refused to take alcohol education seriously at all. A further problem was that the careers input of the 5th year was now being started in the 4th year because it was seen as so essential; the time available to address health education issues was therefore being squeezed.

Teachers' attitudes to alcohol

In most schools, the approach and priority given to alcohol education seemed to relate more to the personal attitude of teachers than to detailed knowledge of local drinking patterns or levels of under-age drinking. Some teachers had a very hostile attitude to drink and, therefore, any drinking by pupils caused them anxiety. Such teachers were prone to a prescriptive approach, which included guest speakers from Alcoholics Anonymous to warn of the dangers. Others viewed widespread under-age drinking in public houses as not necessarily a bad thing, as the environment was teaching them about 'sensible' rather than binge drinking; this was more seen as more likely to be the case with village pubs than public houses in large towns.

There was a discernible uncertainty in several teachers about what most pupils' drinking patterns were like. Should they interpret the occasional story in the local press, the discovery of a pupil found drunk in school hours, as signifying widespread abuse of alcohol by young people? Or could they comfortably dismiss these events as isolated incidents in the lives of 'problem' pupils, probably from a 'problem' family?

Implications for the SWAEP

This overall situation creates a major dilemma for the programme. Those schools in sympathy with its philosophy of experiential learning and the importance of being 'free to choose' may be unlikely to be attracted to a programme that is so clearly concerned with a specific health topic. Those schools more prone to concern over the social issue of alcohol abuse may be likely to approach the subject with a narrow focus on the dangers of drink and treatment facilities for those labelled as 'alcoholic'. In both types of school, and in all Education Authorities, the present turbulent environment undermines the ability of nearly all teachers to respond positively.

A series of local co-ordinators have recently been appointed to the South West Alcohol Education Programme. These will be based in the health education units of District Health Authorities or in local councils on alcoholism. Some of these co-ordinators may well try to persuade the Education Authority to support a blanket coverage of secondary schools in their area with the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire. This would open up the prospect of areas obtaining a much sounder understanding of alcohol consumption trends.

The Questionnaire can also offer an exciting way forward for individual schools. The low cost of the service will appeal to those searching for new resources: it helps to relate alcohol to other aspects of emerging lifestyles, and generates discussion on the actual behaviour of young people. However, two schools in the sample have bought into the service but appeared to be making little use of it.

More thought may need to be given as to how schools and teachers can be trained to make maximum use of the Questionnaire along the line of the earlier 'good practice' example. This would need to include a mechanism by which teachers can address their own drinking careers, and how this relates to peer group pressure, work stress, and other relevant factors.

References

A new PSE series for schools on BBC radio

Geoff Marshall-Taylor
Producer, BBC Schools Radio

This autumn, at the request of the Schools Broadcasting Council for the UK, the BBC will be transmitting a series of programmes on Radio 4 VHF/FM. They are offered as tutor-group starters in the area of Personal and Social Education for upper secondary pupils. This article is taken from the producer's first draft of the Teachers' Notes.

The series will consist of 12 ten-minute programmes, the themes of which were chosen after extensive consultation with teachers and advisers who are directly involved in tutorial work with the 14-16 age group. All agreed that recorded material could play a significant part in stimulating discussion and in PSE courses, even though, in the preparation of this series, a constant concern has been that the 14-16 age group is not accustomed to listening to speech on radio. Was the idea, therefore, doomed to failure before the first transmission?

Teachers and pupils were, nevertheless, surprisingly positive in encouraging us to go ahead. They rightly pointed out that the effectiveness of the series depends on two factors:
1. The impact of the material itself.
2. The way in which it is presented in the classroom.

Using the material

The impact. We have chosen a wide range of situations and concerns, which will be presented through drama and interviews. The intention is to reflect these in a variety of social and regional settings.

The presentation. Very often, educational radio material is an extension of the teacher: it is seen in an authoritative role. But these broadcasts are conceived much more as pupils talking to other pupils, and they should be presented as such.

Because of this, the layout of the room is important. An informal setting, such as a small semi-circle, would enable the cassette player to become just another member of the group rather than a voice 'out there' in front. In one school we visited, the teacher actually placed the cassette player on an empty chair to make the point!

Recordings of the programmes can also be used for individual activities.

Finally, it is important to realise that each 10-minute broadcast is made up of small sections. The teacher may only want to use a small part at any one time, perhaps playing a short scene or interview, and asking "What would you have thought or done next?" or "Were you surprised by anything anyone said?" Other questions may be more specific.

Support material. Teachers' notes are available, to provide background information for the series. In addition, a pupils' pamphlet containing worksheets is also available. It is hoped that these will encourage interaction and will stimulate further interest and discussion. The cost
Related issues: There may be many similar causes of acute self-consciousness. For example: (a) Worries about appearance arising from such factors as hair, unfashionable clothes, or from medical conditions such as eczema; (b) Worries about family circumstances arising from such factors as perceptions of one's social or racial background or from one's financial situation.

Discussion: How do we see ourselves? How do others see us? What do they notice? How would one like to be seen? If the boy in the play was your friend, what would you have to say to him to stop him worrying? Could he help himself? Does fashion matter? What if one can't afford to dress in fashion? An important part of such a discussion is to enable pupils to realise that they are not alone in having these or similar anxieties.

Looking ahead
Another series of radio programmes for this age group is planned for the academic year 1987-88. Readers (and listeners!) are urged to contact the planning team with views about the developments they would like to take place; any feedback from this article would also be welcome. Please write to me at BBC Schools Radio, 1 Portland Place, London W1 A 1A2.

A sample programme
The following notes relate to the first programme: Coping with self-consciousness. They are not necessarily representative of the final form of the broadcast.

General comment: This is the first of four broadcasts concerned with self-image and coping skills. One common source of anxiety amongst young people is the view that other people have of them. Something small can become, as one boy put it, 'a mega-worry'! The dramatic scenes and interviews in this programme explore such reactions.

Situation: A boy is unable to look people in the face because he thinks he has spots. In fact they are few and hardly noticeable, but his anxieties build up until, one day, he decides not to go to school rather than face his friends.