



# Evaluation of the People Plus Project

---

**March 2003**

Commissioned by the College of Chinese Physical Culture



The project was evaluated by

Dr. Arnfrid Beier, EAGLE-UK.com, P.O. Box 124, Leeds, LS8 4YF

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1. Background of the People Plus Project	
1.2. Aim of the People Plus Project	
1.3. Aim of the Evaluation	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Sarnatech (BNL) Ltd</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Delegates' Perspectives	
2.2. Personnel Manager's Perspective	<b>7</b>
2.3. Tutor's Perspective	<b>8</b>
<b>3. York &amp; County Press</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1. Delegates' Perspectives	
3.2. Training Manager's Perspective	<b>11</b>
3.3. Tutor's Perspective	<b>13</b>
<b>4. Conclusion</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1. People Management	
4.2. Project has achieved the Learning and Skills Council Objectives	<b>18</b>
<b>5. Recommendations</b>	<b>19</b>

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Classes in North Yorkshire

Appendix 2: Questions for Delegates

# Executive Summary

## The Project

The People Plus Project is using an innovative and challenging programme of holistic exercise. It is developing the learning potential, health, fitness and life skills of people through a balanced mix of fun and training, which incorporates movement, dance and gymnastic-based exercises.

The Project commenced on the 1st June 2002 and is scheduled to end on the 2nd April 2003. It consists of eleven classes. These classes, facilitated by well-qualified tutors of the College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC), are held on-site in a number of businesses in York and North Yorkshire.

The aim of the People Plus Project is to work with 10 businesses to support their employees who are lacking basic and key skills and/or have not participated in accredited learning within the last 3 years.

## The Evaluation

The evaluation is a summative individual impact assessment. It assesses the impact of the Project on the individual from the perspectives of the individual, her/his supervisors or managers and the CPC tutors, who have delivered the course.

The assessment comprises data from the College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) as well as information gathered from semi-structured interviews, which the evaluator carried out with the delegates, managers and tutors. The evaluation focuses on the impact of the Project within two businesses in North Yorkshire.

## The Outcomes

The People Plus Project has increased the capacity of individuals by enhancing their levels of soft skills such as:

- > confidence
- > self-esteem
- > communication
- > speaking and listening skills
- > participation with others
- > improved health
- > motivation to want to improve basic skills<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See Tables 1 and 2 in Sections 1 and 2.

This has a direct beneficial effect on important aspects of People Management such as:

- managing absenteeism
- encouraging creativity
- increasing motivation
- building a team
- dealing with conflict
- realising empowerment
- solving problems
- coping with stress.

The Project has achieved the aims and objectives set by the Learning and Skills Council. In brief, it:

- uses a unique approach to course delivery which is particularly effective at engaging people
- delivers a movement, exercise and health-related learning activity
- offers accreditation in CPC performance, confidence-building, speaking and listening
- works with businesses in North Yorkshire to support employees who are lacking basic and key skills and/or have not participated in accredited learning within the last 3 years
- promotes the benefits of lifelong learning
- increases participation and access to adult learning
- gives beneficiaries a positive experience of learning
- motivates beneficiaries to want to improve their basic skills and/or access further and higher level qualifications.

# 1. Introduction

This section gives the background of the People Plus Project and the evaluation process.

## 1.1. Background of the People Plus Project

The People Plus Project uses the fun and motivational learning activities of the College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) in a number of businesses.

CPC is an innovative and challenging programme of holistic exercise. It develops learning potential, health, fitness and life skills through a balanced mix of fun and training, which incorporates movement, dance and gymnastic-based exercise. This non-traditional programme benefits people in the following areas:

- confidence and self-esteem
- assertiveness, sensitivity and constructive criticism
- communication and negotiation
- trust and co-operation
- personal awareness and team building
- new skills and workforce development
- change and stress management
- improved health and fitness
- accreditation in basic skills and CPC<sup>1</sup>.

The People Plus Project commenced on the 19th September 2002 and is scheduled to end on the 2nd April 2003. The Project consists of eleven classes. These are run for 14 weeks each and are spread over the above-mentioned span of time. The classes, which last one hour each, are held on-site in a number of businesses in York and North Yorkshire. A total of 90 individuals are participating in the People Plus Project<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.2. Aim of the People Plus Project

The three main aims of the People Plus Project are to:

- work with 10 businesses in North Yorkshire to support employees who are lacking basic and key skills and/or have not participated in accredited learning within the last 3 years in order to:
  - address and change any barriers to learning such as a negative attitude
  - develop effective interpersonal skills
  - stimulate process learning, self-reflection and motivation
  - promote lifelong and adult learning

<sup>1</sup> This information was gathered from the marketing materials of the People Plus Project.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing this report, a number of the People Plus courses had already ended. See Appendix 1 for businesses involved in the Project as well as for the dates when the classes are or were held.

- improve people's health and well-being by:
  - involving them in fun and health-related exercises and activities
  
- create the possibility for people to obtain certificates at entry level or level one through the Open College in:
  - CPC Performing
  - Confidence Building
  - Speaking and Listening<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.3. Evaluation

The aim of this evaluation is a summative impact assessment, i.e. it assesses the impact of the Project on the individual from the perspective of the:

- a) delegate
- b) supervisor or manager
- c) CPC tutor delivering the course.

The assessment is based on a substantial amount of qualitative data, which includes:

- > **Learning Ledgers, Individual Learning Plans** and **Reflective Summary Statements** that were developed for the delegates by the College of CPC to demonstrate change in soft outcomes
- > **Comments and Observations** that were made by the managers
- > **Semi-structured Interviews** with delegates and CPC tutors<sup>4</sup>.

The evaluation focuses on two businesses, one in Knaresborough and one in York. These two organisations will be treated in two separate sections. Sarnatech (BNL) Ltd will be discussed in Section 2 and York & County Press in Section 3.

Please note that the evaluation does not set out to quantify or qualify the effectiveness of the Project in terms of the management or organisation of the College of CPC. In addition, it does not evaluate the sustainable development of the Project. As stated earlier, the evaluation focuses on the delegate of the People Plus Project and the impact that it has on her/his physical, mental and emotional development.

<sup>3</sup> This information was gathered from the marketing materials of the People Plus Project.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 for the semi-structured questionnaire.

## 2. Sarnatech (BNL) Ltd

Sarnatech (BNL) Ltd is a medium-size company, which is situated on the outskirts of Knaresborough. It manufactures plastic components.

Nine delegates, six men and three women aged between 25 and 65, participated in the People Plus Project (PP), which was facilitated on-site by the College of CPC.

The interview was carried out on the 11th February 2003<sup>1</sup>. Only three delegates could take part in the interview. They were all men.

In addition to the delegates, the Personnel Manager, a woman, was interviewed on the same day.

### 2.1. Delegates' Perspectives

This sub-section comprises the answers to the questions in the semi-structured questionnaire.

All three delegates gave a **positive appraisal** of the PP Project and emphasised the benefits that they had received from it in terms of their physical, emotional and mental development. Some of the aspects they liked most about the Project were, to use their own words:

- *“gentle and relaxed exercises*
- *made you feel good about learning*
- *non-competitive and supportive*
- *something totally different from everyday activities*
- *confidence building*
- *very enjoyable*
- *increased levels of trust between delegates*
- *good for one's concentration and co-ordination*
- *made you feel better physically, healthier”.*

The only **negative comments** that were made related to

- a) the written element of the course, which was needed for obtaining a qualification
- b) the brevity of the course, which was “not enough for a radical, deep-rooted change”.

The delegates noticed **changes in the way they see themselves and others**. They stated that the PP exercises

- made them feel better about themselves
- instilled in them a more relaxed and tolerant attitude to others.

According to the delegates, the above changes have also had an impact on the **way in which they treat themselves and behave with other people**. They

- are more relaxed and tolerant with themselves
- think a little more before engaging with others.

<sup>1</sup> As the PP Project took place from 25/9/02 to 8/1/03, this is a retrospective evaluation.

When asked **what they had learned about the mind and body and how this has helped them**, all three delegates stated unanimously that they had:

- achieved a higher level of co-ordination and harmony between their mind and body
- developed a better, more confident body posture, which resulted in a more confident, more gentle and tolerant approach to other people
- become less fearful in handling themselves as well as others and concomitantly developed a greater team awareness.

When asked **what new things they had learned**, the delegates mentioned

- a) **breathing**, which has improved their co-ordination, made them feel less clumsy and less tense
- b) **movements**, which had made them learn how to move more easily, freely and effortlessly.

The delegates were invited to assess the levels of their personal growth and development before and after participating in the PP Project by using a scale of 1 – 10.

The delegates were asked to place a mark on the following tables. The scoring comprises **1 = no confidence** to **10 = a lot of confidence**.

**Table 1: Before the course**

<b>Soft Outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Confidence							2	1		
Self Esteem							2	1		
Speaking and Listening								3		
Communication						1	1		1	
Participation with Others							2	1		
Improved Health							1	1	1	
Motivation							2		1	

**Table 2: After the course**

<b>Soft Outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Confidence									3	
Self Esteem									3	
Speaking and Listening									3	
Communication									3	
Participation with Others								3		
Improved Health									3	
Motivation									3	

On both tables, the delegates placed their marks in the upper grid areas (6 and above), indicating only minor or no improvements. They stated that, as managers, they had to have highly developed soft skills. However, some of their verbal comments made throughout the interview revealed that they had travelled a greater distance from the lower to the higher soft skill levels during the PP course.

The delegates felt that the relatively high levels they gave on the tables indicated the level of confidence, self-esteem etc. that they have in their **roles as managers**. The lower levels, which they initially experienced in the PP exercises, reflected them as **persons**.

When asked what practical opportunities they had become aware of as a result of participating in the PP Project, the delegates stated that they wished to continue with this or another CPC course and that a preferred time was lunchtime.

On a more personal level, the three delegates identified new opportunities in the way they can now relate to other people. They saw this as a positive outcome of their **increased ability for self-reflection and interpersonal awareness**.

Finally, when asked what three things they remembered from the PP course, the delegates replied, to use their own words:

- *“how to breathe properly*
- *balancing the mind and body in a way that produced strength without muscle effort*
- *the relaxed, yet enthusiastic involvement of the tutor, who led by example and without showing off, dwelling on positives rather than negatives”.*

## 2.2. Personnel Manager's Perspective

The Personnel Manager, who also participated in the PP course, observed that the delegates very much enjoyed the break from their daily routine with its stresses. They particularly liked the fact that the **PP exercises were totally unrelated to their everyday activities** and **that the tutor had pitched them at exactly the right level**.

According to the Personnel Manager, the only **negative response** from the delegates was to the written element in the course.

She had noticed **increased levels of confidence and greater self-awareness** among the delegates, who were a mix of all employees, from the shop floor to management. The fun-related, playful element in the **PP exercises helped to bring down barriers** between the delegates from the shop floor and the delegates from the more senior levels of management.

The delegates learned to appreciate the **connectedness between mind and body**, that the human body can “do a lot of things” without physical exertion and that, simply by concentrating on special breathing exercises, **strength and power can be generated without effort or tension**.

The Personnel Manager was invited to assess **the levels of the delegates' personal growth and development**<sup>2</sup> before and since participating in the PP Project by placing marks on a scale from **1 = no confidence** to **10 = a lot of confidence** in two tables. However, she preferred to comment on the delegates' progress instead.

She pointed out that because of the great diversity of professional backgrounds, the delegates were all at **different levels** with regard to their **confidence**, that the confidence of some had improved moderately and that of others significantly.

She felt that most delegates had attained **higher levels of self-esteem and moderately better speaking and listening skills**. Similarly, there was now a moderate **increase in cross-departmental communication**.

**Participation with others**, in her view, had shown **a marked improvement** as a result of the PP Project.

Most delegates had also experienced a moderate improvement with regard to their **health, overall fitness and well-being**.

The Personnel Manager stated that some of the delegates were now **more strongly motivated** to continue with the improvement of their basic skills.

<sup>2</sup> See Question 8 on the Questionnaire

However, she felt it was not possible for her to comment on any **opportunities** that the delegates might have become aware of since they had been on the PP course.

Finally, the Personnel Manager stated that the **delegates remembered three things from the course:**

- that it was enjoyable and fun
- that it was a totally new and interesting concept, i.e. how the mind and the body could work together in harmony
- that it was good to meet other people on different levels in the organisation.

### 2.3. Tutor's Perspective

The CPC tutor, who facilitated the PP course at Sarnatech, was interviewed on the 12th February 2003.

The tutor's perspective closely overlaps with the delegates' and the Personnel Manager's perspectives. However, some of his comments which do not fully coincide with the delegates' and Personnel Manager's observations, are set out here in his own words:

*"The delegates always felt better in themselves after the exercises. This could be seen on them. They always went away with a buzz, after coming in tired from work."*

*"The PP course opened little doors for them. It helped to increase their awareness of what skills they possessed, which made them feel empowered."*

*"Through the exercises they became more aware of how other people operate, which was a powerful tool in their group and team development."*

*"The uniqueness of the PP course made them feel special. They felt valued by doing something that others weren't doing."*

*"They were unfamiliar with the full potential of a balanced and harmonious mind-body interaction, i.e. with how this potential can be harnessed to make them feel more invigorated, more energised and more positive in their mental outlook."*

*"They were unaware of how they can be strong simply by being relaxed, but relaxed not in a floppy way."*

The tutor was invited to assess **the levels of the delegates' personal growth and development**<sup>3</sup> before and since participating in the PP Project by placing marks on a scale from **1 = no confidence** to **10 = a lot of confidence** in two tables. However, the tutor preferred to comment on the delegates' progress instead.

<sup>3</sup> See Question 8 on the Questionnaire

## 3. York & County Press

The York & County Press is a large business, which is situated in the centre of York. It publishes the main daily newspapers in York and North Yorkshire.

The People Plus Project (PP) started with ten delegates. All delegates were from management. Three of them attended irregularly or discontinued the course. Seven delegates, three men and four women, participated regularly in the Project, which was facilitated on-site by the College of CPC.

The interview was carried out on the 12th February 2003. Only two delegates, one man and one woman, could take part in the interview.

In addition to the delegates, the Training Manager, a woman, was interviewed on the same day.

### 3.1. Delegates' Perspectives

This sub-section comprises the answers to the questions in the semi-structured questionnaire.

The two delegates gave a positive appraisal of the PP Project and emphasised the benefits that they had received from it in terms of their physical, emotional and mental development. Some of the aspects they liked most about the Project were, to use their own words:

- *“time out of the day that was not work-related*
- *made you look at things in a different way*
- *made you more focused to do things*
- *power and strength through a relaxed rather than a tense approach*
- *subtle mental influence through physical exercises*
- *made you more effective at work*
- *made you more relaxed, more detached, more objective*
- *removed physical barriers between colleagues*
- *led to more harmony*
- *made the group more of a team*
- *positive interaction with the instructor”.*

The only **negative comment** about the PP Project was that it was too short. The interviewees thought that an extra half-hour would have made an even greater difference. Similarly, the PP course as a whole was seen as not long enough. The reasons that were given are best summarised in the words of one delegate: *“There is a danger to revert back under work pressure. That’s why it (the PP Project) should be a constant thing, until it becomes second nature.”*

The delegates noticed **changes in the way they see themselves and others**. They

- a) felt more confident in the group
- b) saw the lighter side to people

These changes also had a significant impact on **the way in which the delegates treat themselves and behave with other people**. They

- a) have high standards but, by being a little more relaxed about themselves, they can achieve their aims in a less stressful manner
- b) are more relaxed with others and able to bring out their potential
- c) have a better understanding of others' needs
- d) are more tolerant with others, to quote one of the delegates *"from doing the PP exercises I have learned that speeds are different with different people, and I translate this back into the work situation"*.

When asked **what they had learned about the mind and body and how this has helped them**, they both agreed that, quote: *"the body is stronger than we believe it to be, if energies are channelled properly by way of the mind, then the body-mind harmony is most effective"*.

In practical terms, this meant for them that, because of having learned from the exercises how to use the different body parts in harmony, they could take this experience back to the work place and teach themselves how to multi-task efficiently and effectively. As they had learned how to co-ordinate their body movements, they now understood a great deal better how to co-ordinate and prioritise tasks in their daily work contexts without losing sight of the overall picture.

The delegates stated that the **new things they had learned** were that, to use their own words:

- 1) *"you don't have to be aggressive to be strong and focused"*
- 2) *movements, forms, stances and steps from the Chinese tradition, e.g. bear, duck, dragon*
- 3) *special ways of breathing"*.

The delegates were invited to assess the **levels of their personal growth and development** before and since participating in the PP Project by using a scale of 1 – 10.

The delegates were asked to place a mark on the following tables. The scoring comprises **1 = no confidence** to **10 = a lot of confidence**.

**Table 1: Before the course**

<b>Soft Outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Confidence						1				1
Self Esteem							1		1	
Speaking and Listening									2	
Communication									2	
Participation with Others						2				
Improved Health					1					1
Motivation							2			

**Table 2: After the course**

<b>Soft Outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Confidence								1		1
Self Esteem								1	1	
Speaking and Listening									2	
Communication									2	
Participation with Others								2		
Improved Health						1				1
Motivation									2	

On both tables, the delegates placed their marks in the upper grid areas (6 and above), indicating only minor or no improvements. They stated that, as managers, they had to have highly developed soft skills. However, some of their verbal comments made throughout the interview revealed that they had travelled a greater distance from the lower to the higher soft skill levels during the PP course.

The delegates felt that the relatively high levels they gave on the tables indicated the level of confidence, self-esteem etc. that they have in their **roles as managers**. The lower levels, which they initially experienced in the PP exercises, reflected them as **persons**.

When asked what **practical opportunities** they had become aware of as a result of participating in the PP course, the delegates stated that they:

- a) could deal with other people more freely
- b) could see things more clearly
- c) felt responsible for their own lives
- d) had become more aware of personal choice
- e) could alter their attitudes and behaviours, or in the words of one delegate:  
*"it's not a simple equation of **pressure = stress**, I can change that now".*

The **three things the delegates remembered** were:

- 1) the tutor
- 2) the movements
- 3) being pro-active rather than re-active, or in the words of one delegate: *"I can be more effective by focusing my energy rather than flying into a reaction".*

### 3.2. Training Manager's Perspective

The Training Manager, who also participated in the PP course, observed that the delegates very much **enjoyed the fun-related exercises**, and having the time out of a busy working day to do something different. They also liked the fact that the strategies behind these exercises could be translated back into their working situations.

According to the Training Manager no **negative comments** were made by the delegates, although some individuals did not finish the course because of the physical contact required in some of the exercises.

The changes she noticed were that the delegates:

- a) saw themselves and others as more rounded in terms of their skills and knowledge
- b) were more open-minded
- c) were more respectful of themselves and their own bodies
- d) appreciated that they could generate strength through relaxation
- e) could work with gentle strength rather than forceful strength
- f) were more respectful of each other and of other people's space
- g) communicated more freely and more easily

The Training Manager also stated that the delegates had developed a clearer understanding as well as a better appreciation of a harmonious **mind-and-body interaction**. As a result, they have become, to use her own words *“more thoughtful, more complete people, which helps them with their teams, as they are managers”*.

The Training Manager cited the following **new things the delegates had learned**:

- new and unique exercises
- more about balance
- better listening
- improved communication
- understanding of each other
- physical strength through gentle means
- power of the mind through gentle exercises.

The Training Manager was invited to assess **the levels of the delegates' personal growth and development** before and since participating in the PP Project by using a scale of 1- 10.

The Training Manager was asked to place a mark on the following tables<sup>1</sup>. The scoring comprises **1 = no confidence** to **10 = a lot of confidence**<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1: Before the course**

<b>Soft Outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Confidence								9		
Self Esteem							9			
Speaking and Listening								9		
Communication							9			
Participating with Others							9			
Improved Health										
Motivation								9		

<sup>1</sup> The Training Manager has included two delegates, whose participation became more irregular through the course.

<sup>2</sup> The Training Manager's figures represent a general impression of the group's movement as a whole.

**Table 2: After the course**

Soft Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Confidence									9	
Self Esteem								9		
Speaking and Listening								9		
Communication								9		
Participation with Others									9	
Improved Health										
Motivation									9	

With regard to any **practical opportunities** that the delegates might have become aware of, the Training Manager stated they had recognised that there are other ways of developing, of expressing oneself and of working with people and they wished to take the People Plus work further.

The **three things the delegates remembered** were described as follows:

- the professionalism of the tutor
- the exercises with their special movements
- the fun-related and relaxing aspect of the course.

### 3.3 Tutor's Perspective

The CPC tutor, who facilitated the PP course at York & County Press, was interviewed on the 12th February 2003.

In general, the tutor's perspective overlaps with the delegates' and the Training Manager's perspectives. However, some of her comments which do not fully coincide with the delegates' and Training Manager's observations, are set out here in her own words:

*"The delegates developed their skills through a different unusual medium of learning."*

*"Physical contact was difficult for some members."*

*"They developed a heightened self-awareness of how they project themselves, utilising their skills to be sensitive to the actions and communication of other people."*

*"The delegates learned how to monitor their moods, stresses and other negative factors."*

*"They became aware that they were not always as in control of their mind and body as they thought they were."*

*"The People Plus course helped them to identify things about themselves through self-examination, analysis and recognition of their potential."*

*"They learned how they can be effective managers by being non-aggressive, yet at the same time strong and powerful."*

*"They have the ability to develop and improve existing skills that they didn't think they could have done before."*

The tutor was invited to assess **the levels of the delegates' personal growth and development** before and since participating in the PP Project by placing marks on a scale from **1 = no confidence** to **10 = a lot of confidence** in two tables. However, the tutor preferred to comment on the delegates' progress instead.

According to the tutor, the delegates developed each of the soft skills that are listed on the table. For example, the **confidence and self-esteem** of some people was relatively low at the beginning, corresponding to number 4 on the table, but would move up as high a number 7, as the course progressed. The same condition obtained as regards **participation with others**.

*"Individuals, who were strong leaders initially, developed the necessary sensitivities to recognise their forcefulness and began to give others a chance."*

*"As the course progressed, the strong barriers that existed between the senior managers, began to come down. They allowed themselves to be more exposed on a personal level to one another. This had a beneficial effect."*

*"They were bonding at a deeper level than they would ordinarily and no one had an edge over another."*

*"Sharing experiences with each other and constantly working with different partners helped the delegates to defuse power struggles and eliminate competitiveness."*

The tutor pointed out that this change improved the delegates' **speaking and listening skills** as well as their **communication**. On a scale from 1 – 10, this would correspond to a shift from numbers 5 or 6 to numbers 7 or 8, or even 9.

The tutor also pointed out that the delegates have learned from the PP exercises how to maximise a personal opportunity, that is, how to interact effectively.

The three things the delegates remembered from the Project were that:

- strength can result from softness and relaxation
- it was a very unusual programme
- the approach was fun-related and humorous.

## 4. Conclusion

The Government's vision of the future with regard to Workforce Development (WfD) is set out in a report produced by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU):

"In 2010, the UK will be a society where Government, employers and individuals actively engage in skills development to deliver sustainable economic success for all.<sup>1</sup>"

The PIU defines Workforce Development as follows:

"Workforce development consists of activities which increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workplace, thereby improving their productivity and employability.<sup>2</sup>"

The PIU highlights some of the barriers to participation in its report and identifies poor motivation in individuals with low skills as an important obstacle that has to be overcome.

The College of Chinese Physical Culture (CPC) develops many of the key skills that are essential building blocks in the development of the capacity of individuals, e.g.:

- confidence
- self-esteem
- speaking and listening skills
- communication
- participation with others
- motivation
- improved health

### 4.1. People Management

Increasing the capacity of individuals in the above areas has a direct beneficial effect on important aspects of People Management such as absenteeism, creativity in the workplace, motivation in a changing environment, team building, resolving conflict and empowerment.

These aspects in the area of People Management are used as sub-headings in this sub-section.

The businesses in North Yorkshire that participated in the People Plus Project (PP) have benefited in these areas. Through its special activities and exercises, the Project has actively engaged individuals in skills development.

The close link between the People Management issues stated above and the aims of the PP course can be seen in its impact on the delegates:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2001/workforce/report/1.html>, Executive Summary, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.2.

- **Absenteeism**

The **enhanced communication** and **listening skills** of the delegates enable them to air and discuss their personal problems or problems of motivation in *“a more relaxed, harmonious and mutually tolerant”* way<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, *“a more open **participation with other people** on different levels of the organisation”* raised their levels of **confidence** and **self-esteem**, reducing their need to be absent in body and/or spirit.

As Richard Branson once said: “We spend most of our lives working. So why do so few people have a good time doing it?”<sup>4</sup>”

- **Creativity**

The following comments made by some of the delegates reflect values essential for fostering and managing creativity in the workplace.

The PP exercises:

- *“made you look at things differently”*
- *“led to more harmony”*
- *“increased levels of trust between delegates”.*

Creativity begins by looking at things differently and “if you trust people with space and time, generally they come up with the goods. Largely it’s a question of trust, something that has to be given in order to earn it”<sup>5</sup>.

The PP activities and exercises, which focused on **speaking and listening skills, communication** and **participation with others**, drew out and developed the creative potential of the delegates.

- **Motivation**

An important part of the PP activities and exercises is giving and receiving feedback, which is regarded as “...one of the most valuable elements in the motivation cycle”<sup>6</sup>.

By giving and receiving feedback, the delegates’ **speaking and listening skills** improved and their levels of **communication** increased. To use their own words:

- *“the PP exercises made you feel good about learning”*
- *“it was something totally different from everyday activities”*
- *“the relaxed, yet enthusiastic involvement of the tutor, who led by example and without showing off, dwelling on positives rather than negatives”*
- *“more strongly motivated to continue with the improvement of basic skills”.*

<sup>3</sup> The interviewees’ comments, which reflect their own personal growth and development throughout the PP course, are printed in italics and placed in inverted commas.

<sup>4</sup> In: BUSINESS, The Ultimate Resource, Bloomsbury (2002), p. 371.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

- **Team Building**

To build a successful team, it is important among other things:

- > “to communicate openly and honestly, with team members feeling free to say what they think and feel without fear, rancour or anger”;<sup>7</sup>
- > “to listen to others, including those voicing minority or extreme views”<sup>8</sup>.

These pre-requisites for a successful team were realised through the Project’s “*gentle and relaxed exercises*”, which allowed the delegates to **participate with others** in an open, non-competitive, fearless and sensitive way.

The delegates stated that they:

- “became less fearful in handling themselves as well as others and developed a greater team awareness”
- “became more respectful, tolerant and supportive”
- “learned that speeds are different with different people and translated this back into the work situation”
- “are more relaxed with others and able to bring out their potential”.

- **Conflict**

By helping to improve the delegates’ **listening** and **communication skills** as well as develop their **participation with others**, the People Plus activities and exercises enhanced their awareness and understanding of conflict situations, power struggles and aggressive competitiveness.

Moving around in the PP exercises and changing partners frequently took the delegates out of budding conflict situations and power struggles and created self-reflection, detachment and objectivity.

One of the tutors put it like this: “The delegates developed a heightened self-awareness of how they project themselves, utilising their skills to be sensitive to the actions and communication of other people.”

- **Empowerment**

In a “trust culture:

- people are responsible and motivated
- the prevailing atmosphere is of informality and few closed doors
- mistakes are not met with blame or recrimination
- opportunities for learning are plentiful”<sup>9</sup>.

The College of CPC operates on the basis of such a “trust culture”. With its special activities and exercises, the People Plus Project seeks to cultivate and strengthen the soft skills that lead to empowerment. The ultimate aim of this process of empowering people results in increased levels of **confidence** and **self-esteem** as well as improved physical, emotional and mental **health** and **well-being**.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 378.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 378.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.352.

The delegates stated that they:

- *“achieved a higher level of co-ordination and harmony between their mind and body”*
- *“developed a better, more confident body posture, which resulted in a more confident, more gentle and more tolerant approach to other people”.*

**Solving problems** and **managing stress** are aspects of People Management that fully coincide with the areas recorded above.

As has been shown, the College of Chinese Physical Culture is already implementing the Government’s vision for 2010 by applying its People Plus Project to meet the demand of Workforce Development. It uses “activities which increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workplace, thereby improving their productivity and employability”<sup>10</sup>.

#### **4.2. Project has achieved the Learning and Skills Council Objectives**

The Project has achieved the objectives as stated in the contract with the Learning and Skills Council.

In brief, the PP Project:

- promotes the benefits of lifelong learning
- increases participation and access to adult learning
- gives beneficiaries a positive experience of learning
- motivates beneficiaries to want to improve their basic skills and/or access further and higher level qualifications
- delivers a movement, exercise and health-related learning activity accredited through West and North Yorkshire Open College Network (WNYOCN)
- works with 10 businesses in North Yorkshire to support employees who are lacking basic and key skills and/or have not participated in accredited learning within the last 3 years
- offers accreditation in CPC performing, confidence building, speaking and listening
- uses a unique approach to course delivery which is particularly effective at engaging people.

This evaluation has measured the obvious distance travelled by the delegates in terms of increased levels of:

- confidence
- self-esteem
- communication
- speaking and listening skills
- participation with others
- improved health
- raised motivation to want to improve basic skills<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2001/workforce/report/1.html>, Executive Summary, p.2.

<sup>11</sup> See Tables 1 and 2 in Sections 1 and 2.

## 5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the views, comments and observations made by the participants in this evaluation.

### 5.1. Recommendation One

It is recommended that the CPC tutors set up a facilitative focus group after each course, which allows delegates to explore and move towards a deeper understanding of the process of their learning. Managers, for example, may become more aware of their high levels of 'role confidence' in a work context as opposed to their lower levels of 'human confidence' in the CPC activities and exercises.

### 5.2. Recommendation Two

It is recommended that a mechanism be devised and put in place, whereby CPC tutors can strengthen the motivation for feedback in the delegates and measure outcomes of their aims and objectives.

### 5.3. Recommendation Three

It is recommended that further thought be given to a) the length and b) the frequency of the classes, e.g. that a class be extended to 1\_ hours per session and the course run longer than for 14 weeks in order to achieve a more lasting effect.

### 5.4. Recommendation Four

It is recommended that this report be shared with organisations and institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce, Yorkshire Forward, Small Business Fora and other Business-related Partnerships.

# Appendix 1:

## Classes in North Yorkshire

Sarnatech (BNL) Ltd Knaresborough	25th Sep 2002 - 08th Jan 2003
York & County Press York	19th Sep 2002 - 31st Jan 2003
John Boddy Timber Boroughbridge	27th Sep 2003 - 22nd Nov 2002
Massingberd Northallerton Ltd Northallerton	08th Oct 2002 - 21st Jan 2003
Nidd Hall Hotel Harrogate	07th Jan 2003 - 04th Mar 2003
Madeira Threads Thirsk	13th Jan 2003 - 10th Mar 2003
Rudding Park Harrogate	13th Jan 2003 - 10th Mar 2003
Studley Hotel Harrogate	17th Jan 2003 - 14th Mar 2003
Yorkshire Tourist Board (Group 1) York	10th Feb 2003 - 31st Mar 2003
Yorkshire Tourist Board (Group 2) York	11th Feb 2003 - 01st Apr 2003
Yorkshire Tourist Board (Group 3) York	12th Feb 2003 - 02nd Apr 2003

## Appendix 2:

### Questions for Participants <sup>1</sup>

1. What do you like the most about the CPC course?
2. What don't you like?
3. What changes have you noticed in the way you see
  - a) yourself
  - b) other people?
4. How do these changes affect the way you
  - a) treat yourself
  - b) behave with other people?
5. What have you learned about the mind and body?
6. Has this helped you? Give an example.
7. What new things have you learned?
8. What was your level of the following factors before the course and what is it now:
  - a) confidence
  - b) self esteem
  - c) speaking and listening skills
  - d) communication
  - e) participation with others
  - f) improved health
  - g) motivation to improve basic skills?
9. What opportunities have you become aware of since being on the People Plus course?
10. What three things will you remember from this course?

<sup>1</sup> The Questions for Carers and Tutors are identical in content, but have been re-formulated to suit the different audiences.