

Changing the location of learning under the 14-19 reforms

The 14-19 reforms are designed to give all young people the opportunity to choose a mix of learning which motivates, interests and challenges them, and which gives them the knowledge, skills and attitude they need to succeed in education, work, and life. They will see the breakdown of the traditional route of many young people who stay at school until 16 and then go onto work, training or college. As a result of these reforms some students will start regular attendance at college or work placements at 14 whilst others will continue in schooling to 18 but with weekly or block placements in commercial and/or further education settings.

Schools into college

As part of the strategy, there will be opportunities for school students to attend sessions in further education establishments and the workplace from the start of Key Stage 4 at age 14. There are implications for teachers and trainee teachers.

How might the development of these arrangements affect placements? Do courses that are designated 11-16 need to be concerned if the placement concentrates upon the 14-19 age range and teaching?

The Association for Teachers and Lecturers comment,

“Developing the teaching workforce is essential if these reforms are to be carried through successfully. Teachers and lecturers need timely and adequate training to develop the skills and knowledge required for flexible delivery and settings which reflect learners’ circumstances and preferred learning styles. We are wary of political impatience and interference that may underestimate the degree of preparation that is required for successful transition.” (ATL, 2007)

There are the immediate implications of accompanying pupils in “off-site” education and the regulations associated with those activities. These may also have an impact on staff visiting trainees on placement.

An encouragement comes from the DfES initiative *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto*. Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances. To make this a reality, the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto was launched in 2002. The Manifesto acts as an encouragement for all who see the benefits of out-of-classroom and context-based learning experiences (DfES, 2006)

A cautionary note comes from the earlier DfEE publication “Work Experience - Legal Responsibility and Health and Safety”. Governing bodies are responsible for work experience arrangements and must be aware of their legal/health and safety responsibilities. Schools should ensure that they have written policies clarifying objectives and responsibilities and use placements appropriately and affectively by briefing and debriefing students before/after placements (DfEE, 1999). The relationship between the schools’ policies and those of the college will need to be clearly identified as part of the partnership.

Trainees should be expected to read the policies concerning health and safety of pupils including those that relate to pupils going off-site for lessons and using online resources provided by partnership establishments.

The Increased Flexibility for 14-16-Year-Olds Programme (IFP) started to implement these reforms through vocational and work-related learning opportunities (Teachernet, 2007a). The programme enables further education colleges to form partnerships with schools to enable pupils to study off-site at a college, or with a training provider for one or two days a week throughout key stage 4 with opportunities to work towards worthwhile vocational and work-related qualifications. Trainees should be identifying these activities in their schools and taking the opportunity to develop pupils’ ICT capability, knowledge and understanding in a work context.

The 14-19 Education And Training: A Commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme May 2006 report raises some interesting questions:

- ♦ How to balance educational and training provision for 14-19 year olds to satisfy such a wide range of potentially competing goals?
- ♦ How to provide specialist forms of education and training without undermining learning programmes through multiple transitions?
- ♦ How to enable well informed choices, and ensure that information and opportunities are available for all?
- ♦ Is it best to offer more hybrid programmes to engage more learners or would this just risk destabilising qualifications and pathways that are currently well understood?

A TTRB review is accessible from <http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/ViewArticle.aspx?contentId=13039>

For many years, further education colleges have offered link courses. Pupils attend a local further education college for part of their studies (one-day-a-week or block placement). Characteristically they have been associated with vocational studies and/or designed for pupils with special educational needs. They are rarely associated with academic qualifications.

“As part of the transition process, many special schools (and mainstream schools with pupils with significant special educational needs) run 'link' or 'taster' courses in collaboration with colleges of further education for pupils in the final two years of statutory schooling (aged 14-16); these are pre-vocational and usually focus on independence or generic skills. These involve a regular time each week in college (link courses) or a few days (taster) during which students can become accustomed to a different learning environment, staff and activities both to help them firm up plans for their post-16 learning (to see if the college course would be suitable for them) and also to facilitate the move to the different environment if they have already chosen that option. Good practice is often indicated by close collaboration between school and college over the content and delivery of link courses.” (European Agency, 2007)

A MORI report commissioned by the QCA highlighted,

“the continuing link that teachers see between work-related learning and disaffected and underachieving students. Teachers and senior managers (but interestingly not students) consider work-related learning to be more relevant and important to students in the lower attainment quartiles” (QCA, 2004:6).

The same study discovered that teachers and senior managers see learning about business enterprises, taking part in enterprise and problem-solving ideas, and any activity designed to develop a student's skills for enterprise and employability as the least important elements of work-related learning. The challenge to ICT teachers in the 14-19 area is to use the contexts of work to bring relevance to the teaching.

A response to the 14-19 proposals by NIACE includes

“FE curriculum expertise should be recognised in the partnership arrangements made between schools and colleges. For most school pupils, these are going to be new approaches to teaching and learning, with greater emphasis on practical skills and with stronger links with employment. Innovative curriculum should be encouraged. It is vital that 14-19 vocational education is not seen as the second-class route: the inspection services should have a clear monitoring role here. If the pattern of too many old style link courses is repeated, this work will not succeed.” (NIACE, 2005)

In developing an educational experience that meets the needs of all young people the DfES aims to improve opportunity year on year through focussing on raising achievement and eventually providing new of qualifications and curriculum opportunities.

Bringing the vocational expertise into the classroom

The 14-19 reforms are designed to give all young people the opportunity to choose a mix of learning which motivates, interests and challenges them, and which gives them the

knowledge, skills and attitude they need to succeed in education, work, and life. Some students will begin vocational and other further education-type activities in the traditional school setting rather than wait until they are 16 to make such a choice.

As part of the strategy, there will be opportunities for students to be taught in schools by tutors and trainers from further education establishments and the workplace.

Trainees should identify, by asking mentors and teacher colleagues, whether there are people working with the pupils that are not directly employed by the school. They should also identify whether the school is part of any local partnership with its KS4 students attending sessions in local colleges or work-based settings.

The implications for workforce remodelling

There will be a mixture of teaching staff operating in the classroom:

- ◆ Teachers with QTS obtained through undergraduate and post-graduate study;
- ◆ Teachers with QTS obtained through workplace training including SCITT, GTP, OTT, RTP;
- ◆ Teacher trainees from any of the above groups;
- ◆ Unqualified teachers;
- ◆ Teaching assistants (TAs) including higher level teaching assistants (HLTA); and
- ◆ Other classroom or learning support assistants including staff employed to support specific pupils.

This mix will be increased when the number of learning settings is increased. There will also be a diverse range of staff working with young people as a result of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2007b). Teachers will work more closely with professionals from other services – health, social services etc.

This diversification of adult involvement with learning has implications for:

- ◆ the way in which teachers and trainee teachers plan lessons and provide support for the other adults in the classroom;
- ◆ the role of a single teacher having responsibility for the activities taking place in the classroom; and
- ◆ the pastoral and guidance role of the teacher.

This will influence teaching styles, teaching strategies, resourcing for adults as well as pupils, teacher training and school management under the school workforce remodelling.

In January 2003, the *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement* introduced important changes to teachers' conditions of service, which was implemented in three annual phases from September 2003. The National Remodelling Team (NRT) was established to support this process. The remodelling process is designed to enhance the status and work/life balance of all adults who work in our schools. It enables teachers to focus more effectively on their teaching and supports the growing importance of support staff roles in schools (TeacherNet, 2007b).

Another concern arising from the cooperative and enforced working together of teachers, trainers and tutors from different education sectors in the same classroom are the disparities in pay and funding. Tutors and trainees need to be sensitive to these disparities.

The implications for initial teacher training

Trainees must [Q5] “recognise and respect the contribution that colleagues, parents and carers can make to the development and well-being of children and young people and to raising their levels of attainment” (TDA, 2007).

This is a direct requirement placed on trainees to accommodate all of the staff they come in contact with in their classroom and for them make adequate provision to ensure that those adults support pupils' learning. With this successful partnership the learning environment becomes more effective. "A TA who is well informed and confident will enhance the work of pupils, help them stay on task, enable the teacher to set more ambitious learning tasks, provide more speaking, reading and writing opportunities for pupils, and make useful contributions to lesson plans and pupil assessment." (TDA, 2006)

Further, they must have a commitment to collaboration and co-operative working [Q6] and they should know and understand the roles of colleagues with specific responsibilities [Q20].

Importantly, all trainees must show abilities of team working and collaboration.

"Q32 Work as a team member and identify opportunities for working with colleagues, sharing the development of effective practice with them.

Q33 Ensure that colleagues working with them are appropriately involved in supporting learning and understand the roles they are expected to fulfil" (TDA, 2007).

Trainees should identify the mix of staff working with their students in the classroom, the school and beyond. Trainees should clearly identify the briefing they plan to give to other adults in the classroom before the lesson starts.

The role of employers in changing curriculum

Employers have a dual role in the 14-19 agenda. They have an important responsibility to facilitate the education of young people, both in the workplace and in schools and colleges. They also have a responsibility to give clear guidance as to the basic skills they require for people coming into the workforce.

Many young people have been leaving education without basic skills. The 14-19 agenda identifies those as the *Functional Skills* (see below). This curriculum area has been developed as a result of listening to the concerns of employers and following the publication of the Leitch report on skills in the UK (HM Treasury, 2006). Amongst the recommendations of the report are

- ♦ strengthening the employer voice on skills through creation of a new Commission for Employment & Skills, increasing employer engagement and investment in skills, reforming Sector Skills Councils who will simplify and approve vocational training;
- ♦ increasing employer investment in higher level qualifications, especially in apprenticeships...; significantly more training in the workplace;
- ♦ raising people's aspirations and awareness of the value of skills, creating a new universal adult careers service to diagnose skill needs with a skills health check available for all;
- ♦ government to introduce compulsory education or workplace training up to age 18 following introduction of new diplomas and expanded apprenticeship route.

The functional skill areas are English, mathematics and ICT. These are being placed at the heart of the curriculum for 14-19 year olds, so that no young person leaves education without them.

Employers also have a role in developing new specialised *Diplomas* (see below), which combines skills development and general education. Through the sector skills councils, employers have been involved in the top level design of these new programmes. To achieve these qualifications, young people will need to demonstrate competence in the functional skills and a range of personal, employability, learning and thinking skills, as well as developing some of the specific skills required for employment in a particular area. The Diplomas will reflect local needs for employment and social needs.

The new apprenticeships

Employers have a role in providing *Apprenticeships*. These, in the past, have served many people well as an introduction to a successful career or a job-for-life in an established

industry. In latter years the initiatives like the Youth Training Scheme have failed many young people because they did not fully integrate education, training and employment. Apprenticeships prepare young people, through an employment-based route, for a particular occupation that includes learning and assessment in that particular “occupational competence” - industry-recognised skills. There will be an entitlement to funding for an apprenticeship place for all school leavers who meet the entry criteria (DfES, 2007c). There still remains work to be done to establish the quality and status of apprenticeships in the UK but the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA) and Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) are beginning pilots in spring 2007. To ensure employers are onboard a clearinghouse to match potential employers and apprentices is to be established. There will be a compulsory probation period of six weeks to help ensure apprentices and employers are well matched. A system will be in place to ensure that young people can move between employers and transfer the credit they have gained and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will introduce a quality mark for employers creating quality apprenticeships. There are also plans to ensure that further education and employer-based training is equally funded.

Apprenticeships are separate to Diplomas but the DfES endeavours to ensure that there are clear progression routes between them. Diploma Development Partnerships mapped out clear progression routes from specialised diplomas to apprenticeships and vice versa for the initial proposals in summer 2007.

Employers are also being asked to contribute to the *Young Apprenticeships* (YA, see below). The ATL provides a note of warning, however:

“Employer engagement is in short supply; the Government has to provide appropriate levels of funding and incentives to encourage it” (ATL, 2007).

Trainees should identify the extent to which local employers are engaged in their school curriculum and how these links were developed and fostered.

Young Apprenticeship programme for 14 to 16 year olds

The *Young Apprenticeship* (YA) programme is an opportunity for 14-16 year olds, whilst at school, to combine the practical application of skills and knowledge in a vocational context with the pursuit of qualifications that relate to particular occupational sectors. They will be educated at a school but also attend on a regular basis a company or public sector centre to receive vocational training. The initiative contributes to a more personalised approach to teaching and learning.

It is being designed as an addition to the vocational options at key stage 4 “suited to the needs of motivated and bright 14-16 year olds pupils” (DfES, 2007d) to pursue industry specific vocational programmes outside of school. It will involve extended work placements. (3000 pupils have been involved in programmes since 2004.) None of the programmes have ICT as the focus of the study/apprenticeship; the options are dominated by the service industries (DfES, 2007d).

Some people are highly critical of the pathway because, contrary to the wishes of Tomlinson, the proposal promotes a schism between the academic and the vocational provision at the very time that educational practice might have an opportunity to meld the two together in the location, context and accreditation of learning.

NUT General Secretary Steve Sinnott comments further on the White Paper on 14-19.

“The White Paper uses the language of Tomlinson but has a fundamentally different meaning. Tomlinson was about ensuring all young people had access to both academic and vocational learning.

“The Government has created one diploma for GCSEs and A levels and another for vocational learning. This re-branding does not disguise the fact that the academic/vocational divide has been