independence and purpose of education. This systematic literature review looked at what is known about the experiences of young people with ASD during this process. A search of the literature using the keywords of " autis*, transition, school, college, post-16 and postsecondary was carried out using the Web of Knowledge, Psychinfo and Scopus databases. Eventually, seven studies were found that matched inclusion criteria for this review. These were then analysed using a meta-ethnographic approach with the process of reciprocal translation in order to identify themes and provide a synthesis of the studies. From this process eight key themes were identified. These were 'Independence', 'Role of the family', 'Purpose of education', 'Curriculum content',' Supports for learning, 'Concerns about the future', 'Relationships' and 'The process of transition'. The review highlighted issues around the nature and perceived purpose of the transition process, and the opportunities that it presents as a learning opportunity on the topic of change as well as a catalyst for it.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 ASD and Transitions

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are often characterised in terms of difficulties in the three areas of; social interaction, communication and rigidity of thought. Much debate remains as to what extent the 'triad of impairments are in fact linked and how helpful this interpretation is. Some question the level of relationship between aspects of the triad such as social interaction and rigidity of thought (Mandy and Skuse, 2008) whilst others argue that Autism can be seen as an alternative cognitive style rather than a disability (MacKenzie, 2008). The terminology of disorder and impairment is therefore problematic. Even if considering Autism as a style of cognition rather than a disorder there are still clearly some cultural demands which are problematic for young people in this situation.

A resistance to change, alongside difficulties in communication and forming new relationships are likely to make the process of transition particularly challenging. Both horizontal and vertical transitions have been identified as problematic for those with ASD (Earles *et al.*, 1998; Stoner *et al.*, 2007). Horizontal transitions refer to day to day movement between task or activity as opposed to vertical transitions which refer to more significant changes in life stage.

1.2 The focus of this review

Transition between school key phases is a key event in the lives of young people. It presents opportunities but also threats in terms of change of environment and relationships. For young people with the social and communication difficulties associated with ASD, these issues are even more apparent. The particular focus of this review is the transition experiences of pupils identified with ASD as they move into Post 16 education, with the aim of exploring literature concerning experiences of the transition process in order to identify key themes in relation to this topic and compare and contrast ideas.

2.0 Method

This review was undertaken using a systematic search of the literature as described by Cole (2008). The Web of Knowledge, Psychinfo and Scopus databases were searched using key terms for autism, transition and post secondary education. These searches were completed in November 2011. The initial search terms were as follows:

Topic=('autis*') AND Topic=('transition') AND Topic=(school OR college OR post-16 OR postsecondary)

Following the initial searches a total of 180 papers were identified. 46 from Web of Knowledge, 64 from Scopus and 74 from Pychinfo. An initial survey discovered 52 duplicate studies, leaving a total of 128 studies. 13 citations were also excluded due to being publications other than research published in a peer reviewed journal. The remaining studies were then screened against inclusion criteria for topic, age of population, and presence of empirical research data. Studies were then excluded as on closer inspection, they referred to the wrong age population, were related to physiological changes rather than experiences, or were not related to the topic of education and transition. Further studies were also excluded as they were found to be reviews of the existing literature or pieces of editorial comment, rather than empirical research studies. References of the articles selected were also searched alongside those that had been excluded due to being a review of the literature. From this two further articles were selected, Tobias (2009) and Camarena and Sarigiani (2009). Finally, seven studies were identified for inclusion in the review, the details of which are given in Table 1.

Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Title	Employment and Post-Secondary Educational Activities for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders During the Transition to Adulthood	A qualitative comparison of perceived stress and coping in adolescents with and without autistic spectrum disorders as they approach leaving school	Transition as a Vehicle : Moving From High School to an Adult Vocational Service Provider	"The John Jones Show": How One Teacher Facilitated Self-Determined Transition Planning for a Young Man with Autism	Supporting students with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) at secondary school: a parent and student perspective	Postsecondary Educational Aspirations of High-Functioning Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorders and Their Parents	Accessing employment supports in the adult system for transitioning youth with autism spectrum disorders
Author	Taylor and Seltzer	Browning, Osbourne and Reed	Nuehring and Sitlington	Held, Thoma and Thomas	Tobias	Camarena and Sarigiani	McDonough and Revel
Year	2011	2009	2003	2004	2009	2009	2010
Journal	Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders	British Journal of Special Educational Needs	Journal of Disability Policy Studies	Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities	Educational Psychology in Practice	Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities	Journal of vocational rehabilitation
Overview	Part Of a larger longitudinal study	Looking at anxieties of pupils with and without ASD diagnosis prior to transition from high school.	Detailed examination of transition process for four 'case study' students with autism	Case study of work with one student during the transition process.	Looking at the views of parents, year 9 and year 11 pupils on their school experience	Assessing parent and pupil views on their educational aspiration and potential barriers and obstacles to achieving these	Lit review looking specifically at transition issues but has 2 case studies within
Sample	66 young people who exited school system between 2004 and 2008	10 pupils with autism and 7 with no identified disorder (volunteers).	3 students who had transferred from school to work and 1 still at high school	1 student	3 year 11 pupils, 5 parents	21 'high functioning' adolescents and their parents	2 case studies

Study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Data Collection	Questionnaire and interview data from mothers of young people.	Short (5 to 10 minute) structured interviews	Interviews with structured and open questions. Observation	Participatory Action Research	Focus groups with year 9s, year 11s and parents exploring issues including future support	Parallel sets of semi-structured interviews for parents and children	Observation
Study type	Quantitative data from questionnaire ratings etc.	Qualitative comparison – report percentages of answers in categories	Qualitative report of 4 case studies followed by summary of what went well and what could be improved	Experiences of one teacher working with a particular student and using Action Research	Qualitative data from focus groups analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	Qualitative data from interviews using content analysis Means and S.D of answers to quantitative questions	Case study
Setting	USA	England	USA	USA	England	USA	USA

Table 1 : Details of the papers included in the Systematic Literature Review

The quality and weight of evidence of each of the studies was then evaluated using the EPPI Weight of Evidence tool (EPPI Centre, 2007) The results of this are shown below in Table 2.

	A (Trustworthiness in terms of own question)	B (Appropriateness of design and analysis for this review question)	C (Relevance of focus for this review question)	D (Overall weight in relation to review question)
Taylor and Seltzer (2011)	*High*	*Medium*	*Medium/ Low*	*Medium*
Browning et al. (2009)	*Medium*	*Medium*	*Medium/High*	*Medium*
Nuehring and Sitlington (2003)	*High*	*Medium/High*	*Medium*	*Medium/High*
Held et al. (2004)	*High*	*High*	*Medium/High*	*High*
Tobias (2009)	*High*	*High*	*Medium/High*	*High*
Camarini and Saragiani (2009)	*Medium*	*Medium/High*	*Medium/High*	*Medium/High*
McDonough and Revel (2010)	*Medium/Low*	*Low*	*Medium/ Low*	*Medium/Low*

Table 2 : EPPI Weight of Evidence

The texts were analysed using a meta-ethnographic approach with the process of reciprocal translation in order to provide a synthesis of the studies as outlined by Noblit and Hare (1988) and used by (Pound *et al.*, 2005; Britten *et al.*, 2002). Two of the studies provided quantitative data, but this was in the form of descriptive statistics relating to questionnaire responses, and did not lend itself to meta-analysis. So, instead a mixed methods synthesis as used by Sandelowski *et al.*, (2006) wa**s** adopted, with an integrated design, using a one-way assimilation of quantitative data into qualitative data.

3.0 Results

Through the process of reciprocal translation eight key themes emerged and the metaphors within these for each study were then explored. Results are recorded here in relation to each of the eight themes of 'Independence', 'Role of the family', 'Purpose of education', 'Curriculum content',' Supports for learning,' Concerns about the future', 'Relationships' and 'The process of transition'.

3.1 Independence

Independence is conceptualised differently by each of the studies from the idea of self-determination (Held *et al.*, 2004) to the 'development of personal life skills' (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009) Tobias (2009) explains how for her participants' independence " seemed to encompass a range of adult skills, hinging on the ability to organise oneself effectively. " (Tobias, 2009, p. 159). McDonough and Revell (2010) discuss independence in terms of a desire for young people to "live independently in a safe environment." (McDonough and Revell, 2010, p. 79)

 The studies also report different levels of independence achieved by students. Nuehring and Sitlington (2003) discuss the lack of independence afforded to some of those they studied. They describe situations where students are "excessively sheltered" and "not compelled to take responsibility for their own actions" (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003, p.29) They also describe experiences of discussing students as if they were not in the room. Browning et al. (2009) investigated independence in terms of how students with ASD approach problems that they face. They report that respondents suggested that they would either solve their problems 'personally' or rely on 'external assistance', where others solved problems for them. What they were much less likely to do was consult other people for 'external guidance' (Browning et al., 2009, p. 40).

Taylor and Seltzer (2011) was the only study that attempted to measure levels of independence. They used the Revised ADL index (Seltzer and Krauss, 1989) where individuals are scored in terms of the number of identified tasks that they can perform independently. Interestingly, within the context of independence, the ratings were derived from scores given by the students' mothers rather than

the students themselves. They found the highest level of functional independence amongst students who were attending higher education and the least functional independence amongst young people in adult day services. Those without regular daytime activities had functional independence falling in-between these two extremes (Taylor and Seltzer, 2011, p. 572). This suggests the possibility that individual levels of ability may be more important than type of activity engaged in, in determining an individual's functional independence.

3.2 Role of the family

The role of the family was identified as a key component within the studies, with the exception of Held et al. (2004) where the subject of the case study had grown up in a group home rather than a family environment. For Taylor and Seltzer (2011) the type of post transition activity had an impact on whether individuals lived with family. Those who had entered into higher education or competitive employment were mostly residing with their parents where as just over half of those in adult day services were living with their parents. In several studies, parents were active participants in the research who provided their own perspective on their child's experience (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009; Taylor and Seltzer, 2011; Tobias, 2009). Nuehring and Sitlington (2003) describe the mother of a transitioning student as part of the "transition team". They also describe the fears of one parent about "going through" another transition (p.30). From the perspective of service providers they report that "communication with parents" was an area that the providers felt did not receive enough attention(p.30). Browning et al. (2009) report how pupils in their study saw their parents as a means to solving problems on their behalf; "I'd get my parents to deal with it" (p.40). Tobias (2009) reports parents' views of their own role as being to provide an awareness of issues that exist in the world outside the protective environment of education. Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) describe the role of parents in explaining the ASD diagnosis to their children, and contrasts examples of children who were unaware of their diagnosis, and whose parents hadn't talked to them, with children who were aware of the diagnosis and whose parents had explained how they would "see and experience the world differently"(p.120). Camarena and Sarigiani also found that mothers reported thinking about the future more than the adolescents themselves or their fathers and were more likely to identify future goals on "what they thought

was 'realistic' or 'best-fit' rather than what they wished for or imagined could be possible." (p.121)

3.3 Purpose of education

For Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) the purpose of education was multi-layered. Functions included career preparation with increased job options and a place to "turn their 'unique interests' and 'special talents' into something practical." Further education was also seen as a place for an 'extended piece of transition' and an opportunity 'to get more people experience'and develop personal life skills that would allow students to be independent (p.121). Held et al (2004) describe the wider experience of education "in a classroom without walls"(p.180). Nuehring and Sitlington (2003) describe the goal of education as helping students to become "productive members of society as adults" (p.24) who are integrated into the community. The need for occupation and to give individuals something to do is also indicated, in Nuehring and Stillington (2003) by a parent who doesn't want to see her son "sitting at a table, bored, or aimlessly wandering around all day without someone keeping him on task." (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003, p. 25). They describe a vocational centre where "all consumers could be steadily employed without "down time" (p.30). In this centre individuals were grouped in rooms according to their level of functioning. The path of 'consumers' was set and there was no progression to learning new skills in another 'section' once skills were learnt (p.27). A connections worker from the same study indicated that a variety of experience was important in order to "teach people that life is change"(p.26). Held et al (2004) explain the dream of the pupil in their study to 'become a rock star' and their role in providing opportunities to support this. (Held, 2004, p.182)

3.4 Curriculum content

Closely related to the purpose of education is the specific curriculum content, ranging from a focus on practical life skills, social skills, literacy and numeracy (Tobias, 2009) to higher education courses in history and accounting (Taylor and Seltzer, 2011). Nuehring and Sitlington (2003) describe the use of an individualized curriculum, which centres on the development of functional skills. These skills include "...money use, knowledge of personal information, telephone usage, and survival sign recognition and application… daily living

skills such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and personal care." Following an initial assessment of areas such as on-task behaviour, punctuality, appearance and manners the curriculum would be designed to target skill areas which need development. This is termed "work adjustment training" (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003, p.25). Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) highlight the need for individualisation, referring to one pupil's comment "Treat us on a case-by-case basis, we're alike but each of us is unique" (p.124). Tobias (2009) mentions a "cope" course which aims to develop social skills. Whilst, Held et al (2004) advocate a specific curriculum in the skills of self- determination…"to understand themselves what their interests and preferences are and to be able to speak up for themselves….create their vision for the future and direct their own meetings"(p.183). They used particular programmes for this purpose which included the next STEP curriculum and the Self Determined Model of Instruction (p.182).

3.5 Supports for learning

Several of the studies identify specific supports for learning, which would be helpful to aid students through progression. (McDonough and Revell, 2010) explain the importance for pupils of being occupied and not sitting still for lengths of time. They also describe the importance of learning tasks through repetition either of demonstration or verbal or visual instruction, and the need for more intensive services and time (p.97). Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) also identify the need for increased time as well as a quiet atmosphere for testing and flexibility about what coursework would be required outside the child's specialist area" (p.123). On-going support and structure are described as important factors by Nuehring and Sitlington (p.25); as well as the use of a visual timetable to support transition throughout the day where "tasks are completed in a top to bottom, left to right fashion." (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003, p.28). A pupil interviewed by Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) explained that because they were 'autistic' they needed to learn step by step (p.119). Held et al (2004) found that they needed to adapt the self-determination curriculum they used by making language more concrete (p.182). Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) mention the use of assistive technology and software as important aids to success. An example of this is given by Held et al (2004) who describe the use of software as a " key component of making this all work" (p.183) and

explain how a microphone was used to allow the student's voice to be recorded onto a PowerPoint presentation which the student then controlled (p.184). Interestingly, Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) explore potential problems with the use of additional supports, with students either feeling that they were unnecessary or that they would lead to them being labelled. Some students felt that the existence of available supports in the background, that they could access if they needed to, would be helpful (p.126).

3.6 Concerns about the future

Concerns about the future were expressed by pupils themselves, their parents and the professionals working with them. Pupils' concerns were explored in detail by Browning, et al. (2009) and they found that pupils with ASD reported more worries around losing touch with friends and teachers and about external concerns such as catching the bus and getting a job, than their fellow pupils did. They also gave few responses which indicated that they felt they would have the necessary coping skills to prevent them worrying in the future (p.40-41). Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) found that students were concerned with "coursework requirements and curriculum" with pupils' comments including "I may not achieve the scores I need" and "I may not be able to handle the amount of work" (p.123). But, as in Browning et al.'s research, they found that non-academic issues such as the awareness of other students, availability of transportation and maintaining connections with home were considered as more of an obstacle to success by most students. Parents voiced similar concerns to students in relation to the curriculum, and highlighted in particular, difficulties with organizational skills and written communication and the potential effect these would have on students' success. (Camarena and Sarigiani (2009). They further explain their understanding of their children's concerns about social issues; "leaving home is a fear for him...fear of being around others that don't understand." (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009, p.124) Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) found that some parents were also concerned that their child lived in the moment and had no concern for the future or for consequences. There is also a feeling that making school too comfortable an environment would make things more difficult later as pupils would suddenly have to deal with having ASD without any 'safeguards' (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009, p.10). Parents also expressed fears that their children might have issues with possessing the

attitude and confidence required to be successful in continuing education and might be resistant to change.   A parent in Camarena and Sarigiani's study also describes their 'best hopes' for the future in terms of their child understanding themselves, coping with limitations and not feeling 'different' (p.9). Concerns for the future voiced by professionals included, the possibility of regression and loss of skill, as well as unhappiness in an environment unsuitable for the young person(Nuehring and Sitlington (2003), (p.26 -29).

3.7 Relationships

The development of social skills was identified in several studies as an area that would require further support (Held et al, 2004, Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003, Tobias 2009). One pupil described themselves as socially 'on the edge of being normal (Tobias, 2009, p.125). This feeling is echoed by one parent's description of their child; "he still feels that he's on the outside – that he's not fully included" (Tobias, 2009, p. 158). However it should not be assumed that pupils with ASD are not social, two of the case studies also describe the pupils concerned as 'very social' and 'outgoing' (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003; McDonough and Revell, 2010). The importance of peers as mentors was identified by Held et al (2004) and Camarena and Sarigiani (2009). For Held et al. peers were an integral part of the transition process and were able to model behaviours around hopes and dreams. They also found how through this process, the perceptions of peers about the pupil with ASD changed; they were seen as more competent and they got to know them better (Held et al., p.183). Tobias (2009) describes the importance of having same age peers to develop the pupil's 'people experience' (p.122) and the use of mentors and buddy systems to provide assistance in the social domain (p.124) Interestingly, Camarena and Sarigiani (2009), whilst recognising that social integration is an expected overall outcome, question whether there may also be value in 'bringing students with similar needs together' (p.125). The suggestions of parents included introducing children to "similar children" or "understanding roommates" (p.124).

3.8 The process of transition

The function of transition as a process was explored by several of the studies. As many of the studies were based in the U.S. the specific transition programmes relate to the American education system. However, several close

parallels could be drawn between the systems in place in America and in the UK, and similar issues are described. Held et al (2004) described transition as a developmental process where students learn skills of self determination. They also explore the impact of the process on how the pupils are viewed and treated by those who will be involved in their future. For Held et al, this process is described as a "roller coaster ride, with ups and downs...scary times and fun times"(p.181), whilst it is described in Nuehring and Sitlington's study as "a vehicle" which "takes the student from one place and delivers him or her to another" (p.24). Both agree that it is a 'complex, interrelated and ongoing' process (Held et al, 2004) that has begun several years before transition takes place. Both processes resulted in a detailed transition plan with goals and objectives based on desired outcomes. For Held et al. the role of the student in transition meetings was very important and involved people having discussions with the pupil rather than talking about him. Held et al explain that "the tone of the meeting shifted from deficit based to strength based" (p.184). McDonough and Revell, (2010) also explain the importance of the process in terms of helping the pupil to "determine next steps in his life" (p.97). This contrasts with Nuehring and Sitlington's finding that staff felt that the pupil "does not realise the careful planning, prayer, preparation and compromise that have occurred" (p.125). Camarena and Sarigiani (2009) highlight the importance of transition planning and being able to attend practice classes and meet teachers in advance.

4.0 Discussion

Whilst similarities exist in their descriptions of assessment and planning for objectives based on desired outcomes, the understanding of transition described by Held et al and Nuehring andSitlington are very different. The two conceptualisations of transition as a 'vehicle' and 'rollercoaster ride' whilst both seeming to relate to the idea of a journey conjure up very different images. The 'vehicle' suggests that the smooth transition to the end point destination is the crucial factor, and that the importance lies only in the outcome. Whereas, within the roller coaster ride the ups and downs of the process itself have significance and this is reflected in Held et al's idea of transition as a developmental process

for the pupil. It is interesting to consider what is gained and what potential exists for gains from the process of transition itself, and what skills can be learnt and developed through engaging in this process. To what extent can transition be a learning tool for pupils with social and communication difficulties to learn about managing change and develop skills to support their independence? Another interesting point noted by Held et al. is that the process of transition can also change how others perceive the young person and deal with them in the future. Transition can therefore be seen as a process of change for the system around the young person as well as for the young person themselves.

The theme of independence is closely linked to the students' role in the transition process, and to concerns for the future. For Held et al. the transition process is one which fully involves the pupil, and one through which the pupil develops skills of self determination. Transition is a process done by the pupil with the support of those around them. As Nuehring and Sitlington highlight, students can suffer from excessive sheltering, and as Tobias explains, this can cause parents concern in regard to how their children will cope with the realities of a world beyond school. An important role of transition must surely be to promote and develop independence, providing a bridge between a more sheltered school environment and the world at large. If it merely becomes a case of maintaining provision between school and college, then opportunities for increasing independence are lost.

Independence also links to the role of the family, and the level of involvement that they have. With parents identifying themselves as going through the transition process and students identifying their parents as solving problems for them (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003; Browning et al., 2009). It could be considered that the extent of parents' involvement in the transition process can sometimes be at odds with the development of the independence of the young person. Parent and student concerns about the future also seemed to differ. The concerns reported by parents appear to include more process based concerns about how their children would cope with organising themsleves and whether they would have the confidence to manage change, where as the pupils' concerns were more outcome based around whether they would pass their coursework or get a good job (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009). This could

partly indicate a lack of access on the students part to the planning of outcomes which may often be undertaken by others on their behalf.

Whilst in several studies a curriculum design based on desired outcomes is advocated, difference exists in the nature of these outcomes. Held et al.'s focus on a curriculum around transition itself with the aim of enhancing the students self development contrasts with the focus on an academic and practical skills based curriculum (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009; Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003; Taylor and Seltzer, 2011). Is the interest in developing an individual who can understand and speak up for themselves or one who possesses a set of practical skills required to fit in with society? Is it not in fact about both these aspects, about developing the practical skills but in the context of becoming an independent adult who can speak up for themselves and has an increased understanding of their own role in society, in a multi layered approach as described by Camarena and Sarigiani (2009). Are the possibilities for developing this dependent on the individual, both in terms of their own capacity to attain independence but also in the way that they are viewed by others? This could include those working with them as well as their families, and might then impact on the opportunities for development and the way that these are presented to them.

 Interestingly, a participant in Nuehring and Sitlington's research also identifies a purpose of education as teaching that "life is change". Their suggestion is that this is done in a practical way, via introduction to a range of differing work related experiences. This would seem to be more in keeping with Held et al's conceptualisation of transition as a rollercoaster than the description of a vehicle moving smoothly from one stage to another. As well as teaching individuals about change, this would also seem to promote a greater level of choice for young people by increasing their repertoire of experiences. However, whilst aspects of the process are about the young people adapting to new experiences and environments, the environment itself also has to be able to be flexible and inclusive. This could be a barrier to enabling young people with ASD to access a range of opportunities, and there is clearly much work to be done in raising awareness outside the field of education. Aspects of the transition process which include the development of self understanding and skills in addressing change and speaking up for yourself, could be helpful in

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allowing young people with ASD to have a greater voice in terms of breaking down barriers and promoting flexibility in others. It could be seen that the differing cognitive style suggested by Mackenzie (2008) becomes an impairment due to the nature of the society in which they live. To what extent should it be the individual rather than the environment around them which goes through a process of change?   Several of the studies identify the importance of peers both as mentors or role models and as an opportunity for the development of social skills. Held et al. (2004) explain the importance of the reciprocal interaction between peers and how their perception of the young person changed and this in turn changed the young person's perception of themselves. It can be seen that these interactions can be about bringing greater equality and promoting change within society as well as developing the young person's own skills in social interaction and change management.

This literature review has highlighted contrasting ideas about education as a necessity for occupation and recreation or as an opportunity for self development, and about independence as a means of facilitating integration within society or as a means of an individual taking an active role in their own future. There are a number of questions arising from this about the process of transition, its purpose and the impact it has on society. To what extent is transition a roller coaster ride in itself, rather than a vehicle moving smoothly from A to B? What function does the process itself have in shaping a young person's future development? What effect can it have on the views of those working with the young person? How is their developing independence balanced with the involvement of their family? Can the process effectively be used as a vehicle for promoting independence and teaching individuals about change as well as helping them to develop strategies to manage it? Can the process also be used to develop the understanding of others and change their perceptions of young people with ASD?

4.1 The value of synthesis

Synthesising these studies has allowed different experiences and viewpoints on transition to be explored. The contrasts between the different understandings of the meaning of transition and its purpose allow a deeper understanding of the whole process. Through undertaking this literature review key questions have

arisen about the extent to which transition is a process which facilitates change within the individual and their environment, and about the role which pupils have in the process, and how this affects outcomes.

4.2 Limitations

Limitations of this research include the difficulty in having a limited number of studies, which necessitated the inclusion of several studies on the US education system, where different cultural and social understandings may be required than within the UK education system, and transition ages differ slightly.

5.0 Conclusions and implications for further research

This review has highlighted issues about the nature of transition and its perceived purpose. As a result, further research has been carried out into the views of young people with ASD and the extent to which they experience the transition process as an opportunity for developing independence and acquiring skills in managing change, as well as affecting change in the system around them.

Chapter Two - Bridging Document

1.0 Identifying an area of research

My initial interest in the area of transition for pupils with ASD came from my previous experience as a teacher. I worked in a school where there was an additionally resourced centre for students with a diagnosis of Autism. As the first cohort of pupils reached Year 11, I was interested to consider what possibilities were available in terms of their future transition, and how this differed depending on the perceptions of family, staff and other professionals. In my first year on the D.App.Ed.Psy course, I undertook a small piece of work looking at the preparation of pupils with ASD for transitioning from KS2 (end phase of primary school) to KS3 (beginning phase of secondary school). This further highlighted to me the practical difficulties of managing change and transition for these pupils. I wanted to explore transition to post 16, as I am interested in the process of becoming an adult and what it means. Above all, I wanted to consider the purpose of education. What is this process all about? What are we preparing people for? What outcomes are desired?   For me, transition from school to post 16 education has a key role in the exploration of these issues. I was particularly interested in the understanding of these issues in relation to young people with autism, our expectations for them, and our expectations of them.

2.0 Arriving at a research question - development and refinement

I began my systematic literature review by exploring research into the experiences of young people with ASD of transition from secondary school to post 16 education. I was interested to note that much of the research I found explored other's views of the experience with little focus on the views of the young people themselves. At times, when young people's views were considered, it seemed that their validity was then checked by comparing them to the views of adults within the process. I was keen to provide an opportunity

for pupils' views on their experience to be voiced, and at the start of my research journey, that was what I set out to do. The findings of my literature review led me down a slightly different path. I became interested in the extent to which transition itself was a learning opportunity, a platform for which young people could learn about managing change. I was also interested at how the process was able to change the views of those around them. I wanted to try to better understand some of the cyclical relationship between change of the transitioning individual and change of those operating in the system around them.

3.0 An interesting metaphor: The transition journey - Rollercoaster or Vehicle

Two contrasting metaphors for transition as a journey were discussed by papers within my literature review. The first considered transition to be like a rollercoaster (Held et al., 2004), whilst the second described a vehicle that transports from A to B (Nuehring and Sitlington, 2003). I was interested to further consider these two metaphorical descriptions in relation to each other. I came to my own interpretation, which arose from the initial descriptions of these metaphors in the reviewed papers. For me the rollercoaster emphasised the importance of transition itself, the experience of the ups and downs, where as the vehicle suggested a movement from A to B with transition just allowing movement from one to the other with little focus on the value of the experience itself. However, when discussing this metaphor with others, an alternative understanding emerged. This centred on the feeling of control. The rollercoaster, being an experience that was guided and set by others, over which you had no control and had to follow at a speed and path that was predefined, where as the vehicle allowed you to progress your own path from A to B, and have control over the speed and direction. Two important ideas emerge from these discussions that of the importance of individual control and of the view of transition as an important experience and entity in itself rather than merely a mechanism from moving from one stage or location to another. These metaphors have undoubtedly been influential in my developing thinking around the topic of transition.

4.0 Theoretical framework

From a theoretical standpoint the understanding of transition expressed in this paper is underpinned in particular by theories of self efficacy (Bandura, 1978) and self determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The development of both self efficacy and self determination can be seen as an important product of any programme of education and transition to adulthood. The way in which ASD is considered both within this process and outside it is also an important factor. Growing up with a deficit model of their condition is likely to have a highly detrimental effect on an individual's self efficacy. Field and Hoffman (1999) highlight the importance of family involvement for promoting the development of self determination in young people with autism. Modelling of positive behaviours in this respect is again seen as a key factor. Interestingly, they promote the possibility that parents of children with developmental disabilities are likely to have developed some unique self determination skills through their own need to act as advocates and overcome barriers in the process of parenting a child with a disability. Aspects of Social Learning Theory (Bandura and McClelland, 1977) can also be considered to be relevant when considering how development and change might occur through transition.

5.0 Methodology

I initially intended to carry out my research using semi structured interviews with a small number of students. Initial visits to potentially participating schools caused me to further reflect on my choice of method due, in part, to difficulties they saw with facilitating the research using this method because of staff resources. I considered my reasons for choosing this method and whether any other methods would also be appropriate. I had already considered that a group based method such as a focus group would not be likely to enable participants with identified difficulties with social and communication skills to effectively share their views, and could be problematic in terms of participation being voluntary. I read further research into possible ways of enabling those with autism to effectively express their views, and became interested in literature around computer mediated communication (Jacklin and Farr, 2005; Mancil *et*

al., 2009; Rajendran and Mitchell, 2000). In applying this to my own research, the literature supported the idea that the use of a computer based questionnaire would allow participants to respond in a way that would limit the difficulties of communicating with a researcher who was unknown to them, and would allow them to give their answers anonymously, and within their own timescale. I was concerned that this method might elicit data that was less rich than that gained from a semi structured interview. However, this method allowed for the possibility of accessing a greater number of respondents over a wider area, which would potentially enrich the data. I was also concerned that this method was also less flexible than the semi-structured interview approach, where the focus of the interview could be more determined by the responses of the interviewee. I was conscious of this within my questionnaire design. When translating my original interview guide into questions for the questionnaire, it became clear that a certain level of literacy would be required in order for respondents to access the questionnaire.   This was necessary due to the complex nature of the topic, and I felt that to further simplify the questions would lead to a more superficial exploration of the issues. I had initially wanted to explore the viewpoints of students across the range of the autistic spectrum. On reflection, I felt that exploring these topics via spoken interview would also have required a certain level of articulation in order to provide rich, insightful data, and I had to accept that this would exclude some potential participants.

The questionnaire design used a combination of open and closed questions. Scaling and multiple choice questions were used as artefacts to aid the responses from individuals, as it has been suggested that closed questions and the use of scales can aid the communication of individuals with autism (Buron and Curtis, 2003). It was not intended that these scales would lead to any comparative analysis between the responses of individuals, but that it would aid the thinking of respondents and allow basic interpretations to be gained, such as that the respondent would like to be more independent in the future than they are now. Alongside the closed questions, were open questions which were designed to further expand on topics and elicit richer data. Thematic analysis was then used in order to gain a detailed, rich account of the data collected (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

6.0 Ethical considerations

There are a number of ethical considerations in relation to this research, particularly in relation to power relations between pupils and their teachers and how this impacted on the presentation of a voluntary study. This is discussed in further detail within the empirical study.

In terms of data analysis, whilst understanding that my own background and influences will undoubtedly affect my interpretation of students' responses, I felt a responsibility to accurately reflect the views expressed. In using a transparent process, and acknowledging that it can never be a truly unadulterated reflection of their views, I felt that I was able to fulfil my ethical responsibility to the respondents who completed the questionnaire.

The collection of data via the university network, rather than an external source, helped to ensure data security and confidentiality. Throughout my work, I was mindful of the ethical codes of conduct of both the Health and Care Professions Council (H.C.P.C) and the British Psychological Society (B.P.S) (H.C.P.C, 2012 ; B.P.S, 2009).

7.0 Epistemology

Initially there were ideas within my research that I felt were potentially conflicting in terms of epistemology. I wanted to explore views and perspectives on the issue of transition and to consider it from a systemic perspective. I was looking to use a qualitative methodology which enabled a more in depth exploration of the experiences of individuals, and was not seeking to generalise my findings to the wider population. However, I was acutely aware that a central term and concept within my research was that of 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder'. I struggled to reconcile what I felt was a medical, within person definition, with my systemic perspective of the situation. However, I was in no doubt that this definition exists in society and that individuals live within the label of this condition, whether we understand it to be a medical condition, or a construct of society or a combination of these factors. This led me to feel that from a critical realist

perspective, I could make sense of my use of the term 'ASD' as an entity which exists in our world, the effect of which can be explored, whilst not subscribing to a particular view of its meaning and basis. As Scott (2007) asserts "holding a belief that an independent reality exists does not commit the researcher to the view that absolute knowledge of the way it works is possible" (Scott, 2007, p. 634).

8.0 Reflexivity

Developing an awareness of my own understanding of the terms used in my research and my own existing beliefs about the purpose of education has been an important part of the process of recognising my own agendas and biases and the way in which these influence my research. Rather than taking a 'god's eye view'. It is important for researchers to practice both personal and epistemological reflexivity and be aware of the contributions that their own backgrounds and beliefs bring to their research (Willig, 2008, p.7). My understanding of the metaphors around the journey of transition, and the way in which these differed to other interpretations further highlights to me the significance of what you as a researcher bring to any piece of research. Even through a method such as a questionnaire which can be seen to create greater distance between researcher and participants, I still chose the topics which were to be addressed, phrased the questions and then interpreted the data. Whilst we can attempt to avoid asking leading questions, we should not assume that our own perspectives can be completely put to one side, as they will impact on both our focus, and the language we use. By being explicit about our own beliefs and discussing our perspectives we can be more transparent in our role as researchers and our representation of our findings (Willig, 2008).

9.0 Summary

I began with a fairly broad question in my systematic literature review, looking at the experiences of young people with ASD of transition from secondary school to post 16 provision. Through the process of completing the review I became

more interested in the potential for transition itself to be both a learning opportunity and a catalyst for change.

The twin metaphors of rollercoaster and vehicle that were earlier applied to the process of transition could also be applied to the process of research and the research journey. I can identify with the rollercoaster analogy, in that the experience itself has been an important process of learning and development, through which I have become a researcher. I have felt the sense of ups and downs and of being out of control, the sense that the research develops a life of its own and takes you in directions that you could not have predicted.

Chapter Three- Empirical Research

"To what extent does the post-16 transition process both provide opportunities for young people with ASD to learn about change and facilitate changes in the system around them?: An investigation of the perceptions of young people with ASD"

Abstract

This research aimed to gain insight into the perspectives of pupils with ASD on the post-16 transition experience, process and their role within it. Data was collected via online qualitative questionnaires, targeted at Year 12 students with a diagnosis of ASD. Questionnaires were chosen in order to provide an appropriate and comfortable mechanism for individuals with ASD to express their views. Questionnaire responses were received from students in both specialist 6th form provision and mainstream 6th form colleges. The responses of these students were then coded and analysed using thematic analysis. Several themes were identified within three super ordinate themes of 'help', 'social communication' and 'environment.' Students' identification of independence in terms of being alone and without help was a particular area of interest and further ideas around how their concept of independence could be developed in more beneficial ways are discussed.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 An ASD Epidemic?

The National Autistic Society reports that over half a million people in the UK have an autistic spectrum disorder, translating into 1 in every 100 (The National Autistic Society, 2013). Within both popular media and the research community, it has been suggested that we are in the midst of an epidemic of Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).(Leonard *et al.*, 2010; Matson and Kozlowski, 2011) It could be argued that the diagnostic process for this condition is very subjective and that an increase in numbers of people with ASD is at least in part due to either diagnostic developments or over diagnosis. Gernsbacher *et al.*(2005) argue against the 'myth' of an autism epidemic, citing the changing

diagnostic criteria as one possible reason behind a perceived increase in numbers. Leonard *et al.* (2010) also consider this alongside other social and cultural factors such as ASD diagnosis being a gateway to additional funding. The increasing numbers of young people receiving a diagnosis of ASD means that issues surrounding their effective transition to adult life will become all the more apparent. The consideration of reasons behind increased diagnosis is pertinent in that it impacts upon the range of individuals diagnosed and raises questions about the impact the diagnosis then has on their lives.

1.2 Genetics, biology or environment?

Much debate and controversy has surrounded the causes of Autism, and what the relative contributions of genetic, biological, chemical or environmental factors might be. Mercer *et al.* (2006) investigated parental beliefs on the causes of autism. They found that the majority of parents in their study believed autism to have some genetic basis. Parents also indicated that they saw diet, vaccinations and pre and perinatal factors as being significant. In comments relating to a genetic basis for autism, parents indicated that this brought about feelings of guilt, blame and transference, where symptoms were subsequently identified in another family member. They also reported an effect on reproductive decisions within both the immediate and extended family. The ongoing Childhood Autism Risks from Genetics and Environment (CHARGE) study aims to investigate biological and chemical factors alongside early environmental experiences (Hertz-Picciotto *et al.,* 2006). This research is based around the idea that individuals may have a genetic predisposition for autism, but that the effect of this may then be strongly influenced by both pre and post natal environment. Advances in our ideas about the relationship between genetic and environmental factors have come from studies with siblings and twins. Arguments for a genetic basis for autism have been made in the light of findings that incidences of both twins having autism were higher amongst identical than non-identical twins (Bailey *et al.,* 1995). Recent research also suggests that the recurrence of ASD amongst siblings may be higher than previously considered (Constantino *et al.,* 2010).

Our understanding of causation is important in that it can influence our concept of the condition. Is it a lifelong illness triggered by exposure to chemicals, or a

learned behaviour that could then have the potential to be unlearned? To what extent do we see genetics to be the key causal factor and how does this affect our interpretation of the potential of a person with ASD to change and develop?

1.3 Adult Outcomes for individuals with an ASD diagnosis

Following the results of national surveys in 2007 and 2009, the National Autistic Society estimates that only 15% of adults with autism are in full time, paid employment (Redman *et al.,* 2009). The implication of the survey being that there are many people with ASD who consider themselves able to work, and who are seeking employment but are unable to secure a job. Seltzer *et al.*(2004) also suggest in their review of research studies into the life course of individuals with autism that about 15% of adults with autism achieve outcomes judged to be more favourable. This is clearly a concerning statistic, and we should consider implications of this for the purpose and focus of education for young people with ASD. This could of course, be viewed from an alternative perspective, to consider what allowed 15% of adults to successfully gain employment. Kanner *et al.* (1972) carried out case studies of adults with autism who were deemed to be socially well adapted and considered factors that might have contributed to this. Through the case studies it was identified that whilst their core 'personality' did not change, as the individuals with autism grew older they 'expended considerable effort to fit themselves...to what they came to perceive as commonly expected expectations' (Kanner *et al.,* 1972, p.31).

The belief systems of parents and families of children with ASD are also clearly important in determining their future. King *et al.* (2006) explored through focus groups the changing perspectives of families with children with a range of disabilities, including ASD. They discuss how some parents reached a point where they gave up trying to 'fix' their child and instead adopted a perspective that was based on the child's particular strengths and needs.   Some research suggests that individuals may 'recover' from aspects of ASD and in adulthood no longer show characteristics that would lead to a diagnosis (Fein *et al.,* 2013; Helt *et al.,* 2008) However, this raises a question of whether this is in fact 'recovery' or whether the initial diagnosis was itself problematic. Seltzer *et al.* (2004) identified from their analysis of a range of research studies into the lives of individuals with ASD, that some improvement in terms of a reduction in the

symptoms of ASD is often noted as people get older, but that this is rarely great enough for the individual to be considered as functioning within the normal range. In some individuals no improvement or even a decline is seen. About 10 - 15% of adults with ASD are identified by studies as becoming 'symptom' free. Seltzer *et al.* highlight the importance of further research into these individuals to see the extent to which individual differences and the use of certain interventions and programmes play a part in their development.

Holroyd and Baron-Cohen (1993) looked specifically at the development of theory of mind within individuals with ASD. They found that there was some development in teenagers and adults with autism up to about the level normally exhibited by a 6 - 7 year old. They pose an open question as to whether this is due to a later development of the processes normally used or the development of alternative cognitive processes. Other studies report that attempts to teach the theory of mind through social skills programmes have had mixed results. Ozonoff and Miller (1995) found that performance in self belief tasks was improved in those having undertaken a programme, but there were no reported improvements based on rating scales of social competence completed by teachers and parents. However, it could be considered more beneficial to focus on the development of adaptive behaviours and coping strategies rather than attempting to change core understandings.

There is a danger that ASD becomes a self fulfilling prophecy. Research has shown that pupils' behaviours can be influenced by their teacher's expectations (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Once a diagnosis of ASD is reached there is likely to be a shift in perceptions and behaviour around the individual concerned. In some cases making adaptations to the environment is necessary. However, there is a distinct possibility that we can over adjust the environment in such a way that can ultimately disable rather than enable the individual. This is a concern echoed by parents in Camarena and Sarigiani (2009), who felt an overly comfortable environment at school would create difficulties in later life, as discussed in the systematic literature review. A focus which also considers some adaptation on the part of the individual, allows for a greater possibility for change and development. However, we should be careful in considering the extent to which an individual should have to adapt to fit in with social norms. Much of the research focuses on deficits and impairment,

which can be seen to reinforce an unhelpful view about the potential of individuals with autism (Happa, 1999). As a spectrum disorder, the range of abilities of individuals with ASD is wide and varied, and we might also consider how helpful it is to consider them as a homogenous group with similar needs (Bumiller, 2005; Brook and Bowler, 1992). An alternative understanding of autism is that it is just a different thinking style. There is evidence about the way in which people with autism look at cognitive tasks differently, and see the component parts rather than the whole picture (Shah and Frith, 2006 ; Happa, 1999). In his writings on living with Aspergers, Marc Segar explains that autistic people have to understand scientifically what non-autistic people already understand instinctively (Segar, 1997). If we consider autism not just to be a social dysfunction, but to represent an alternative cognitive approach, then this provides a more empowering framework for individuals concerned. It also has potential implications in relation to developing successful coping strategies for individuals with ASD.

1.4 The role of transition in promoting positive outcomes and change

With an increasing number of individuals being diagnosed with ASD, the need for a societal shift in our understanding of what it means to have ASD may become all the more apparent. It is important to find the balance between the needs for individual development and the need for change in the society around them. Within this the role of the education system and the ultimate transition from this into further education and the adult world is crucial. Mesibov and Shea (1996) argue against the full inclusion of pupils with ASD in mainstream classrooms. They assert that different teaching approaches are needed for pupils with ASD and that to be within a mainstream class they might require high levels of adult support which could increase their dependence and limit the educational options available to them. They suggest that skills for coping with social situations are not necessarily best learnt in situ, but can instead by learnt through specialised methods of instruction in an alternative setting. Whilst I can see the arguments for selecting an appropriate environment to foster independence, it would seem to me that a focus on segregated education perpetuates a segregated society and is likely to contribute to more limited outcomes for individuals with ASD.

1.5 The importance of technology

Continuing developments in methods of communication through technology can be seen as a potential avenue to breaking down barriers for individuals with ASD. Face to face communication is no longer always the expected norm. Online communities, forums and text based communication present new opportunities for breaking down barriers. The electronic age has also been important in allowing the wide scale development of groups to support the self advocacy and self determination of individuals (Ward and Meyer, 1999). The use of online questionnaires in the present study was intended to allow a more comfortable response mechanism for students with ASD. The use of computers as a research tool has been noted to have a relaxing influence on children with ASD (Barrow and Hannah, 2012). Bellini and Akullian (2007) carried out a meta analysis of studies into the use of video self modelling with children with ASD. They found evidence to support the effectiveness of video modelling for learning new behaviours or increasing desired behaviours for both children and adolescents. There was also some indication that this could be generalised to other settings. This could suggest a use for video modelling as an aid to the development of new skills in relation to transition to new environments.

2.0 Method

A questionnaire was developed to address the research question; "To what extent does the post-16 transition process both provide opportunities for young people with ASD to learn about change and facilitate changes in the system around them?" This was designed to be completed by Year 12 pupils with a diagnosis of ASD, who had recently experienced transition from Year 11.

2.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study of the questionnaire was carried out, in order to check the accessibility of the questions and the time taken to complete. Two additional questions were added to the questionnaire asking how long it had taken respondents to complete the questionnaire and if there were any questions they found difficult. Full details of the pilot questionnaire are included in Appendix B.

The pilot questionnaire was completed by volunteers from a Year 12 cohort .These were not students who had been identified as having ASD, as this would have excluded potential participants from the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to ascertain time taken to complete the questionnaire and general suitability of the questions. I found that firstly the questionnaires were completed far more quickly than anticipated. Therefore, I reduced the suggested time on the participant sheets accompanying the questionnaires. I also included additional questions on involvement in transition meetings, which I had initially excluded due to time constraints. I was aware that student responses referred very much to their current situation. I changed the wording of some of the questions to encourage answers that might also relate to life outside and beyond school.   Initially, the skills referred to in question 6 "how useful do you think the following skills are for people moving from Year 11 to Year 12?" were based on those found in Edexcel Key skills curriculum (Edexcel, 2012). Following the pilot study, additional skills that had been identified by participants were also added to the skills listed.

2.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to have a mixture of closed and open questions. The closed questions involved identifying the importance of a factor on a scale. These questions were used alongside the open questions in order to make the questionnaire more accessible to participants with ASD. Research has linked the use of closed and scaling questions in helping individuals with ASD to communicate their ideas more effectively (Boucher and Lewis, 1989; Buron and Curtis, 2003). As such, the use of closed questions related to the accessibility of the questionnaire rather than an attempt to generalise.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

2.3 Overview of procedure

Recruitment of participants was via their current educational setting, either school or college. In total, 143 schools/ colleges were contacted via e-mail to ascertain their interest in participating in the research. These were a combination of mainstream 6th form colleges and specialist schools and colleges. Initially institutions listed on the website of the National Autistic Society

were contacted, along with institutions within the local area that I had knowledge of. After initially low response rates a list of main stream sixth form colleges was used for further contacts . The institutions were geographically located across England.

Interested schools were then contacted with further details for accessing the individual questionnaires, along with participant sheets for students. A copy of the participant sheet can be found in Appendix C. Data was collected automatically using the online form system provided by Newcastle University, which allowed data to be collected safely and securely.

In total, completed questionnaire responses were received from 19 students across 5 institutions. These were a combination of specialist colleges and mainstream sixth form colleges.   The data from these questionnaire responses is included in Appendix D. Following collection, the qualitative data was analysed using inductive thematic analysis, following the procedure as suggested by (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Joffe and Yardley, 2003).

2.4 Ethical Considerations

The existing power relations between staff and students within a school or college environment, presented potential ethical difficulties in terms of conducting this research. The recruitment of respondents at a distance via their schools meant that there was no direct contact between them and myself. Whilst this was helpful in terms of preserving anonymity, it also meant that there was no opportunity for face to face communication about the nature of the research. This was potentially problematic. I was reliant on schools and colleges to respect the complete anonymity of students in accessing the questionnaire and to present the questionnaire as a voluntary activity. As a counter to this, the participant sheet and questionnaire itself had information about anonymity, data collection and the voluntary nature of the questionnaire. There were no compulsory questions and through the written information provided students were instructed that they were able to miss out any questions or finish the questionnaire at any point. The use of an online questionnaire meant that there was no requirement for schools or colleges to handle data. The issue of gaining parental consent was considered, and it was decided that

this was not necessary for the completion of an anonymous questionnaire by pupils in this age group. An insistence of parental consent also seemed contrary to ideas around promoting the self efficacy and self determination of the pupils.

3.0 Findings

The findings from the questionnaire are presented in terms of themes arising from inductive analysis of qualitative responses, alongside additional data from closed questions.

3.1 Emergent Themes

Through the inductive analysis of the questionnaire responses seven themes were identified in relation to the research question. These fell into three super ordinate themes of 'help', 'social communication' and 'environment. These are detailed in Table 2, along with related codes and example quotes.

Super ordinate Theme	Theme	Codes	Quotations
	Help with transition can be in different forms; having others doing things for you, having others support you or using your own skills to help yourself.	• a lot of help • talking for me • working together • choice	"My parents often did most of the talking for me as at the time I found it difficult to communicate with people." "When I talked to my parents about this, we all worked together on choosing the most suitable course for me, and we agreed to talk with the staff members before I made this choice." "… I was able to communicate with these people through a social networking website. I was able to ask them the differences they experienced when they first started college"
Help	Independent people cope alone and don't rely on help from others.	• able to cope alone • not relying on others • solve problems on your own • doing on your own • without help	- "Being independent with their own learning and be responsible for your own work." "that they're able to do things on their own" "Being able to look after yourself and solve problems on your own" "It means that they don't rely on anybody else to help them and they're well capable of doing things for themselves." "Personally, I would say someone who can motivate and organise themselves without the assistance of others."
	Social rules are different and this is sometimes helpful and sometimes difficult.	• social life • maturity • making friends • relationship with teachers	"would most people talk to me like a nursery child like they did in high school?" "I found the social life at college much better. The students are more mature and much easier to talk to." "after becoming 'friends' with some of my teachers in high school, I did not realise that the relationship I would have with my teachers is strictly professional, and any attempts to be friendly were not allowed." "Less annoying people throwing stuff at you, calling you names and saying insults at you."
Social Communication	Talking is valued, but is more about receiving information than sharing ideas.	• Talking • relating to stories • telling me • advice • information	"I visited my Learning Mentor …before I started College and she would tell me what she would do with me while I was a student at the College." "During the first part of Year 11, ex-students from my school who were at College at that time would come in to talk about their experiences at College and what happens there." "They gave me advice and information on future courses" "Information, my teachers point of view of my interests and talents and what they think I

Super ordinate Theme	Theme	Codes	Quotations
Social Communication	Social skills relate to work situations rather than making friendships; working in teams and groups is an area of difficulty and a desirable skill to develop.	• Social skills • team tasks • working individually • working with others	would enjoy more" "Teachers also told me about College work in the lessons of English Language and English Literature (mostly my English teacher)." "changes came as a shock to me...Social interaction and not being allowed to work individually when team tasks were planned" "Learning to work in a team, and not panicking if you find out you have to work in a team seconds before it happens. Learning how to feel confident in socialising with others, for a partner based project for example." "For me, I prefer to do coursework independently, as I am not good at working with teams (especially people I don't know)."
	Visiting and understanding the new environment to know what college life is like is very important	• Visiting • seeing how things work taster day • knowing where to go • knowing what I need to have • understanding expectations • what happens at college	"they showed me what happens at the college and how to get around" "... comforted me to know that I have had knowledge of actual college students experience in starting and getting used to the working environment" "I believe a college introduction program should be made for all students. This could be a three day program that allows students to understand the working environment and the expectations from their teachers." ""The introductory day gave me a taste for college life and prepared me for what to expect."
Environment	The atmosphere and comfort of the environment are important, increased freedom and choice are positive but unfamiliarity is difficult.	• more freedom • don't have to be in • treated like an adult • treated fairly • responsibility • relaxed atmosphere • comfortable environment, • understand the environment • more time • knowing staff • staying in familiar environment	"Also, one disadvantage of, not just this college but any college, is the fact that most students come to college for a two year period, and to me, this does not give you enough time to develop and understand the environment you are learning in and the approach towards life in general taught here" "The atmosphere at college is much better you have more freedom to do things in your free time."

Table 3 : Emergent Themes from Thematic Analysis

3.2 Further Questionnaire Responses

Question 4, asked respondents who had helped them within the transition process. They were able to select as many as applied to them. The results show that within this group teachers and parents were those most often identified as sources of help. Within the 'Someone Else' Category students identified mentors and connexions advisors as other sources of help.

Q.4 Are there any particular people who helped you to prepare for year 12?	
Teacher	11
Parent	17
School Friend	4
Friend outside school	4
Brother or Sister	2
Another Family Member	3
Someone Else	6

Table 4 : Summary of responses to Question 4

Question 6 asked students to rate how useful they felt each of a series of skills were for pupils moving from year 11 to year 12. Figure 1, on the following page, shows the responses received for each skill.

Figure 1 : Graph to show responses to Question 6

Researching and motivating yourself were the skills given the most 'very useful' ratings. Working in a team and discussing ideas with others were given the least 'very useful' ratings. Overall respondents gave few ratings in the 'doesn't matter' or 'not that useful' categories, and there were no 'not at all useful' ratings given. Question 8 then asked students to identify skills that they would like to develop to help them in the future, students identified organisational, social and memory skills as well as practical skills related to a particular job.

Questions 9 and 10 asked students about who took the lead in making decisions concerning their transition and how happy they were with their involvement. 7 students indicated that they took the lead, 1 indicated that it was their parents, 7 indicated that it was them with their parents and 4 indicated that it was a combination of them and their teachers. 16 students responded that they were happy with their level of involvement and wouldn't change it. 3 students said that they would have like to have been more involved. These included 1 student who identified that their parents took the lead, and two who identified a combination of themselves and their parents.

Questions 15 to 17 looked at independence and asked respondents how independent they considered themselves to be now and how independent they thought they might be in 5 years time, as well as how important they felt it was that they were independent. The majority of students indicated an increase in independence between now and 5 years time. 2 students indicated that they felt their level of independence would be the same in 5 years time. The importance of independence was rated as follows:

Q.17. How important is to you that you are independent in the future?	
Very important	11
Important	3
Quite important	3
Slightly important	1
Not at all important	1

Table 5 : Summary of responses to Question 17

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Environment

The importance, for students, of being comfortable in a new environment and knowing what to expect and what will be expected of you was highlighted within the themes relating to environment. Induction programmes, taster days and opportunities to get a better understanding of what to expect were identified as key aspects of the transition process that had been helpful to students. Studies of younger pupils with ASD transferring from primary to secondary school have also highlighted the perceived importance of preparation and visits to the new school (Hannah and Topping, 2013; Jindal-Snape *et al.,* 2006).

Within the theme 'concerns for the future' from the systematic literature review concerns were identified by a number of studies about students having the necessary skills for coping with change and worries in the future. The responses in the current study focused on pupils' particular experiences of moving from Year 11 to year 12. They didn't express how or whether this experience would help them to cope with similar situations in the future. In relation to skills that they would like to develop to help them in the future, one student identified 'learning how to make decisions and choose the best ones that will support me the most.'

4.2 Social communication

The changes in social rules and expectations when transitioning from one institution to another was referred to by many students. For some, there were welcome changes in their relationships with other students, noting that they found peers in college more mature and easier to talk to. This related to comments about feeling comfortable and more relaxed in the new environment. Others expressed difficulty in adapting to different social rules, particularly in terms of their relationship with staff. They described having become 'friends' with staff in school and finding relating to unfamiliar staff in a new environment difficult, feeling that the relationship was meant to be more 'professional'. Their attempts to transfer their understanding of teacher pupil relationship directly from one environment to another proved unsuccessful. This seems to illustrate

a difficulty with understanding the complexities of relationships between professionals and the individuals they work with. A dichotomy is then created between professional and friendly, with the same rules being applied to all teachers. There appears to be little understanding of relationships developing over time. The identification of teachers as 'friends' is probably not so helpful when it comes to constructing and negotiating relationships with new teachers. In terms of skill development and preparation for life beyond education, the distinction between professional and personal relationships and degrees within these would seem to be a helpful concept to master.

The desire to develop social skills was generally expressed by students in terms of being able to work in a group or team rather than in terms of 'making friends'. Students expressed difficulty in being unprepared and not having prior warning when they needed to work with others. However being able to deal with situations where they were required to work in a team was also a skill that they recognised as important to develop. We should perhaps consider the extent to which this skill is required outside of an educational context. Students may be focusing on this skill as it is a requirement of their current setting. However, within many job situations, teams may be well established and changes only take place with considerable warning. The emphasis on last minute adjustment to working in an unfamiliar team may be unrealistic in relation to life outside education. The need to adapt to working in teams could be seen as an unnecessary cause of anxiety and, as such, a barrier to learning. The opportunity to develop the skills for team working within consistent groups and partnerships, within which the individual feels more comfortable, could be a more beneficial preparation for life outside education.

Responses where students referred to 'talking' were interesting, in that whilst talking was mentioned as a useful method of help by several students, this related largely to the imparting of information. Talking did not seem to relate to discussing or developing ideas. The focus seemed to be on being told what to do or what to expect rather than talking through problems and possibilities. One student did discuss the use of technology during transition, and explained how a social networking site had been a useful way to keep in contact with students who had previously experienced transition to ask them questions about their experience. The importance of peers as mentors and supports through

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transition was also identified by studies in the systematic literature review (Held *et al.*, 2004; Camerena and Sarigiani, 2009). It is interesting to consider whether students would engage in a wider range of 'talking' activities if these were to involve the use of social networking or other technologies rather than being reliant on face to face interaction.

4.3 Help

One of the most striking findings from the thematic analysis was the way in which students related independence to being alone and not relying on help from others. I would consider that this interpretation could be in part due to an educational construction of independence in reference to 'working independently' and without help. One student demonstrated a more complex understanding of the term independence, asserting that you can be more or less independent in different circumstances. However, their response also demonstrates the strong relationship within education between independence and working alone. It is interesting to consider whether this understanding of independence is helpful in preparation for adult life, particularly if viewed in a more set and restrictive way. In contrast to this, others have identified social support as being crucial to the building of skills to support independence (Hong *et al.,* 2012). The development of alternative understandings of independence could therefore be considered. These could explore issues around how and when to access help and accept that independence may be achieved whilst still accepting and seeking help when required.

Hammarstraam and Torres (2010) explored concepts of independence within older people accessing home care help. They suggested interpretations of dependence and independence which recognised a difference in being, feeling and acting independently. A similar remodelling and breaking down of aspects of independence could perhaps be helpful for young people with ASD. The all or nothing concept of independence, as interpreted by respondents in the current study, could be limiting in that if someone can't achieve what they perceive to be full independence, then they may not see themselves as having any independence. This could then relate to reduced self efficacy, and a more limited capacity for self determination. In contrast, promoting a willingness and ability to access appropriate support could build self efficacy and create

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opportunities for self determination. The way in which independence, dependence and support are understood as concepts, and in relation to each other is an important point to consider. The notion of independence within an adult context often seems to be focused on independent living, and the development of skills to support this. This is supported by findings from the systematic literature review, where Browning et al. (2009) describe students' perceptions of either solving problems themselves or having them solved by others rather than seeking guidance from others.   This can be considered to have political connotations in terms of the suggestion that being independent is about not requiring additional resources from others or the state. I would argue, however, that independence is also about developing the ability to advocate for yourself and assert your own ideas, opinions and needs. An individual may then make use of available support in order to help them best achieve this. Being able to accept help and seek support whilst still viewing yourself as independent is important for self development and the promotion of self efficacy. Studies have suggested that schemes for supported employment can be helpful for individuals with ASD who may experience success at school, college and university but then struggle to successfully gain employment. In a longitudinal study by Howlin et al. (2005), higher numbers of individuals with support gained and maintained employment and that they reported a greater sense of self-achievement in comparison to a control group (Mawhood and Howlin, 1999; Howlin *et al.,* 2005). Studies have also indicated that for individuals with ASD, being in supported employment schemes has positive effects on both quality of life (Garcia-Villamisar *et al.,* 2002) and cognitive improvement in terms of increased executive function in comparison to a group of unemployed individuals with ASD (Garcia-Villamisar and Hughes, 2007).

Hong et al. discuss the possibility of supported independent living via a social network which acts as a 'socialMirror' through which individuals with ASD can seek advice from a network of professionals, family and friends. From work with a focus group, they found that the idea of a distributed network of support, and increased flexibility in how individuals might deal with new situations were seen as particularly positive aspects. Issues were discussed in relation to parental control of the social network and the acceptance of help by individuals. There were also concerns about how to deal with conflicting advice and about safety

and privacy online (Hong *et al.,* 2012). Within this the individual's own understanding of independence seems of central importance. If they view accepting help as counter to being independent then this is likely to limit their use of facilities such as 'socialMirror'. The control of such support systems seems to also be an important aspect. If others have overall control then this will surely limit the individual's self efficacy and change the context of the system from a tool to help them, to a tool to monitor them. This would further reinforce the notion that help systems are not compatible with independence. This is reflected by findings within the theme of 'supports for learning' in the systematic literature review, where technology was found to be an important component within the studies (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009 ; Held et al., 2004). A preference for supports that exist in the background to be only accessed when required was also highlighted (Camarena and Sarigiani, 2009). Technological tools such as the 'socialMirror' would seem to facilitate this.

4.4 The development of skills through the transition process

I would argue that whilst there are many similarities between issues faced by pupils at transition from primary to secondary school, there is a marked difference in focus for Post 16 transition. Whereas at transition from primary to secondary the focus may be on specific preparation for continued success and survival in the particular school environment, the focus at post-16 transition should naturally become more closely linked to an individual's eventual life path and the development of coping skills for operating within wider society. The transition process itself can be viewed as an opportunity to develop skills and strategies in dealing with new situations and managing change. There could be a change of focus within transition to look more specifically at skill development, making this an explicit and integral part of the process. For example, particular skills for team working, such as negotiating and listening could be identified, and opportunities given for practice with familiar adults and peers. Other skills such as researching, planning and organising could also be utilized and developed as part of the transition process itself. Different support systems using information technology and other resources could be trialled. Social Networking, for example, has been mentioned as a potential source of support in this and other studies, and its use within transition could be developed. Video modelling could be used within this or as a separate resource. If skills and

strategies are made explicit in this way, then students will gain a better understanding of the personal skills they can draw on and the resources that can support them in the future. Self efficacy can be also developed through students having a clear understanding of the skills that they have and how they can be used to support them in new situations. The possibility of students then acting as mentors for younger students, through social networking or otherwise, could also be a method of consolidating skills and boosting efficacy.

Whilst the development of skills through transition has remained a focus of this study, an additional focus has emerged from the analysis of questionnaire responses. Notions of independence and the relation of this to help and support have been of particular interest. Educational Psychologists could have a role in supporting this by helping schools to devise transition pathways that effectively maximise the potential for skill identification and development. If further research was to support the notion that independence could be conceptualised more helpfully for students with ASD then they could also be involved with the creation and implementation of programmes to promote this.

4.5 Research Limitations

This research is from a small number of students attending particular educational institutions, and so their experiences of transition cannot necessarily be generalised to other pupils with ASD, whose experiences may be very different. Their responses do, however, provide insight into some students' perspectives and provide interesting points for further research. In addition, the time of year that questionnaires were completed excluded students who didn't make it through first term, and so the questionnaire was in effect only completed by those for who the transition was relatively successful.   In order not to exclude potential participants from the main study, the pilot questionnaire was carried out with pupils from the general Year 12 population, rather than specifically those with ASD. It is recognised that a pilot study including data from the specific target group would have been preferable in terms of fully testing and refining the questionnaire.

4.6 Implications for Practice

The systemic role and background knowledge of Educational Psychologists provides them with a unique role in advising and supporting the transition process. This may allow them to advise on a wider range of options and opportunities, based on their experiences relating to other young people and settings. Recent changes in Post-16 education, mean that there is a statutory requirement to provide education and training for pupils with an identified learning difficulty up to the age of 24. This provides an extended opportunity for the development of skills in relation to self efficacy and self determination, and the implementation of tailored programs to achieve this. The 8 themes identified in the literature review, can be considered in conjunction with the 3 themes from this study in order to create a framework for evaluating existing practice in relation to transition and developing improved systems and supports. Educational Psychologists would then be able to use this as a tool to aid consultation with schools and facilitate their thinking in this area. This can be considered in relation to the development of individual pupils as well as systemically. A possible framework for considering the themes and their relationship to each other is shown in Figure 2.
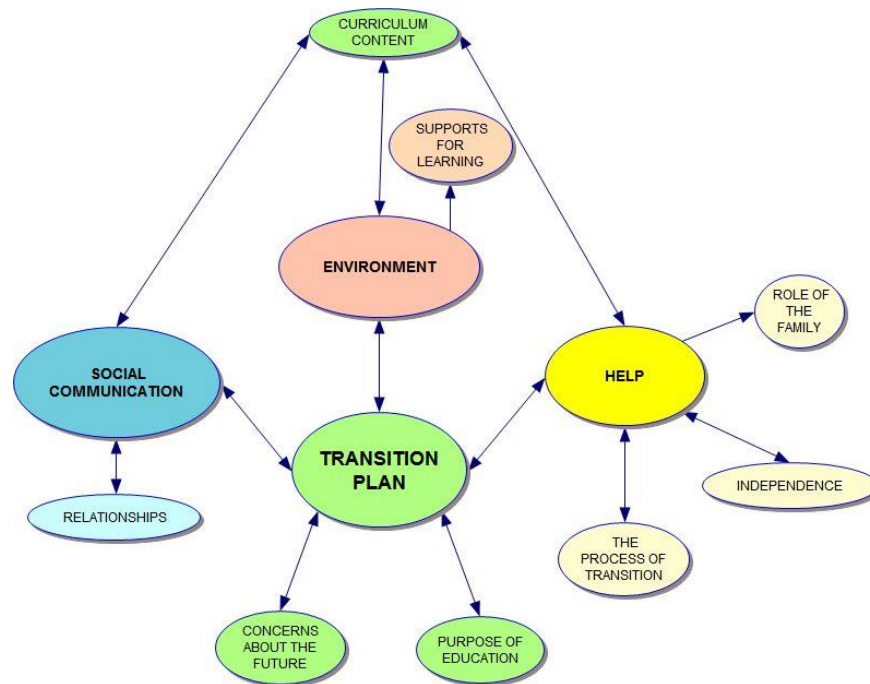
Figure 2 : Framework of themes for transition

4.6 Considerations for the future

It would be interesting to further explore how students might approach future situations of transition and change, where they might not have as extensive support networks around them. Have they been able to develop skills as part of the transition process to help them identify and request appropriate preparation to meet their own needs in future transitions? In order to further explore both this and concepts of independence, further research with young people using computer assisted interviewing would be valuable. This would allow for more in depth exploration of pupils' ideas through a semi structured interview, whilst still allowing the communication to be facilitated through technology, with a shared focus and limited eye contact (Barrow and Hannah, 2012). Social networking, as identified by participants in this research, and through previous research studies could also be an interesting tool to consider in facilitating group discussions for research in this area. Further research into how parent and teacher views change as a result of the process would also be helpful in considering the ways in which the system around the young person changes.

5.0 Conclusion

Two main areas of interest arose from this study. Firstly, the relationship between concepts of help and independence and how helpful these are for young people with ASD. Secondly, the development of skills and strategies for managing new environments and situations. It is interesting to consider the role which technology might have in supporting both transition and independence, particularly in relation to social networking. To return to the initial metaphors of rollercoaster and vehicle, I would consider that transition itself can be considered to ideally have elements of rollercoaster and vehicle. The rollercoaster, comprising aspects of transition which test the skills and strategies of the individual and allow them to learn from the experience. The vehicle representing aspects where the individual is beginning to steer their own path and navigate to their destination. Ultimately, the goal being to develop, skills, strategies and support networks to enable individuals with ASD to navigate their own path with an independent and efficacious identity.

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Appendix A - Pilot Questionnaire

Moving from Y11 to Y12 Pilot Questionnaire

This is a pilot study to help develop a questionnaire, which will then be used to collect data from young people about their experiences of transition from year 11 to year 12.

All fields marked * are mandatory.

1. What do you think is different about being in Year 12, compared to being in Year 11?
Please complete your response in the box below.

2. What helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
Please type in the box below any things that you found helped you to prepare for starting year 12.

3. What other things would have helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
Please type in the box below anything else that you think might have helped you prepare for starting year 12. If there is nothing else then please type 'none'.

4. Are there any particular people who helped you to prepare for year 12?
Please tick any people that helped you.

☐ A teacher

☐ A parent

☐ A school friend

A friend outside school

☐ A brother or sister

☐ Another Family Member

☐ Someone else

If you answered 'someone else' to Q.4 then please type who they were here.

[   ]

5. If you answered in Q.4 that people helped you then please type below any details of how they helped you

[   ]

6. How useful do you think that the following skills are for people moving from Year 11 to Year 12?

Use the drop down boxes to select whether each option is very useful, quite useful, doesn't matter, not that useful or not at all useful

Reading

[▼]

Writing

[▼]

Discussing ideas with others

[▼]

Setting goals

[▼]

Working in a team

[▼]

Listening to others

[▼]

Making plans

[▼]

Solving problems

[▼]

Organising tasks

[dropdown ▾]

Using a computer

[dropdown ▾]

Researching

[dropdown ▾]

Being punctual

[dropdown ▾]

Please add any other skills that you think are important in the boxes below.

[text field]

[text field]

[text field]

7. What skills do you think you have that have most helped you in moving from year 11 into year 12?

[text area]

8. What other skills would you like to develop to help you in the future?

Please list any skills that you would like to develop or get better at in the box below.

[text area]

9. Who made decisions about what you were going to do after you finished year 11?

Please select from the options below

○ Me

○ My parents

○ My teachers

○ My teachers and my parents

○ Me and my parents

○

Me and my teachers

○ Me, my parents and my teachers

○ No one

○ Someone else

If you answered 'someone else' to Q.9 then please type who it was in the box below.

10. How did you feel about the part you had in making decisions about what you were going to do when you finished Year 11?

○ I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it

○ I would have liked to be more involved

○ I would have liked to be less involved

11. Is there anything that you would have liked to be different about moving from year 11 to year 12?

Please type below anything that you would have liked to be different about the process of moving into year 12.

Independence

The last few questions ask about your ideas on the topic of independence.

12. What do you think it means if somebody is described as being 'independent'?

How independent do you consider yourself to be at the moment?

Please use the box below to select how independent you are on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is not at all independent, 10 is very independent)

How independent do you think you might be in 5 years time?

Please use the box below to select how independent you are on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is not at all independent, 10 is very independent)

[▾]

How important is to you that you are independent in the future?

[▾]

questionnaire Feedback

Approximately how long did it take you to complete this questionnaire?

[   ]

Please give feedback below on any questions that you found confusing or difficult to answer.

[   ]

Data Protection Statement: The data is password protected and will only be accessed by the researcher. Questionnaire responses are anonymous and pilot responses will only be used to further develop the research questionnaire. Following this the data will be destroyed.

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Appendix B - Student Questionnaire

Moving from Year 11 to Year 12

This is a short questionnaire that should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your own experience of moving from year 11 to year 12. There are no right or wrong answers and you can miss out any questions that you don't want to answer.

Your views along with those collected from other young people, parents and school staff who have taken part will be looked at to find out more about what happens when pupils move from year 11 to year 12.

If you have any further questions following your participation in this study, or would be interested in receiving a copy of the research findings, then please contact me at l.barrow@ncl.ac.uk

All fields marked * are mandatory.

Questionnaire ID *
Please enter the questionnaire ID number that you have been given.

In Year 11 did you go to the same school as you do now or a different school?
Please indicate whether you were at the same school in Year 11 or attended a different school.

   I was at the same school in Year 11

   I went to a different school

1. What do you think is different about being in Year 12 compared to being in Year 11?
Please complete your response in the box below.

2. What helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
Please type in the box below any things that you found helped you to prepare for starting year 12.

3. What other things would have helped you to prepare for being in year 12?

Please type in the box below anything else that you think might have helped you prepare for starting year 12. If there is nothing else then please type 'none'.

4. Are there any particular people who helped you to prepare for year 12?

Please tick any people that helped you.

A teacher

A parent

A school friend

A friend outside school

A brother or sister

Another Family Member

Someone else

If you answered 'someone else' to Q.4 then please type who they were here.

5. If you answered in Q.4 that people helped you then please type below any details of how they helped you

6. How useful do you think that the following skills are for people moving from Year 11 to Year 12?

Use the drop down boxes to select whether each option is very useful, quite useful, doesn't matter, not that useful or not at all useful

Reading

Writing

Number skills

Discussing ideas with others

Motivating yourself

Setting goals

Working in a team

Listening to others

Sharing your ideas

Making choices and decisions

Solving problems

Organising tasks

Using a computer

Researching

Keeping yourself safe

Please add any other skill that you think are important here.

7. What skills do you think you have that have most helped you in moving from year 11 into year 12?

8. What other skills would you like to develop to help you in the future, when you have left school?

Please list any skills that you would like to develop or get better at in the box below.

9. Who made decisions about what you were going to do after you finished year 11?

Please select from the options below

Me

My parents

My teachers

My teachers and my parents

Me and my parents

Me and my teachers

Me, my parents and my teachers

No one

Someone else

If you answered 'someone else' to Q.9 then please type who it was in the box below.

10. How did you feel about the part you had in making decisions about what you were going to do when you finished Year 11?

I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it

I would have liked to be more involved

I would have liked to be less involved

11. What things took place to help make decisions about what you were going to do after year 11? (e.g meetings, reviews, information evenings)

Please list any things that you can remember happening.

12. When did planning first start for your move to Year 12?

Just before the end of year 11

In the middle of year 11

At the start of year 11

In year 10

In year 9

13. Is there anything that you would have liked to be different about moving from year 11 to year 12?

Please type below anything that you would have liked to be different about the process of moving into year 12.

Independence

The last few questions ask about your ideas on the topic of independence.

14. What do you think it means if somebody is described as being 'independent'?

15. How independent do you consider yourself to be at the moment?

Please use the box below to select how independent you are on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is not at all independent, 10 is very independent)

16. How independent do you think you might be in 5 years time?

Please use the box below to select how independent you are on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is not at all independent, 10 is very independent)

17. How important is to you that you are independent in the future?

Data Protection Statement: The information collected by this questionnaire is password protected and will only be accessed by the researcher (Miss L.C. Barrow).
Questionnaire responses are anonymous and will be looked at for general themes on the experience of moving from year 11 to year 12.
The data will be kept until Aug 2013, when the research will be completed.

Submit

Questions about the content of this form should be directed to its owner.
Concerns and technical questions about this form should be directed to webmaster@ncl.ac.uk
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Appendix C - Participant Sheet

School of Education,
Communication and
Language Sciences

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NE1 7RU
United Kingdom

"To what extent does the post-16 transition process both provide opportunities for young people with ASD to learn about change and facilitate changes in the system around them?: An investigation of the perceptions of young people with ASD, their parents and their teachers."

Dear Student,

This research is about the experiences of young people during the process of moving from year 11 to year 12.

I am asking people to complete an online questionnaire about their experiences of moving from Year 11 to Year 12.

I hope that this will help to better understand what can help to make moving from Year 11 to Year 12 easier.

Things you need to know about the research:

- The questionnaire should take you no longer than 10 minutes to complete

- You can stop the questionnaire at any time and leave any questions that you are not happy to answer.

- The research is anonymous. This means that you, your school or anyone you talk about will not be identified by name in the research.

    To access the questionnaire you need to visit the following web page:

http://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=3652

The password for the questionnaire is **lbstudnetq**.

The questionniare ID is :

If you have any further questions, or would like to discuss anything else about this research, then please contact me at

l.barrow@ncl.ac.uk

Many Thanks,

Lucy Barrow.
Trainee Educational Psychologist
Newcastle University

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The University of Newcastle upon Tyne trading as Newcastle University

THE QUEEN'S
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2009

Appendix D - Questionnaire Data

No.	In Year 11 did you go to the same school as you do now or a different school?	1. What do you think is different about being in Year 12 compared to being in Year 11?	2. What helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
1	I was at the same school in Year 11	You get more freedom in Year 12, as you get "study breaks" where you don't have to go to lesson and you don't even have to stay at College if you don't want to (and on some days you don't even have to be in College), but you are expected to complete unfinished classwork or complete homework assignments. In Year 11, you don't have the opportunity of getting time during the school day to catch up on unfinished assignments and failure to complete the homework gives you an after-school detention.	I attended a few "taster days" during and after my exam times in Year 11 in order to get some knowledge of what college life is like and what the differences are from secondary school. During the first part of Year 11, ex-students from my school who were at College at that time would come in to talk about their experiences at College and what happens there.
2	I went to a different school	Treated more fairly and like and adult.	NOTHING
3	I went to a different school	you get treated more like an adult at college	introduction day
4	I went to a different school	I feel more independent and confident.	Introductory Day Letters
5	I went to a different school	I get treated more like an adult and have responsibilities towards my education and also feel more motivated.	Knowing from other people at the college and school has prepared me is well.
6	I went to a different school	I liked my last school but I prefer college because they treat you as an individual and the lessons are more flexible and the teaching is better. I found the social life at college much better. The students are more meture and much easier to talk to. The atmosphear at college is much better you have more freedom to do things in your free time. Acess to the XXXX leisure centre is good and it's free.	I had a progress review at my last college where I made my descision to go to XXXX college.
7	I went to a different school	more course choicermore freedommdifferent kind of relationship with the teachers like being able to call them by there first names	taster day at collegemopen eveningmprogression advice at school

No.	In Year 11 did you go to the same school as you do now or a different school?	1. What do you think is different about being in Year 12 compared to being in Year 11?	2. What helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
8	I went to a different school	It is more subject based- the difficulty level of work is harder. Also, the transition has meant that you have to grow up a lot faster and deal with a lot more issues eg stress.	The introductory day gave me a taste for college life and prepared me for what to expect. We had two induction days which allowed me to get used to the college timetable.
9	I went to a different school	As a youth moving from Primary School to High School, I feared the outcome of change. I was worried about the differences I would have to accept, but within less than a year I became used to the environment and felt more comfortable. Through high school, the five year period gave me an opportunity to become used to my classrooms, understand my teachers personalities and mature in my own personality. The final year of high school was a tough worry for me as an individual - I had grown to understand and accept the environment and I never feared returning to high school after the summer break. In the final year, I knew that I would have to deal with pressuring change and accept the truth of college being alot harder. Through the jump from high school to college, my beliefs of being prepared were washed away and my worst enemy, Change, was sat next to me. After a few of my lessons I understood that the time given to complete more challenging work was 1/3 of the time given at high school (given three years to complete one subject at GCSE / BTec or equivalent, whereas we are given one year to complete an A-Level that is 2 times harder than the GCSE work). I had to accept responsibility and professionalism, and the order in which this college followed. What I also found hard was the change of teachers - after becoming 'friends' with some of my teachers in high school, I did not realise that the relationship I would have with my teachers is strictly professional, and any attempts to be friendly were not allowed.	To brief things up, multiple changes came as a shock to me - this included: - A new system where we have to complete works using a deadline - New rooms, having to sit next to people I did not know - Peoples thoughts about me (would most people talk to me like a nursery child like they did in high school? - The relationships with teachers - Social Interaction and not being allowed to work individually when team tasks were planned - The quantity of work to complete in a short-time period (1 year) Also, one disadvantage of, not just this college but any college, is the fact that most students come to college for a two year period, and to me, this does not give you enough time to develop and understand the environment you are learning in and the approach towards life in general taught here (as we have to concentrate on work and we don't get enough time to feel comfortable). In High School, I knew that year 12 was going to be a major jump for not just me, but everyone in high school. I honestly feared the jump but I managed to become more comfortable thanks to a selection of reasons: - Family, who informed me that college was going to be a major challenge - one-to-one talks with a subject teacher at my high school, where I informed her of my worries and asked her what it is like in college - Relating to some of the school teaching assistants stories for when they went from high school to college - Talking to friends who were in college - Whilst in year 10, I made a lot of friends that were in Year 11 in the school support rooms. As they had already had their first year in college, I communicated with them through a social networking website asking them what it is like. - Meeting a Learning Support teacher from the college in high school, and talking with her about my concerns for the future jump.

No.	In Year 11 did you go to the same school as you do now or a different school?	1. What do you think is different about being in Year 12 compared to being in Year 11?	2. What helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
10	I went to a different school	i got choose the subjects what in wanted to do	college open days
11	I went to a different school		1 being at school
12	I went to a different school	there is more freedom and a more relaxed atmosphere	knowing where i have got to go and what i need to have
13	I went to a different school	your given more independence and choice alot more free time	college open days

No.	In Year 11 did you go to the same school as you do now or a different school?	1. What do you think is different about being in Year 12 compared to being in Year 11?	2. What helped you to prepare for being in year 12?
14	I went to a different school	being treated more like an adult. you can take the courses more to your liking rather than loads of different ones.	visiting the college and seeing how things worked here.
15	I went to a different school	I get to choose which courses that I will be studying. I only need to come in when my classes are on.	Connexions. My teachers at school. My parents
16	I went to a different school	More comfortable enviroment.	My TA in school helped me.
17	I went to a different school	Less annoying people throwing stuff at you, calling you names and saying insults at you.	I was helped to prepare by visiting the some colleges.
18	I went to a different school	not mutch diffarence	induction day
19	I went to a different school	Considering that I now study at A Level, the workload has been much more than at GCSE which was initially something I struggled to cope with but as the year has progressed I have developed my time management skills in this area.	Technically I'm a Year 13 student but I chose to spend a year in my school sixth form last year gaining a few more qualificatioins before i started my A Levels. During that time, I had lots of support put in place in regards to transitioning to Sixth Form College.

No.	3. What other things would have helped you to prepare for being in year 12?	A teacher	A parent	A school friend	A friend outside school	A brother or sister	Another Family Member	Someone else	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.4 then please type who	5. If you answered in Q.4 that people helped you then please type below any details of how they helped you
1	I visited my Learning Mentor Diana a few times before I started College and she would tell me what she would do with me while I was a student at the College.	A teacher	A parent							My parents are both in the education business and so they're fairly knowledgable on post-GCSE education. Teachers also told me about College work in the lessons of English Language and English Literature (mostly my English teacher).
2	DUNNO		A parent					Someone else	mentor at school	can't remember
3	done		A parent							
4	Reading prospectus		A parent					Someone else	friend of family	research
5	None	A teacher	A parent			A brother or sister	Another Family Member			
6	Visitits to college and the taster day.	A teacher	A parent							
7								Someone else	connections	information on courses and entry requirements

No.	3. What other things would have helped you to prepare for being in year 12?	A teacher	A parent	A school friend	A friend outside school	A brother or sister	Another Family Member	Someone else	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.4 then please type who	5. If you answered in Q.4 that people helped you then please type below any details of how they helped you
8	none									
9	Although this does not exist, I believe a college introduction program should be made for all students. This could be a three day program that allows students to understand the working environment and the expectations from their teachers. This would allow them to complete real coursework based on the courses they want to choose and understand the type of work that is expected of them (for example - how hard it is). In my second lesson for ICT (when I first started this college) I did not understand what was expected of me. When the teacher introduced the assignment, I panicked because of the specialist vocabulary he used, and did not expect us to be working on the inside of a computer as soon as we started college.	A teacher	A parent		A friend outside school			Someone else	A teacher visited me from the college whilst I was attending High School.	A teacher - although this is unproffessional, I had a good freindly relationship with most of the teacher assistants in the support area of our school (and with some of my subject teachers). Whilst at high school, I did a Vocational Course, and luckily there were only two students in the class. When I had finished my Vocational Coursework, I had some free time before I finished high school, and so in this free time, my Vocational Studies teacher supported me to prepare for college. Since she was in her twenties (forgive me for knowing that!) she had only left college a few years ago, and so I was able to ask her questions based on her college experience and how hard the work was. A parent - a few weeks before the end of the Summer Break, I was talking to my parents about my worries for going to college - I was worried about choosing the right course(s) as, for ICT, there were multiple courses available. When I talked to my parents about this, we all worked together on choosing the most suitable course for me, and we agreed to talk with the staff members before I made this choice. A friend outside school - As mentioned in another previous question, I had made alot of freidns that were in Year 11 when I was in Year 10 - throughout the summer break, this supported me as I was able to communicate with these people through a social networking website. I was able to ask them the differences they experienced when they first started college and how they have adapted to the college atmosphere and work. This gave me an insight as to what college would be like when I started, and comforted me to know that I have had knowledge of actual college students experience in starting and getting used to the working environment.

No.	3. What other things would have helped you to prepare for being in year 12?	A teacher	A parent	A school friend	A friend outside school	A brother or sister	Another Family Member	Someone else	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.4 then please type who	5. If you answered in Q.4 that people helped you then please type below any details of how they helped you
10	N/A		A parent							
11	none	A teacher	A parent	A school friend						
12	none							N/A	N/A	
13	having a clear idea of what i wanted to do		A parent					N/A	N/A	

No.	3. What other things would have helped you to prepare for being in year 12?	A teacher	A parent	A school friend	A friend outside school	A brother or sister	Another Family Member	Someone else	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.4 then please type who	5. If you answered in Q.4 that people helped you then please type below any details of how they helped you
14	none	A teacher	A parent							
15	None	A teacher	A parent					Someone else	Connecxions advisor	I am autistic and I when I moved to college, I got a lot of help from my parents and my teachers from school. My parents often did most of the talking for me as at the time I found it difficult to communicate with people.
16	none	A teacher	A parent		A friend outside school					They gave me advice and information on future courses
17	N/A		A parent							By showing me the different colleges.
18	none	A teacher		A school friend						they showed me what happens at the college and how to get around
19	none	A teacher	A parent	A school friend	A friend outside school					They offered me advice on course choices and routes to higher education.

No.	Reading	Writing	Number skills	Discussing ideas with others	Motivating yourself	Setting goals	Working in a team	Listening to others	Sharing your ideas	Making choices and decisions	Solving problems	Organising tasks	Using a computer	Researching	Keeping yourself safe	Please add any other skill that you think are important here.
																Being motivated by teachers
1	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Not that useful	Quite useful	Not that useful	Having confidence
2	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	
3	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	
4	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	social skills
5	Quite useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Quite useful	
6	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	
7	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	

No.	Reading	Writing	Number skills	Discussing ideas with others	Motivating yourself	Setting goals	Working in a team	Listening to others	Sharing your ideas	Making choices and decisions	Solving problems	Organising tasks	Using a computer	Researching	Keeping yourself safe	Please add any other skill that you think are important here.	
8	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Not that useful	Very useful	Not that useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Very useful	time management	essay structure
9	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Understanding and using specialist vocabulary	Communication and attempting to make friends

No.	Reading	Writing	Number skills	Discussing ideas with others	Motivating yourself	Setting goals	Working in a team	Listening to others	Sharing your ideas	Making choices and decisions	Solving problems	Organising tasks	Using a computer	Researching	Keeping yourself safe	Please add any other skill that you think are important here.
10	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	
11	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Not that useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	
12	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	confidence
13	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Quite useful	

No.	Reading	Writing	Number skills	Discussing ideas with others	Motivating yourself	Setting goals	Working in a team	Listening to others	Sharing your ideas	Making choices and decisions	Solving problems	Organising tasks	Using a computer	Researching	Keeping yourself safe	Please add any other skill that you think are important here.
14	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	
15	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	
16	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	
17	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	Very useful	Doesn't matter	Quite useful	
18	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Very useful	
19	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Very useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Quite useful	

No.	you think you have that have most helped you in moving from year 11 into year 12?	8. What other skills would you like to develop to help you in the future, when you have left school?	9. Who made decisions about what you were going to	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.9 then please type who	10. How did you feel about the part you had in making	11. What things took place to help make decisions	12. When did planning first start for your move to Year 12?	13. Is there anything that you would have liked to be different about moving from year 11 to year 12?	14. What do you think it means if somebody is described as being 'independent'?	15. How independent do you consider yourself to be at the moment?
1	Being pushed to work hard. I am confident and so I have never needed to worry about being shy or reserved. I am also very good at researching things.	I'd like to have practical skills for when I leave College, because I plan to get a job in BAE.	Me		I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it	Meetings and "taster days" at the College.	At the start of year 11	There was nothing really worth changing as, although I felt reluctant about attending College on the first-ever day, it's not a great deal different to GCSE. College isn't bad after all and you get more freedom, but you do have a great deal of responsibility to carry and one teacher said during a taster day: "If you want to be treated like an adult, behave like an adult." In	It means that they don't rely on anybody else to help them and they're well capable of doing things for themselves.	6
2	DUNNO	DUNNO	Me		how involved I		before the end of	NONE	Someone that can look and stand up for themselves.	5
3			my parents		how involved I		start of year 11			7
4	Motivating myself, listening to others, making choices,	public speaking	Me and my parents		I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it	Went to informatio n	In the middle of year 11	no	Do things by yourself	7
5	and being able to discuss in a group. Also being independent with my own learning.	Probably gaining more skills to put down all kinds of important infomation and helping to remember them more.	Me, my parents and my teachers		how involved I was and I wouldn't change it	n, my teachers point of view of my	At the start of year 11	None	Being independent with their own learning and be responsible for your own work.	8
6	My English skills have improved and my confidence has improved		Me		I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it	Progress review. carriers advice	At the start of year 11		I am very independent person.	9
7	personal skills	confidence comunicatio n	Me		I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't	open evening taster	At the start of year 11		that they're able to do things on there own	8

No.	you think you have most helped you in moving from year 11 into year 12?	8. What other skills would you like to develop to help you in the future, when you have left school?	9. Who made decisions about what you were going to	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.9 then please type who	10. How did you feel about the part you had in making	11. What things took place to help make decisions	12. When did planning first start for your move to Year 12?	13. Is there anything that you would have liked to be different about moving from year 11 to year 12?	14. What do you think it means if somebody is described as being 'independent'?	15. How independent do you consider yourself to be at the moment?
8	Note taking, time management, essay structure and writing.	sleeping	My parents		I would have liked to be more involved	I didn't do anything xD	In year 10	I would of liked more time to complete my courses. Maybe 2 years for AS and 2 years for A level.	They can do routine daily life things for themselves.	2
9	Computer Skills Setting Goals Motivation	If you mean college: Learning how to Make Decisions, and choose the best ones that will support me the most. Learning to work in a team, and not panicking if you find out you have to work in a team seconds before it happens. Learning how to feel confident in socialising with others, for a partner based project for example.	Me and my parents		I would have liked to be more involved	Talking to parents, Meeting a teacher from the college at High School, My High School teachers, Induction Day Enrolment Day.	In the middle of year 11	If my school had a six form, I could have applied there and stayed on in the school. Then, I would've felt more comfortable as I would've known staff and felt more comfortable in the working environment.	Independance can be explained in a selection of ways. People journey through emotions in ways were they appreciate the support of others. And there are times were people prefer to work individually on certain things. For me, I prefer to do coursework independantly, as I am not good at working with teams (especially people I dont know). But there are times were I break into peices because of getting stressed out, and I prefer to have my parents to support me in relieving this stress. For example - when I was revising for my GCSE exams, I prefered to work independantly in team tasks (when we had revision sessions at school). But one time when I was revising at home, I got really stressed out with the work, and my parents helped me to relieve this stress by telling me to take a break (as I otherwise would have continued working without any breaks).	4

No.	you think you have that have most helped you in moving from year 11 into year 12?	8. What other skills would you like to develop to help you in the future, when you have left school?	9. Who made decisions about what you were going to	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.9 then please type who	10. How did you feel about the part you had in making	11. What things took place to help make decisions Year 12?	12. When did planning first start for your move to Year 12?	13. Is there anything that you would have liked to be different about moving from year 11 to year 12?	14. What do you think it means if somebody is described as being 'independent'?	15. How independent do you consider yourself to be at the moment?
10	N/A	independance skills mostly like cooking for myself more oftern	Me and my parents		I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it	meetings with the careers advice counciler and my tutor helped me with choosing my lessons which would help towords getting a	At the start of year 11	i wish i had known more what i wanted to be later in life	they can handle most situations by themselves	6
11		orgonisation	Me		I liked how involved I	informatio n evening	In year 10		able to cope alone	5
12	being independent when needed but being able to work in a group if needs be, also being good with computers helped	social skills	Me, my parents and my teachers	N/A	I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it	informatio n evenings, visits to different colleges, meetings	In the middle of year 11	nope	to be able to work for themselves confidently	8
13	N/A	N/A	Me and my parents		I would have liked to be more involved	my gcse choices.	In the middle of year 11	had a more clear idea of what career i wanted to do.	being able to take care of themselves.	7

No.	you think you have that have most helped you in moving from year 11 into year 12?	8. What other skills would you like to develop to help you in the future, when you have left school?	9. Who made decisions about what you were going to	If you answered 'someone else' to Q.9 then please type who	10. How did you feel about the part you had in making decisions Year 12?	11. What things took place to help make decisions	12. When did planning first start for your move to Year 12?	13. Is there anything that you would have liked to be different about moving from year 11 to year 12?	14. What do you think it means if somebody is described as being 'independent'?	15. How independent do you consider yourself to be at the moment?
14	Reading about the college in general	socialising better, getting better at completing tasks quicker	Me and my parents		I liked how involved I was and I wouldn't change it		Just before the end of year 11		very capable of looking after themselves and not having to rely too much on others	5
15	This was a long time ago for me so I cannot remember		Me, my parents and my teachers	N/A	how involved I was and I wouldn't change it I liked how	Meetings. Meetings			They can work outside of college and arrange their spare time so that they can do work for college.	7
16		Cooking	Me		how involved I liked	and open days A couple days	In year 10 At the start of year 11 in the	Nothing no	Being able to look after yourself and solve problems on your own	6
17		Art	my parents		involved I how	visits to the	middle of year 11	N/A	Doing things on your own.	6
18	organising		Me		I liked how	N/A	Just before the	none	capable to do thing with out help	5
19	writing style and I believe this has helped me in many areas both	Independence and confidence in some academic areas.	Me, my parents and my teachers		how involved I was and I wouldn't	an Open Evening at college. My	In the middle of year 11	none	Persoannly, I would say someone who can motivate and organise themselves without the assistance of others.	7

No.	16. How independent do you think you might be in 5 years time?	17. How important is to you that you are independent in the future?
1		8 Very important
2	10 - Very independent	Very important
3		8 Very important
4		9 Important
5	10 - Very independent	Very important
6	10 - Very independent	Very important
7	10 - Very independent	Very important

No.	16. How independent do you think you might be in 5 years time?	17. How important is to you that you are independent in the future?
8		2 Not at all important
9		7 Important

No.	16. How independent do you think you might be in 5 years time?	17. How important is to you that you are independent in the future?
10		8 Very important
11		7 Very important
12	10 - Very independent	Quite important
13		9 Very important

No.	16. How independent do you think you might be in 5 years time?	17. How important is to you that you are independent in the future?
14		7 Important
15		8 Slightly important
16		9 Very important
17		7 Quite important
18		5 Quite important
19		9 Very important