

## THE FUTURE OF CAREERS EDUCATION IN SEVEN-AND-A-HALF CHAPTERS

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Bill argues that QCA ideas for curriculum reform are handing us our biggest challenge in a generation. They start up a process which will change the way we work - maybe forever. That story will need at least seven chapters:

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. - 'back to basics'      | employability or well-being?            |
| 2. - 'moving out'          | learning-for-work or learning-for-life? |
| 3. - 'getting smart'       | the real expertise?                     |
| 4. - 'off the edge'        | multilateral partnerships?              |
| 5. - 'linking up'          | worker as citizen or citizen as worker? |
| 6. - 'markets and meaning' | for deeper well-being?                  |
| 7. - 'the reformers'       | our work as change agency?              |

The QCA review will take us little beyond chapter 2. But, Bill argues, we will by then have reached a point of no return. And we'll find we can go a lot farther. The QCA review has its own dynamics.

This article...

...sets out what the QCA says;  
...lists Bill's responses;...

but, most importantly, it...

...points to the dynamics of change.

Oh! and about the future: somewhere along the way there will be a change which is welcome to some careers people, and not to others. It is worth at least half-a-chapter.

In his introduction to the review, QCA-chief Ken Boston sets out its purpose...

*'... we want to encourage schools to be innovative in the way that they plan the school timetable...'*

And why do we want to do that?

*'... to make pupils more enthusiastic about learning.'*

He speaks not a moment too soon. After several decades of obsessive concern with how well - rather than why - our children learn, we've reached a crisis. If ever there were a time when people needed to find out what is going on, and to be enabled to do something useful about it, that time is now. Our students need that, and we all need all our people in that position.

Whatever is in store for careers education, right now it is at the heart of that dynamic for change.

## **principles not prescriptions.**

The QCA review is web-based and browse-able – with many ways in, and many ways of developing your ideas.

That challenge is for local development, by educators whose scheme-development expertise will be called fully into play. There is going to be more of a school say on how human and material resources are engaged, and how that process leads to worthwhile outcomes.

The QCA places more emphasis on principles, less on prescriptions. The review is organised around what are called 'programmes of work'. But that's not what they are: true to its purpose, the review sets out principles on which programmes of work can be based. They appear in a five-fold framework of ideas-for-action.

1. **aims of the learning** – what students gain, and why it is important;
2. **key processes** – how the learning is acquired and used;
3. **key concepts** – ideas that underpin any useful grasp of that learning;
4. **range and content** – topics and issues that students need to examine;
5. **curriculum opportunities** – scheme, project and other learning experiences.

These principles are developed for all areas of the curriculum. And that common framework allows all kinds of links to be made between one area and another. What we have called 'careers education' appears as part of 'economic well-being'. The agency is looking for two-way traffic between what we do and the 'academic' curriculum, so that students can...

- > *'use 'work' as a context for learning across the curriculum'; and*
- > *'reflect on how their learning in all subjects in the curriculum is relevant to their economic well-being'.*

Local development needs principles not prescription. Credible principles for professional autonomy are more useful than statutory requirement and detailed performance indicators. And so, what do we say to the QCA?...

**... 'the QCA review is welcome for the way it locates schools as curriculum-development agencies, and their teachers as professional innovators. The review positions teachers to apply their grasp of education principles to on-going curriculum development. It supports them in developing local accounts of a national commitment. And - in today's challenging world - it mandates them to make that learning relevant to our children's and young people's well-being.'**

More later on what 'across-the-curriculum' must mean, and whether 'well-being' is a useful term.

The LiRRiC proposals on personal and social development (psd) were made to the QCA in anticipation of this review. There are parallels between this use of 'well-being' and LiRRiC's use of 'life-role relevance'. Both make links to *Youth Matters* – which, itself, examines cultural impacts on career development in contemporary society. You'll find an examination of the relationship between the QCA review and the LiRRiC proposals set out in panel one (following page).

panel one

**did the LiRRiC proposals influence the QCA review?**

The LiRRiC proposals were focused on 'life-role relevance in curriculum'. They were developed to inform the review. You will find resonances with LiRRiC in the quotations from the review given on these pages.

What matters more is that the QCA and LiRRiC broadly share an appreciation of change, and a resulting concern with why and how people now learn for their lives. All of this is well documented by both academia and well-founded media.

More important than who said what first are these twelve resonances...

1. the psd curriculum needs greater coherence;
2. standards are important, but no more than well-being;
3. 'academic' curriculum is a resource for well-being;
4. well-being requires a wider range of community links;
5. transfer-of-learning is essential to learning-for-life;
6. by relating learning to life-roles we embed it for future use;
7. that means taking account of both social and emotional pressures;
8. and enabling students to deal with those pressures;
9. as well as to anticipate the consequences of their own actions;
10. the resulting schemes need progressive sequences;
11. and active teaching-and-learning methods;
12. schemes of work should be locally-developed.

The review is a consultation on priorities for learning; LiRRiC is a tool for realising them. The QCA and the LiRRiC proposals inhabit the same world. They serve each other well.

The results of the review will be published this autumn. Adoption is expected from autumn next year. There will be a further two-year period for implementation. But once set in motion this development will continue. And LiRRiC is a practical resource for both getting-started and following-through.

LiRRiC, *Youth Matters* and the QCA review link careers work to a wider scenario. But a first and natural urge is to take a close-up look to make sure that the ideas that drive careers education are still well enough represented in the QCA review.

**close-up careers work**

The review uses an optical metaphor - its 'lenses' focus on learning which may be found in all parts of the curriculum. One of those lenses is 'personal development'. To zoom in is to find at the centre what we have been calling 'personal, social and health education', 'careers education', 'the work-related curriculum', 'education for enterprise' 'financial capability', 'education for citizenship' and 'religious education'. All linked together.

Religion and citizenship have their own areas in the review. The more linked-up range of ideas is assembled in what is inelegantly called 'personal social, health and economic education'.

In the figure (following page) the bracketed terms do not appear in the review; but they do more elegantly cover the ground. Explained later.

**figure**  
**personal development in curriculum**

education for citizenship (civil well-being)	personal social health and economic education (psheel!)		religious education (spiritual well-being)
	personal well-being	economic well-being	

There is nothing in the review about timetabling. But the way the review separates citizenship and religion encourages their separate timetabling. Citizenship and religion are in a semi-detached position.

And so we are left with two start-up levels of linking here – both at the centre:

- > between personal roles and economic roles;
- > and, within economic well-being, between worker and consumer roles.

It's a start. We'll get to what more there can be later.

**why 'well-being'?** We are used to 'employability' as the term which affords our work its value. It means students positioning themselves in a market place, so that they look good to others, and - therefore – are likely to do good for themselves.

'Well-being' doesn't exclude that, but it includes more. Employability refers to what we have to offer to others, and that contributes to our own well-being. But economic well-being calls up what a person needs, as well as what a person has to offer. Few careers educators will have any problem with that.

And maybe fewer students will. Looked at in one way, employability is a readiness to jump through other people's hoops. And, whatever we do, there have always been some youngsters who have no energy for that. But the idea of investing energy in being able to look after your own well-being? Well, we need more ways of talking with our students about that. And the QCA is mandating us to find them.

The term 'well-being' links the review to the five aims of *Youth Matters*:

1. **enjoy and succeed** – for example *'have a say in what and how you learn'*;
2. **stay safe and manage risks** - for example *'develop skills such as negotiation and assertiveness to resist unhelpful pressure'*;
3. **maintain a healthy lifestyle** - for example *'see the consequences that some decisions might have on their health and that of others'*;
4. **form relationships and participate** - for example *'understand the multiple roles individuals play'*;
5. **be ready for working life** - for example *'understand the economy' and 'be an informed consumer of financial services'*.

The review claims that personal well-being links to aims 1–4, and economic well-being to 5. Too narrow a view of economic well-being. It should link to managing a household budget, personal spending, being a savvy consumer, and dealing with advertising and sales pressure. That links it to all the YM aims. And so...

... **'the underlying principle of well-being is in tune with contemporary needs - with regard to community, to citizenship, to belief, to work and to learning. Contemporary conditions require that we pay more attention to the well-being of our children in all these respects. The links to the aims in *Youth Matters* give the review a useful coherence. However, 'economic well-being' should be linked to more than the fifth YM aim. It should, for example, point to the need to help students, not just with the structures of financial services and as investors, but with how to manage their lives as individual and household earners, as consumers and debtors, and in dealing with commercial media pressures.'**

The review's direction-of-travel is strongly towards restoring a lost balance in how we educate our children. For a generation we have been working on an economics-driven and competitive curriculum. At times educational values have become indistinguishable from commercial ones. Those decades have done well-documented damage to our children's well-being.

The QCA is aware: and so personal development across the curriculum is about a more inclusive and linked-up life...

*'... at its heart is a sense of the individual and the roles each person has to play in life – in a family, as a neighbour, with friends and as members of a community...' – as well as 'as an employee.'*

**looking for careers education.** The review does pretty well at ticking careers education's boxes. Economic well-being will still lead students to where, among other things, they can:

- > *'envision a positive future for themselves'; and*
- > *'assess their changing needs, interests, values, skills, abilities and attitudes'.*

and...

- > *'use a variety of different information sources efficiently and critically'; and*
- > *'recognise bias and inaccuracies in information'.*

These sound like 'self development' and 'career exploration' to me. However, for some reason that I don't understand 'career management' is a key process rather than a key concept. But it is there, saying that students, should, among other things, be able to:

- > *'understand how to seek and secure opportunities'; and*
- > *'develop, review and adapt their plans'.*

And, in working through curriculum opportunities for economic well-being, careers educators will find familiar ideas:

- > *'contacting people from business';*
- > *'contacting careers guidance specialists';*
- > *'ideas, challenges and applications from the business world';*
- > *'investigating opportunities in learning and work';*
- > *'discussing contemporary issues in work'.*

But, in personal well-being, you'll find more:

- > *'understanding that all relationships affect everything we do in our lives';*
- > *'reflecting critically on their own and others' values';*
- > *'reflecting on personal strengths and achievements';*
- > *'recognising how others see them and give and receive feedback';*
- > *'recognising that actions have consequences';*
- > *'challenging prejudice and discrimination assertively'.*

What QCA is now saying reaches beyond the rather short list of career-management procedures that too many of us have had somehow to squeeze in. They speak more of how to learn, why learn anything, and how that learning helps people deal with what is happening in and around the way they live their lives.

The most dyed-in-the-wool defender of careers education should not be disappointed by that.

## wide-angle careers work

That was the optical zoom-in, here comes the pulled-back positioning shot. Aims feature prominently in QCA's big picture. That landscape is populated by students who are...

- '... **successful learners** - who have enquiring minds and think for themselves - who know how to process information, reason, question and evaluate... who know about big ideas and events that shape our world...'*
- '... **confident individuals** – who are self-aware and deal well with their emotions... recognise their talents and have ambitions... are willing to try new things and make the most of opportunities...'*
- '... **responsible citizens** – who are well prepared for life and work... take account of the needs of present future generations in the choices they make... can change things for the better.'*

This is also new thinking. It pursues achievement but it also intends that students will learn to some purpose. It is a commitment to both standards and relevance.

But, surely, we've heard this before? So we have: the LiRRiC papers set out statements like this. going back to an education act that handed down a curriculum too much subject-based, content-dominated and standards-driven. There were aspirations to relevance; but the apparatus was an after-thought, smuggled in as a package of ill-thought-through cross-curricular themes. They never had a chance.

So what's new about this? It is this: the relevance of learning is integral to what we are being asked to do. The QCA are not only getting the aspiration right, they are designing in an apparatus for its delivery...

- '... more than what is taught in individual subjects... an entire planned learning experience....'*
- '...taking place in and out of the classroom and calling for active teaching and learning methods...'*
- '...with, transferability of skills and understanding, together with experience of a variety of social and emotional contexts.'*

The National Curriculum consigned careers education to the edge of timetable. We have not had time, space or resources to meet the needs of our work. Personal-development across the curriculum has those resources.

But there is nothing inevitable about how this thinking will work out. We are going to have to make it work. However, unlike the cross-curricular themes, it is thinking that can be made to work. More about that later.

**making links – civil well-being.** Citizenship holds a semi-detached position in the personal-development curriculum. Advocates for citizenship show signs of wanting to position it like a subject in a subject-based curriculum. Nonetheless, citizenship is often delivered in an integrated relationship - often with careers education.

But, at the moment, citizenship is under serious political pressure. Policy looks to it for combating exclusion and building social cohesion – as it once looked to us. It is far from certain that separate-subject citizenship can deliver on this.

Actually 'citizenship' may prove to be more of an eighteenth-century than a twenty-first-century-term. The most obvious ways in which 'citizenship' is exercised are as voter, activist, party-member and volunteer. But the most recognisable ways in which people realise their membership of society are as neighbour, friend, consumer, campaigner and worker. 'Citizenship' is too much of an abstraction. It seems that people find how they belong to society less in large-scale politics and nationhood, more in close-up attachments and allegiances.

To be fair, 'career' may also turn out to be another of those earlier-century abstractions. People know more about how work involves being an applicant, employee,

entrepreneur, colleague, friend, consumer, partner and neighbour. Which overlaps 'career' with 'citizenship'. If the question were worth asking, it would be hard to say whether career is a part of citizenship, or citizenship a part of career.

People will, of course, continue to find and claim their position in civil, political and economic society - as employees and entrepreneurs as well as voters and party members. But, increasingly, they find those memberships in their families, voluntary organisations, and charities, in the campaigns they support, and on the shopping mall. Whether any of these links has more to do with citizenship than it has to do with careers is a question of limited meaning - and not much usefulness.

We can develop from all this a useful concept of 'civil' as well as 'economic well-being'. But this is in the future. It belongs to a more fully integrated form of the QCA ideas. The term 'civil well-being' does not feature in the current review.

Any more than does the term 'spiritual well-being'.

**looking deeper – spiritual well-being.** Unlike both careers education and education for citizenship, religious education has a clearly-mapped academic discipline of its own. That knowledge and method is as deeply embedded in our culture as of history and science.

But you would have to go back a long way to find when it was first seen as a way of maintaining society-wide social cohesion. Its position has been secured (in statute anyway) as part of the settlement which brought church schools into state provision. That may help to explain its semi-detached position in personal development.

And now, what we call 'spiritual' concerns increasingly feature in our national conversation. Many of our most articulate cultures are no longer dominantly secular. We hope to find meaning in the beliefs, practices and values of spirituality. People are wondering whether there might be more to making a living than working and shopping.

Well, some are.

Religion is also an abstract concept, predating even the eighteenth century - by quite a margin. But, like citizenship and careers, we can think of religion in terms of what people do – for example as believer, guru, disciple, celebrant, worshipper and communicant, and also as volunteer, neighbour, friend, and campaigner. Which puts it into serious overlap with both citizenship and careers.

Like citizenship, religious education has its own dynamics. And like citizenship, the review will permit it to maintain its semi-detached position in relation to the personal-development curriculum. Both may do so, at least for the coming three-year period for implementation of the QCA reforms.

But not forever.

### **getting smart – curriculum and community**

It will take longer than three years to realise the potential in these reforms. (LiRRiC gives itself a longer timescale.) The starting point is the 'pshee' idea of linking personal with economic well-being. That need give careers educators no serious problems: it can be done in the implementation period; most schools are doing something like it now.

But ideas for 'spiritual' and 'civil well-being' will need to evolve. It is true that many schools already make links between careers and citizenship. But the semi-detached way that the QCA has located them means that both can readily slot into subject-based timetables. That kind of enclosure will thwart further radical thinking. We'll see what happens when they get more cultural and political breathing-space. We can hope that it comes soon.

But the wide-angle development of cross-curricular integration is harder to anticipate. My bet is that this is, for-now, the way to go.

The tools are in the QCA's five-fold framework. It does three things:

- > it links well-being to the subject-based curriculum;
- > it links subjects together which are separated by conventional timetabling;
- > it links all to community-based expertise and experience.

Some of this is happen now. But with much between-school variability.

Some schools may be swayed by the bad press given to cross-curricular work. Advocates for both citizenship and careers education are on record as rejecting it. The criticisms are misplaced. Although critics sometimes (and mistakenly) use the term 'integration', they are actually rejecting 'infusion'. Infusion is a discredited idea: it was how the cross-curricular themes were meant to work. The assumption was that every 'academic' teacher could cover some aspect of what students need to know about learning-for-life. It was thought that we would involve more teachers in, for example, careers education. Our people knew it couldn't work; and it didn't.

The QCA term 'integration' has more to do with the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative than the National Curriculum. Integration does not invade academic timetable, instead it occasionally restructures timetable, so that academic experts can take part in psd schemes. But it calls only on people who are in a position to help, and who are committed to the value of this kind of help. They then take part in one or more of a series of long-slot, and carefully-managed, events. Each is organised around a specially-selected and developed set of resources. Each processes a planned series of school-and-community-based learning experiences. Each leads to well-defined and transferable learning outcomes. While infusion is sporadic and diffuse, integration is managed and focussed.

The QCA's personal well-being section touches on possibilities for drawing in academic expertise:

... 'on sex and relationships, drugs, alcohol and tobacco linked with work in science';  
... 'on diversity and dealing with prejudice and discrimination linked with work in citizenship, history and RE.'

LiRRiC touches on more.

This is smart: subject teachers will often have more expert knowledge of such matters than anybody else in the school. And they will know more about how the students can find out more. But that kind of expertise is not all that this kind of work requires. Hence the need for shared schemes.

Like LiRRiC, the QCA is aware of the need for integration, rather than infusion:

'...It is important that links are planned and coordinated and that young people have time to reflect on the sum of their experiences in order to maximise their learning and its impact on their lives.'

Infusion erodes subject boundaries, but integration does not. It restructures those boundaries, for specific schemes and on the basis of useful links. The distinctiveness of integration needs to be understood both by our people and by their 'academic' colleagues. Far from being a strategy for involving more teachers, integration looks for fewer, but better-prepared, helpers.

And, as both LiRRiC and the QCA point out, this restructuring deals with the most pressing practical issue for old-fashioned careers education – it gets our work off the edge of timetable.



And so...

...‘the review is right to urge a more integrated approach to curriculum development. There are useful suggestions, in ‘personal well-being’, for making cross-curricular links. And there is also a useful alert to the need for careful management. These suggestions and alerts should appear for all subjects. Furthermore, in addition to what is already said, it is necessary to say that these integrative links cannot be left to develop spontaneously or sporadically. They need to be incorporated into a coherent programme of specifically-planned and well-managed events, each with clearly-identified resources, processes and outcomes.’

All that we know about why and how people learn points to this necessity: learning-for-life needs to link learning to learning. What is learned from one experience is always taken with what is learned in another. It is not possible to make useful sense of learning-for-life in any other way. We have evolved, mentally and emotionally, to find the patterns across the experiences. Background thinking to this is set out in panel two (following page).

panel two

**getting smarter - a brain-friendly curriculum**

What we know about how our brains have evolved offers a useful way of appreciating what the QCA is doing. The brain is not one organ: it is network linking a variety of ways of dealing with different learning needs. So, any one of a number areas might kick-in to ensure that we retain what is useful, and recall it when we need it.

The brain's responses include what we mean by ‘mind’. And how the mind works is important to what we do in curriculum:

- > **procedural learning** retains how to do things – such as kicking a ball, key-boarding a computer, accessing a data base, conjugating a verb and applying a formula;
- > **semantic learning** retains information – on facts and factors about how things are, which we build into a mind map of what goes on.
- > **episodic learning** retains accounts of what happens, as stories - it shows how one thing leads to another, and is infused with feelings as well as talk and image, so that most of what we recall is episodic (‘flashbulb’ memories are intense, recalled in sharp detail).

That is what your brain can do for you. But there's more to a mind than a brain. Your brain does not float in a vat, it lives in a body. That body experiences a world. And your brain interacts with all of that. And so...

- > **experience-based learning** refers to how your brain, at many neurological and chemical levels, adapts to what is going on, in the world around you and in your body - the very structures of learning are expanded and limited by what you encounter, as well as by health-and-fitness, substances and temperament.

Because the brain is a network, no single bit of your mind ever takes care of any single thing you do. But it is possible to make a useful transposition from how the mind works to what curriculum can usefully do. And all the elements are in the QCA review.

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**a procedural curriculum** enables students to find things out, make things happen and get things right. Some careers education is learning how to find what you need to know, make a match between self and opportunity, and be effective in moving on. The QCA has taken this on board: in speaking of employability it seeks...

*‘...the development of personal-learning and thinking skills...  
.... and activities and experiences to develop learning’.*

Learning like this demands practice – as it does in physical education, design-and-technology, language, music and mathematics. There is, in all these activities, a skills base, requiring active learning and useful feedback. Careers education also enables learning like this – for example in how to find information, link self to opportunity, and look good in a selection process. All career-management skills are procedural learning. And there has rarely been enough time to practice, get feedback and apply procedural learning to its full potential.

And the area of procedural learning to which we have not yet given nearly enough attention is knowing how to learn – to find out, to subject what you find to scrutiny, and to get to the point where you know what to do about it.

Life coaches and therapeutic programmers are strong on selected aspects of procedural learning. A lot of people seek knowledge of how to deal with things, so that they can be happy. This makes procedural learning popular and saleable.

But it is not enough. Any defensible idea of education does not conceive students merely as carriers of skills. And, while teachers do not actually want to make their students miserable, they do seek to enable students to move about a bit, in the networks of their minds. And there is more to well-being than happiness.

**a semantic curriculum** moves on from the ‘how?’ to the ‘what?’, ‘who?’, ‘when?’ and ‘where?’ of what goes on. It means becoming aware of facts and identifying factors. Much of subject-based and content-dominant ‘academic’ curriculum, is set out in such terms.

In our work the QCA acknowledges the importance of...

*‘... up-to-date labour-market information, showing the diversity of local and national employment opportunities, self-employment and information on learning options, skills, occupations and progression routes.’*

We call it labour-market information (LMI). But there is more to semantic learning than that, students also need to...

*‘...explore sources of images and ideas about work and enterprise in individual and group activities, and discuss contemporary issues at work.  
Those issues include equal opportunities, sustainable living and ethical investment.’*

This is a commitment to the importance to career learning of both knowing and valuing. Skills-based learning, from sport to mathematics, does not just help people to know what to do, it connects them to ways of expressing beliefs and values about what they do. There is no rounded learning without it. And it is a cultural acquisition.

It offers careers education new ways for thinking about LMI and employability. As the QCA implies, there are more questions about LMI than economists ask; and there are more issues for employability than commerce acknowledges. Any active mind will engage in those issues. This is not just skill, it is understanding: it is not just procedure, it is culture; it is not just training, it is education.

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**an episodic curriculum** does not ignore facts and factors, or beliefs and values; but it moves learning on by engaging students in gathering and setting down narrative episodes. Narrative shows how one thing leads to another. Much of curriculum can be set out in narrative form. Some subject can hardly be developed in any other way. Literature, religious education and history are among them. Story-telling is the prototypical teaching-and-learning method.

In our work, those episodes can be from other people's stories, and from students' own. They take students into tracking causes and effects - how things have worked out, and how they can be made to work better. But stories also set out accounts of how people have points-of-view. So that there is always disagreement about what is worth doing, worth paying attention to, and worth investing energy in.

In developing ideas for personal well being the QCA touches on all of these matters. For example, students, it says, should be able to:

- > *'negotiate within relationships, recognising that actions have consequences';*
- > *'use skills of communication, negotiation, assertiveness and empathy';*
- > *'value differences between people and demonstrate empathy and a willingness to learn about people different from themselves'.*

Much of what we remember we remember in narrative form. The brain is organised to retain emotionally-laden stories of important events. Through narratives we explain how things got to be this way, and wonder what we can do about them. It is hard to imagine any kind of learning which is more important when people need to explain what they will do, and anticipate what their consequences might be.

**an experience-based curriculum** takes account of students' own emotional-and-social background to learning – in inner life and among other people. Before they come to us, their minds have adapted: they restructure learning around their own finding-and-feeling experiences. The point here is a big one: curriculum is not necessarily an originating cause, it is our attempt to intervene in a process that is already underway.

So students do not just learn what the curriculum sets out; they learn what they make of it. And what they make of it is influenced by where they have been, who they have been with, what has happened, and how they feel it about it. All of those influences can be deeply embedded, so much so that students are barely aware of their influence. The government green paper *Youth Matters* makes a point of how young people are influenced by families and by each other – especially by media, computer and web-based contacts.

Take procedural curriculum: any skill we seek to enable is seen in the context of student experience. Skills are, then, acquired as students believe that they can help, as they value them, and as they expect to be able use them. Skills are not an originating cause of anything: the origins are in prior learning-from-experience, and the mental and emotional structures that experience sets up. And students adapt use, or discard skills on the basis of that experience. If we want to embed that learning we must expand the experience.

And take semantic learning: students already have their own experiences of work, and they know of other people's. Any learning of LMI we set up will be taken in the context of that prior learning. It is labour-market experience (LME). The range of that experience is not represented in LMI. Some students will have grounds for the suspicion that it cannot tell them all they need to know. If we want them to understand any aspect of opportunity structures to the point where they are prepared to act on it, we must expand their LME.

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And so the originating cause for career development may not be skill development, and its most valued effect may not be employability. Too much depends on prior experience.

Careers workers understand this. We know how students learn from upbringing and neighbourhood. We also know that what we do needs to be embedded through experience-based learning – in mentoring, experience-of-work and student volunteering.

What is learned from experience can be re-learned by experience-based curriculum. *Youth Matters* affirms it...

*‘...something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to’*

And QCA restates it...

*‘direct contact with people from business could include work-based activity –  
such as work visits, work shadowing and work-based projects...  
and school-based activity -  
such as enterprise, work simulations, talks and careers fairs.’*

A brain-friendly curriculum needs to do more. In order to fire-up students for new learning, the experiences we build into the programme need to be...

*...something interesting to do , somewhere exciting to go,  
and someone talk to who really knows what's going on.*

But the end-point will always be...

*...skills students find worth developing, things they believe worth knowing,  
and stories they think worth telling.*

What they find worthwhile will depend on the extent to which what we do is as mind-expanding and as stimulating as any of their prior experiences. Community-linked experience-bases often most fire-up this learning.

## key features of curriculum

There are some things that students need to learn for their well-being which only curriculum can enable. These are key features of curriculum. The QCA review refers to them. They are in the way that curriculum can:

- > **enable processes:** so that students learn how to learn;
- > **ensure progression:** so that students move forward from basic to useful learning;
- > **get transfer-of-learning:** so that students see how they can use their learning in their lives;
- > **build teams:** so that student learning is broadly-based in experience.

**enabling processes.** In current thinking about curriculum the valuing of what people learn is being overtaken by the valuing of how people learn. It is a distinction between learning coverage and learning process. Coverage can quickly outdate, but knowing how to learn serves for a lifetime.

The QCA framework includes 'key processes'. But there is an ambiguity. Process can refer to the skills that students need as an outcome and in order to function. But process can also refer to how students know how to engage in reliable, useful and sustainable learning. The distinction closely corresponds to what the QCA calls functional skills (an outcome) and personal-learning skills (a process). In contemporary learning it is critical not to fudge the distinction.

The QCA account of economic well-being lists key processes under the headings of 'self awareness', 'careers exploration' and 'enterprise'. The resulting lists are, for the most part more like functional outcomes than learning processes. And so...

**...the effectiveness of school-based curriculum development rests on the engagement of learning processes. There should therefore be more in 'economic well-being' on processes. Processes refer to how students are enabled to locate useful sources of information about self and opportunity, to check out one source against another, to deal with unwelcome facts and impressions, to take account of point-of-view in what people say on economic well-being, to resist arbitrary social and cultural pressures on the way they resolve these issues, and to expand their bases for learning about what goes on in economic life.'**

For the purposes of local curriculum development, it is essential to point to how students get a reliable, useful and sustainable hold on such matters - on how they learn to learn.

**ensuring progression.** Progression requires that students are taken through a step-by-step learning journey – each step being a new and different piece of learning. All complex learning needs to be learned progressively.

In personal-development progression, the journey is from forming first impressions to arriving at a basis for sustainable action. When that learning has any depth, designing progression is critical. Getting it wrong can lead to overwhelming confusion - and sometimes to damaging misunderstanding.

The QCA review sets out progression from key-stage-3 to -4. It does so in terms of how, during these years, students' circumstances change: they meet new situations and they need to deal with different demands. This is programme progression - moving from one form of provision to the next on the basis of what is happening 'out-there'.

But learning progression is different: it refers to how, 'in-here', students move through their own inner experience of learning. In the review of economic well-being the QCA sets out this inner learning progression with two terms: developing 'awareness' in KS3, and reaching 'understanding' in KS4. Support for the local curriculum development needs more, And so...

**...the differences between KS 3 and 4 in 'economic well-being' are currently largely identified in terms of programme progression – how a programme changes in response**

to different stages of student experience. School-based curriculum development needs more on learning progression. Innovators will then be able to show how gathering information and impressions can be developed – stage by stage - into a basis for mapping what is going on, leading to assigning priorities for action, developing into being able to explain what is happening, and to suggesting what can be done about it. Learning for sustainable and fulfilling action in a complex world requires this level of learning progression.'

Only curriculum can accommodate learning progression.

**getting transfer-of-learning.** Transfer-of-learning means that what is learned in curriculum must be useable in life. In psd there is an absolute requirement that learning is transferable. If learning is to be applied to life it must embed the learning by making it credible, useful and accessible. And it must test the transfer by providing for it to be rehearsed, tried-out and modified.

LiRRiC makes that work rest on the use of life role. The examination of role calls up recognisable images, in answer to questions about 'being where?', 'with whom?', and 'taking on what?'. And what students get ready to do about that plainly needs to be rehearsed, tried-out and modified.

It entails establishing life-role markers at start-up...

*'you can use this learning in your lives when you are in these life-roles...'*

...and, when students have completed the scheme, by extending the range of markers at follow-through...

*'... where else in life's roles can you use this learning?'*

But, during the scheme, transfer-of-learning also requires that its usefulness is rehearsed, tried-out and modified. This is curriculum work. It calls for more time, a different kind of learning space and a special kind of support - different from what any other form of provision can afford.

QCA says much of this in the introduction to personal-developmental...

*'...a planned learning experience... in and out of the classroom... calling for active methods... for progress and transfer-of-learning.... a sense of the roles each person has to play in life - in a family, as a neighbour, with friends, as an employee and a member of a community...'*

But in cross-curricular work this needs to be understood across the board. And so...

**...curriculum development for personal development requires a statement on the essential significance of transfer-of-learning. School-based innovation needs to be alerted to this necessity, in the introduction to 'personal-development across the curriculum'. Without learning being transferred from curriculum to life, the QCA aims cannot be fully achieved. Scheme development which engages students' roles is recognised by them as credible, useful and accessible. That learning is, therefore, more likely to be transferred from curriculum to life. The learning will be embedded, making it more likely that students will be reminded of their learning in their lives. Students need this. And as a society, we all need all our people so to assign this kind of value to learning, life-long.**

It is of course true that face-to-face guidance can and must enable transfer-of-learning. But only curriculum can provide the time, space and support needed for rehearsing, trialing and modifying the learning.

**building teams.** There is a link between identifying life-role relevance and planning scheme resources. Understanding where the learning is to be transferred gives a clue to the human and material resources to involve. Material resources need to be recognised by students as representing the reality of their lives.

But the most significant resources for linking learning to life are people. The personal development curriculum is socially interactive. An important resource for learning is the different points-of-view of the students themselves. Managing what are often their feeling-laden disagreements is an important part of the process.

But there are other human resources. They include academic teachers, who are able to engage students with their expertise; and community-based experts, who know well some aspect of the lives of people in the community.

But students also value contact with people who can, on the basis of day-to-day experience, put them in touch with what is going on. They include mentors, experience-of-work contacts, former students, and the people they meet in community-linked projects.

There is here a radical challenge to the way the programme is managed. Personal development in curriculum calls on a diverse team of helpers. It includes professional colleagues who can help, but are not specialists. It draws on community-based experts, who can speak of life in the community with an authority that nobody in the school can match. And it calls on people whose authority is in the recounting of their finding-and-feeling experience. All of this requires a special kind of management.

The QCA is alert to this. It speaks of curriculum as, among other things, requiring that...

- > *'everybody in the school is aware of the aims and their own contribution';*
- > *'families, pupils, local employers, school staff, community members, local university are engaged';*
- > *'the programme is seen as an entire planned experience – made up of lessons, events and out-of-hours learning.'*

Management of this network is not like the work of departmental heads. Much of the help is volunteered. It is carried out on the basis of both expertise and experience. Some is housed entirely outside the school. Effective team development presents a distinctive challenge.

And so...

**... 'school-based innovation requires an understanding of the dependence of useful curriculum on appropriate resources. The introduction to 'personal development across the curriculum' should, therefore, alert schools to how effective scheme-development depends on effective team-development. Programme coordination calls on high levels of both curriculum know-how and team-building insight. These are not tasks that it is reasonable to expect one person to take on. Because effective team building is such a key component in this work, programme coordination for personal development across the curriculum will itself, require a number of team roles.**

What the QCA is saying will radically reposition what we have been calling 'careers education'. It is going to call for a more mature rebalancing of what face-to-face work can achieve, and what curriculum can achieve.

This realisation will change the way in which partnerships are agreed between schools and outside providers. Unilateral partnerships with guidance providers will be expanded into multilateral partnership agreements – negotiated with a range of community-based groups.

And we may not for much longer be able to assume that curriculum is what you find in schools and colleges. Curriculum does not belong to teachers, it is community property. And it is a set of ideas that can be worked out in different community-based

organisations. Their people will, like anybody else, need to grasp the underlying principles that shape its distinctive contribution to our work. But process, progression, transfer and team-building can be worked out in other-than-schools – particularly where those organisations are close to the experience of the people they are seeking to help.

### **the future in seven-and-a-half chapters**

There is a story to be anticipated here. And not just for careers education. Like all stories it will be an unfolding account of how one thing leads to another. And that unfolding will reveal underlying dynamics. All good stories surprise.

The characters, the setting and the plot have been examined above. It will take time to see what can happen. But if I'm still around in ten years (and you shouldn't assume that I won't be) I expect to be able to write it - in seven chapters.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>1. – 'back to basics'</b>      | finding the principles of careers education, and getting them embedded in economic well-being;  |
| <b>2. – 'moving out'</b>          | linking learning for economic roles to personal roles - so that what is learned for any role is learned for all;  |
| <b>3. – 'getting smart'</b>       | drawing on expertise in school-wide curriculum and community, and on the experience in community;   |
| <b>4. – 'off the edge'</b>        | securing an integrated position, with well-managed schemes of work - key events in timetabling;   |
| <b>5. – 'linking up'</b>          | as boundaries on citizenship relax, linking economic roles to civil roles - developing the idea of civil well-being;  |
| <b>6. – 'markets and meaning'</b> | as boundaries on religious education relax, acknowledging the need for human purpose in what students learn and in what they do about work - developing the idea of spiritual well-being; |
| <b>7. – 'the reformers'</b>       | using our position, at the heart of a coherent curriculum, as a basis for helping to bring about on-going curriculum reform.  |

The QCA does not say much about the dynamics of reform. But the way its review is constructed implies a need for on-going reform – curriculum wide. The LiRRiC proposals have more.

Can I know now that this will happen then? Of course not. But, like our clients and students, we need an anticipation of what can happen, it helps us know what to do about what needs to happen. A grasp of the pushes-and-pulls puts us in a better position for action. The dynamics are a springboard.

Anticipations like this are always best framed as a story. This may not be the story. It may not even be the story that most helps most students. You may have a better story. In which case, you should tell it.

**half a chapter.** There is one consequence of the review that we have not fully worked out - the language is changing. 'Well-being' now rightly occupies the position that the narrower term 'employability' has occupied. And the abstract noun 'career' is beginning to look of doubtful use. (The Career-learning Café may become just 'www.hihohiho.com!')

If 'career' falls out of use it will be because we've found more useful ways of talking about what needs to be learned. Terms like 'job seeker', 'job applicant', 'employee', 'entrepreneur' and 'investor' speak of what we have been calling 'career' – but in concrete and recognisable terms. Understanding how and why that has proved to be so would be worth at least half-a-chapter.



But what about terms like 'voter', 'party member', 'activist', 'neighbour' and 'volunteer' – might they consign 'citizenship' to the same redundancy? And I find the use of 'believer', 'worshipper', 'guru', and 'communicant' usefully un-mysterious ways of talking about 'religion'.

And there are also some role terms – 'friend', 'partner', 'parent', 'consumer' and 'debtor' - which belong to all of any learning for well-being.

**ideas not organisations.** The disappearance of 'careers' does not mean the loss of career workers. We are talking about changing structures not vanishing people. Neither are we talking about vanishing principles. Indeed, it is the principles that drive the story. If any dyed-in the wall defence of anything is to be mounted it must be a defence of our principles, not our structures. Ideas not organisations.

Having said that, principles have their own dynamics. Things will develop whatever we do. Because if we don't somebody else will. And, so in the end, we can't assume that the people delivering the well-being curriculum ten years from now will be, in any sense, the descendants of careers educators. There are plenty of other people in a position to manage these reforms. So there are no inevitabilities in history. But there are dynamics.

*Youth Matters* is stronger than the QCA on what sort of community resources to engage. QCA is stronger than *YM* on what sort of curriculum to set up. And what schools and colleges do about curriculum will be critical determinants of the extent to which the aims set out in *YM* can be realised. So what we do here can be understood in terms of what the QCA catalyses and what *Youth Matters* mandates.

But it is best understood in terms of what our society now needs.

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## more help

find a browse-able version of this monograph at  
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