

## **'A Rehearsal for Life' – Exploring Transition**

**A thought-provoking journey of theatre and presentation around the themes of transitions and aspirations.**



Year 11 students from Oakwood visited Irlam and Cadishead Colleges to work beside Year 12 student in classes. The Oakwood students requested sessions in IT, Sport, Textiles and Catering and Drama. A drama workshop has been prepared to explore transition and highlight feelings and thoughts about leaving Year 11 and embarking on a post 16 education programme or entering the world of work.

The workshop was run by 'So Many Words', a north west theatre company, working with young people aged 12 – 21 who have learning disabilities. This work:

- provided an opportunity for student to communicate their concerns and fears, hopes and aspirations around the transition from high school to further education
- encouraged realistic goal-setting, challenge low-expectations and enhance aspirations.
- raised awareness about specific issues and particular concerns e.g. the college environment, timetables, workload, transport etc.
- developed a dialogue between young people about to embark on the transition and mainstream college student. (The contribution from college students and staff will be supportive and reassuring).
- increased student's confidence to make informed decisions about their future learning and share strategies for decision-making and problem-solving.

The workshop created scenes of 'School Life' and 'College Life' and supported a discussion about the differences between the two learning environments. Using image theatre, students worked together to create frozen pictures of issues/concerns/fears relating to these changes. The group (especially the Irlam & Cadishead student) were encouraged to come up with strategies for addressing issues and encourage problem-solving. The aim was to dispel some myths around leaving school, and finish on a positive note about the benefits/positives of moving on. Students spent time sharing aspirations, perhaps looking at the broader options that further education can provide.

*'This is a unique opportunity to hear directly from young disabled people about their futures, their needs and desires, and their perceptions of the world around them.'*

**Jamie Patterson Artistic Director 'So Many Words' Theatre Company**

A Personal Advisor from Salford Careers Solutions was closely involved with students and developed a diary of the week including 'before and after' thoughts. The student are producing a video of the drama workshop, a display of their work and their learning outcomes.

*'The extended placements at Irlam & Cadishead College will give the Year 11 students an invaluable insight into college life and open up post 16 opportunities. The drama sessions that open and close the week will help our students to express and develop their feelings and emotions and consider their futures. They will be able to talk about their hopes and fears with a Year 12 mentor who is already enrolled within the college. The students are enthusiastic and will fit in well.'*

**Liz Cappell Transitions Advisor Oakwood Specialist Academy**

## **‘A Rehearsal for Life’ – Exploring Transition**

### **So Many Words Theatre Company Transitions Workshop Oakwood Year 11 and Irlam & Cadishead College**

#### **Aims**

- To provide an opportunity for students to communicate their concerns and fears, hopes and aspirations around the transition from high school to further education
- To raise awareness about specific issues in transition, particular concerns that students have about college environment, timetables, workload, transport etc.
- To develop a dialogue between young people about to embark on the transition, and students who already have. Perhaps to also have input from school/college staff about the process.
- To increase participants’ confidence to make informed decisions about their future learning and share strategies for decision-making and problem-solving.

#### **Workshop 1 – Monday**

Approx. 10am to 2pm with breaks and lunch time

##### **Morning Session**

Icebreaker exercises, ‘Getting to Know You’ games to get group engaged and working together.

Using arts materials, the group created a scene of ‘School Life’ and ‘College Life’. This lead on to a discussion about the differences between the two learning environments.

Using this list of differences, the Oakwood pupils placed themselves on a chart (1 to 10) showing how comfortable/confident they feel about dealing with these changes. The group returned to these charts on the final day to map whether any progress has been made in their attitude towards these changes.



## Afternoon Session



Using image theatre, students worked together to create frozen pictures of issues/concerns/fears relating to these changes.

The group (especially the Irlam & Cadishead Sixth Form students) were encouraged to come up with strategies for addressing these issues, encouraging problem-solving, attempting to dispel some myths around leaving school, and finishing with a positive note about the benefits/positives of moving on.

## Workshop 2 – Friday

### Morning Session

Using creative exercises, the facilitators lead an evaluation of the week and reviewed what had been learnt. The group revisited charts to see if progress has been made.

### Afternoon Session

The students spent time sharing aspirations, perhaps looking at the broader options that further education can provide. All were encouraged to keep to realistic goal-setting but low-expectations were challenged and aspirations enhanced..

