Frances Tomlinson, Association of Karen Horney Psychoanalytic Counsellors, London 1978 (2nd edition). This pictorial book gives a clear and practical introduction to co-counselling and shows how some of the techniques discussed here can be used in a peer relationship.

"Gestalt Therapy Verbatim" by **Fritz Perls**, Bantam Books, New York 1974. A collection of sessions, including much dream work, illustrating Gestalt Therapy, and the personality of Fritz, at work.

"Creative Dreaming" by **Patricia Garfield**, Futura Publications, London 1976. Rather repetitively rubs in all of the surprising skills we can develop during dreams, for inducing them in the first place and for recording them afterwards.

"Dream Power" by **Ann Faraday**, Pan books, 1973. This 'should' be the 'dreamer's bedside book. . . it is comprehensive. Ann later followed the book with *"The Dream Game"* (Temple Smith, London 1974) which covers much of the same ground more chattily.

"The individual and his dreams" by **Calvin Hall** and **Vernon Nordby**, Mentor, New York 1972. If you like knowing the statistical patterns of dream behaviour and how to dream up your own. Reveals such facts as that most people tend to dream of failure. It is down to earth and stresses that dream work should be based on collections of dreams and is not a one off exercise.

"The Interpretation of Dreams" by **Sigmund Freud**, Hogarth Press, London 1953. (And in Penguin 1976.) Freud's classic (with theories slightly modified in his "New Introductory Lectures"). A fine example of rationalising the irrational. Penguin have started a Freud library, and *"The Psychopathology of Everyday Life"* is an introduction to the workings of the unconscious in daytime, which through its parapraxes has much similarity with the dream life.

"Dreams" By **Carl Jung**, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1974. Excerpts from Jung's Collected Works, volume 4, 8, 12 and 16, related to dreaming.

"Man and his Symbols", edited by **Carl Jung**, Picador, London 1978, and published also by Aldus Books, London 1964 in a larger format and with many more illustrations, is a clear and readable exposition of the significance of symbolism in dreams etc. and how this is expressed by and may be used in the process of personal and cultural growth.

Tom Osborn

Planning a student-directed learning programme

Now is the day of the trendy right.

Not so long ago, we were discovering a lot about how students could determine their own work. What has happened to all that valuable learning?

Self-direction, student planning, is no soft option. It needs its own disciplines and its own precision. Even if we assume that the staff on a course and the authorities of a college are willing: there are in particular three major obstacles which students themselves have to overcome in planning their own programme.

First, it is not easy for people to say, or to know, what they want to learn.

Second, it is not easy for people to recognise and to manage the resources available to them.

And third, it is not easy for individuals to join together collectively in organising a programme.

These difficulties are surely not inherent in human nature. Rather, they are due to the way people are brought up. Formulating what we want; handling resources ourselves; and doing things by co-operation among equals: these are responsibilities which are largely withheld in our society. So we don't get much practice in exercising them.

Breakthrough.

I have been obsessed, you might say, for years (or some years back you might have said I was one of the trendy left) with tackling these difficulties. Some two years ago, on the staff of the courses in Counselling Skills at South-West London College, I believe we arrived at a structure for a programme-planning weekend which goes a long way towards overcoming them. We have now run this weekend structure as the start of six part-time, one-year courses (two per year). Each time it has resulted in viable programmes for the first term, which were carried out.

It's true that these courses are for mature students who already have some experience of what they have come on the course to work at. But this does not seem to make it any easier for them to deal with the difficulties of setting up a student-directed programme. It has been the structure that has made the difference. I regard it as something of a breakthrough, and my aim in writing this article is to share it for general use. Perhaps others have made similar breakthroughs. I believe we should be hearing about them.

The course.

The programme-planning weekend is the first time this course meets as a whole, four or five months before the first term. Then the year itself consists of three 12-week terms of one afternoon a week (from 2 - 7 pm). There is also an evaluation weekend and one or two more evaluation days, plus normally some occasional days or weekends as requested, and largely set up, by students. Individual supervision, mainly of course-members' own counselling at work,

also takes place, but this does not come into the joint planning of the course. There are 36 - 40 students and 4 staff members.

The weekend, which is residential, starts with a meal on Friday evening, followed by the first session. People introduce each other in pairs, then forming groups of six as a way of facilitating the expression of their hopes and fears.

It is a rather standard group-work beginning. But this is not a weekend workshop which finishes with goodbyes and the learning being taken to another life. It is a weekend with the primary task of producing a timetable for the first term. It is the start of a real-life organisation which is jointly defining its own future.

Objectives and resources.

The hopes and fears will be about the weekend, and about the course as a whole. And they will also be about people's lives as a whole: which begins to open out the basis on which people will be formulating their objectives.

The three difficulties, that I listed at the start of this article, correspond with the three stages that a learning community has to move through in arriving at a programme. So the weekend has three main parts to it. The first is to define objectives; the second, to identify resources; and the third, to work out an actual timetable together.

These are not separate stages, one of which can be completed before the next one is begun. To some extent they depend on each other. Objectives may become clearer when resources are brought into view; the way in which available resources can meet objectives may not be seen until a concrete programme begins to be visible; and so on. Like with a complex piece of knitting, some parts of the pattern which have been started on earlier, may need to be left hanging while later parts are worked on.

The first part of Saturday morning, then, is devoted to identifying personal objectives for the Course. After a short plenary, just to get started and establish a sense of the group as a whole, people are asked to prepare, individually, a list of their learning objectives. The wording of the task we give is "What do you want to have achieved on this course by the end of the year?" After this, people work in a group of six or so, to prepare wall charts. These groups are not intended to arrive at consensus or agreement, but to represent everybody's objectives. The wall charts are then exhibited and looked at, over coffee.

Next, the process of identifying resources is started by an exploration of what resources course-members actually possess themselves. We ask people, again individually, to draw their own life chart, as a way of helping them to recognise how many of their experiences, in addition to formal education or training, form the material of valuable resources. For example, being married and bringing up children, speaking a foreign language or knowing

a foreign country, being an acrobat or a salesman, having been bereaved or sick, having served a sentence on a drugs charge: any of these could be a resource. So could energy, articulateness, a sense of fun and so on. The life charts are again shared in the same small group and a general picture of these resources is prepared by each group for exhibiting.

The exercise of going into ones life-experience could easily take all day, so we say that there is no time to do full justice to it and its purpose here is to find out what resources are around in the group. We also emphasise that nobody is obliged to offer, for use by the course, a resource that they may have.

By lunch time, the walls will be well covered with lists and pictures of both objectives and resources.

The staff.

Staff members have also taken part, as a staff group, in both parts of he morning, producing their list of objectives and also in detail the resoruces that they can offer. We attach great importance to the objectives of the staff being visible. We do not pretend that we don't influence the nature of the course, and we want this influence to be open and accessible.

People are usually grateful for a long break after this full morning. Also, the life chart exercise has at times opened up charged areas for some. The free time between lunch and tea has given time for informal meetings to continue between individuals or occasionally in one of the small groups as a whole, as well as for walks, sleep and shopping.

This seems a good point to bring to the foreground the dynamic of such a community which, like every group, is an organism with a life of its own, composed of people who are emotional human beings. Needs to do with being included or remaining separate, with power and rivalry, with dependence and independence, with intimacy, may all at times become issues which vitalise, or block, achievement. Anyone familiar with group-work knows these phenomena. They are not mysteries, but to run this structure with success needs some experienced awareness of them.

After tea, we start with a short plenary at which one of the staff gives clarification of the various kinds of resources that are available to the course. There are the human resources, from staff, from outside specialists and from participants themselves; there are technical aids, such as video-equipment; there are books, films and tapes; places to visit; and so on.

Space and time are also resources - time being one of the most important of all. The aim of the afternoon is to focus on the matching of objectives to the resources available. The matching of the limited resource of time to what people want to achieve is the essence of a programme. Of course there is also a limit to the resource of money. For example, a definite budget

exists for outside specialists. All these things have to be understood to make planning realistic.

People work once more in their small groups. This time, the task is to work out what resources they have within their small group to satisfy the objectives in that small group, and which ones they would need to seek outside their group. This provides a way of contacting people in other small groups; and of rehearsing the process of finding resources to meet objectives. This work is again recorded on wall charts which are exhibited and looked at, and there is a general discussion about any points that have come up.

Top voice groups.

Now comes the most crucial part of the sturcture. It is the point at which people take responsibility for seeing that what they want actually gets into the programme.

What happens is that people decide what their topmost interest is for learning on this course. They make a placard announcing it, which they go about displaying. This event we have called the Chinese Procession, an image that gives it an extra lift. They find other people with the same, or a very similar, top voice interest displayed on their placards and they join up to form an interest group.

Such placards might read, for example, 'family counselling', 'psycho-analytic', 'ageing and bereavement', 'skills and techniques', 'personal growth', 'theory'.

This group of people will from now take responsibility for this interest and see that time and resources for it are planned. It has to be emphasised that these groups are not permanent for the course but have come together for the purpose of planning. They need not last beyond the weekend.

The process of forming these groups needs to be fairly fluid and to continue for some time - because part of it is the sense that your second voice interest, and third and fourth, are going to be looked after by other groups. Sometimes it happens that a course member finds that nobody is looking after a second interest that is nevertheless really important to him or her. In that case, she has to abandon the group that she first joined and form her own -otherwise this interest will not be looked after by anyone.

Nobody should form or join a group because they feel a topic *ought* to be on the course, but only because they have real energy for it.

We have found that we do not need, in the instructions, to place limits on the number of top voice groups formed. Although we have sometimes felt anxious about the possibility of ending up with a cumbersome number of groups, each time we have ended up with eight or nine, a number that works fine in the planning part of the weekend - which all this is a preparation for.

Nor is it necessary to place either upper or lower limits on the numbers in each group. Sometimes a top voice group will have only one person in it. This is perfectly alright as far as the process is concerned. It just means there is that much more pressure on that person, in pushing for a particular interest.

Nor does it matter about restricting or defining the categories of interest too clearly. Some of these will be skills, some will be topic areas, some will be conceptual areas, some will be process concerns such as 'evaluation' or 'the large group', and some will be practical concerns such as 'resources'. All of these are all right. The only essential is that somebody feels real energy for pursuing the interest.

The process of arriving at stable top voice groups may need to be facilitated by taking stock at times, by writing up what groups there are so far, by suggesting amalgamations or splitting and so on. It has usually taken groups not much more than an hour to arrive at a stable grouping.

The beauty of it is that people take responsibility for what they have real energy for. And they trust others to do the same.

Planning the programme.

We are now, by Sunday morning, ready to start actually planning the programme for the first term's work. The top voice groups are asked to prepare proposals for their specific interest, in consultation with other top voice groups as to a realistic use of time.

These proposals are to bring to the planning table. This is an actual, large table which we set up in the middle of the room. At it will sit one representative from each group (even if a group has only one member). The rest of the course sits at the side, watching. Only people at the table are allowed to speak: but there are two empty chairs for temporary occupation, while speaking, by anyone else.

The planning takes place in stages. First, the groups prepare draft proposals. Then, there is a preliminary discussion at the table to see how these proposals look like working. Then the groups reconsider and reshape their proposals in the light of this first meeting, and then there is a meeting to hammer out an actual programme. This has usually been achieved by about 3 o'clock.

The result.

To give details of the actual programmes planned would be impossible within the space of this article. But each time, the programme planned and carried out was at least as good as anything we, the staff, could have devised and in our judgement it covered what the students needed. Any minor defects of emphasis or differences between what came out and what we believed might have been better (and really there was as much difference between individual members of the staff group as between staff and students) is amply compensated for by the advantages in motivation and ownership.

There are certain beliefs we have to start with, in order to work in this way. One is a trust that people actually themselves know what is best for them. And: that if they themselves do not choose to follow a particular objective at a particular time, then they are not ready to do so just then, but will become ready another time. And: that the energy which comes from doing something at the right time, and trusting your own rhythm, is worth infinitely more than the well-ordered, unambiguous, apparent certainty of a programme determined form above.

All this is in accord with well-known educational ideas in the progressive (trendy left?) tradition, from Montessori and John Dewey to A S Neill and Noam Chomsky. It also connects on a more general level with the admission that in our time of explosive change, nobody knows what answers are the right ones to hand on to others, nor even what are the right problems.

The staff do in fact have plenty of influence. They make their own objectives visible; they can speak from an empty chair in the planning meeting; they can draw attention to what they see as gaps; and they can exert pressure, both in the first weekend and later in the course. People finding their own way does not mean you don't face them with your own views or feelings. Staff members on a course are always endowed with quite a lot of power. But what they do here is structurally on a level with what the students do, and is seen openly for what it is. It will be accepted or rejected for much better reasons than a spurious institutional authority.

This course is in the area of social skills. The content is to do with practical human interaction, which means it is more closely related to the activity of self-directed goal-setting and of joint planning than would be a more conceptual or else a more technical subject area. I believe, however, this approach to be just as workable and advantageous for other kinds of course.

Fears.

In ourselves, we have to overcome the fear of nothing happening, of the mind going blank. There is also the fear of too much happening, of conflict or emotion becoming unmanageable, taking up all the time, making it impossible for people to say or follow what they are after, paralysing progress. These are the kinds of fears people have when they contemplate, whether as staff or students, working in this way. In overcoming these fears, the precise structuring is important. The structures which we are accustomed to in our hierarchical society have to be replaced by structures which make it possible to work collectively.

We have set out to provide a very firm and definite structure for a learning community to get together and decide on its own work, without laying down what that work should be or how it should be done.

The sooner we practise precise structures for facilitating the process of joint self-directed learning, the faster will we get through the reaction that threatens our education .