

SOUTH WEST OBSERVATORY

Skills and Learning  
Intelligence Module



## **Generic Employability Skills II**

**Produced by the Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning at the University of Nottingham**

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# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
Acknowledgements	5
<b>Section 1 Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Section 2 Project Design and Methods</b>	<b>11</b>
Stage 1: Desk Research	11
Stage 2: Case Studies	11
Stage 3: Development of Good Practice Framework	12
Stage 4: Reporting	12
<b>Section 3 Generic Employability Skills</b>	<b>13</b>
What are generic employability skills?	13
Why are generic employability skills important?	14
<b>Section 4 Mapping Exercise</b>	<b>16</b>
Where generic employability skills are being explicitly developed	16
How generic employability skills are assessed and certified	19
Profile of Achievement (City and Guilds)	19
Certificate in Preparation for Employment, Certificate in Job-Seeking Skills and Certificate in Career Planning (OCR): Entry Level 3 – Level 2	20
Certificate in Preparing for Employment (City and Guilds): Entry Level 3 – Level 1	20
Certificate in personal, team work and community skills (City and Guilds) - Entry Level 3 – Level 1 (City and Guilds)	21
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (ASDAN): Levels 1-3	21
BTEC Level 2 qualification in Skills for Employment (Edexcel)	22
BTEC Level 4 Professional Certificate and Awards for Trainers of Employment Related Learning (Edexcel)	22
Personal and Professional Development Awards (City and Guilds): Levels 2, 3 and 4	23
<b>Section 5 Case studies</b>	<b>24</b>
Case Study 1	25
Entry to Employment	25
Case Study 2	27
Reengaging Young People	27
Case Study 3	29
Young Apprenticeships	29
Case Study 4	31
Apprenticeships	31
Case Study 5	33
Programmes for Minorities	33
Case Study 6	36
Using the Experience of Armed Forces Personnel	36
Case Study 7	38
Higher Education	38

Case Study 8.....	40
Deloitte Employability Skills Programme .....	40
Case Study 9.....	43
ASDAN'S CoPE Award Programme .....	43
Case Study 10.....	47
The Use of the CoPE Award at KS4.....	47
Evidence from 3 completed portfolios .....	50
Case Study 11.....	52
The Opening Minds Programme.....	52
Case Study 12.....	54
The GQAL Personal, Employability, Achievement and Reflection for Learning Programme (PEARL).....	54
<b>Section 6 Aspects of Good Practice in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Generic</b>	
<b>Employability Skills.....</b>	<b>57</b>
Box 1: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – In general .....	57
Box 2: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Courses for those who are not in employment, education or training.....	58
Box 3: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Work-related learning in schools and further education .....	58
Box 4: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Higher Education .....	59
Box 5: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Work-based learning .....	59
<b>Section 7 Recommendations .....</b>	<b>60</b>
Strategic Bodies .....	60
Providers .....	60
Strategic Bodies/Providers.....	61

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

- Generic employability skills comprise a suite of 'transferable' skills which are independent of the occupational sectors and organisations in which individuals work, and which contribute to an individual's overall employability by enhancing their capacity to adapt, learn and work independently. These skills are required not only to gain employment but also to progress within an organisation.
- Generic employability skills are important because jobs today require flexibility, initiative and the ability to undertake many different tasks. They are not as narrowly prescribed and defined as in the past and generally they are more service oriented, making information and social skills increasingly important.
- This is the final report of a study of the teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills in the South West of England, which was undertaken by the Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning (CDELL), at the University of Nottingham.
- The aim of the project was to identify effective models of teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills in the South West and to identify how these are employed in schools, further and higher education, work-based learning and others supporting young people.

### *Project design*

- The project was structured into four stages:
  - Stage 1: Desk Research. This stage included a literature review and consultations with practitioners and strategic agencies in the South West, in order to (1) identify current employability-related programmes in the region and (2) develop criteria for identifying good practice in teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills.
  - Stage 2: Case Studies. This stage included case studies of 12 centres where the practice in teaching and learning in generic employability skills provided evidence of good practice.
  - Stage 3: Development of Good Practice Framework. This stage involved the development of a framework for ensuring the effective delivery of generic skills in a range of settings and programmes.
  - Stage 4: Reporting. Following a presentation to the Steering Group/Research Forum, two documents were produced: this report and a 'guide' for providers seeking to embed and deliver generic employability skills training in their mainstream curricula.

### *Main findings*

#### **Definitions of generic employability skills**

- While there is general agreement that generic employability skills are important (see below), there is no one definitive list of such skills; instead a wide range of lists have been developed in recent years in the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and North America. These lists include:
  - Fundamental skills – such as literacy, using numbers, technology skills.
  - People-related skills – such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, influencing skills, negotiation skills, team working skills, customer service skills, and leadership skills.
  - Conceptualising/thinking skills – such as managing information, problem solving, planning and organising skills, learning skills, thinking innovatively and creatively, reflective skills.

- Personal skills and attributes – such as being enthusiastic, adaptable, motivated, reliable, responsible, honest, resourceful, committed, loyal, flexible, well presented, sensible, able to manage own time and deal with pressure.
  - Skills related to the business world – such as innovation skills, enterprise skills, commercial awareness, business awareness.
  - Skills related to the community – such as citizenship skills.
- Although employability skills frameworks vary in terms of the particular skills and attributes they include, all major generic skills schemes include people-related skills and conceptualising/thinking skills. Recent lists of generic skills developed by employers have also emphasised personal skills and attributes.
  - Generic employability skills and attributes are context sensitive, which is to say they may vary in detail between different work contexts. A further complicating factor is that individuals and organisations not only use different terms to refer to generic skills/attributes, but also give different meanings to seemingly identical terms, especially when referring to personal attributes.
  - Agreement on language and definitions is crucial to the development and implementation of generic employability skills programmes. However, it is also important to recognise that there will probably never be one definitive list of generic skills because they need to be open to review and re-interpretation over time as working practices change.

### **Where generic employability skills are being explicitly developed**

- The report contains an overview of the main contexts within which generic employability skills are being developed and identifies the range of skills/attributes involved.

### **How generic employability skills are assessed and certified**

- In some situations, the formal certification of generic employability skills can provide benefits to both learners and employers. Learners will be motivated to acquire skills that are recognised and employers will gain from knowing exactly what skills their prospective employees have attained. Details of qualifications that are currently being offered by programmes in the South West are provided.

### **Aspects of Good Practice in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment of generic employability skills**

- Good practice in delivering generic employability skills training requires the provision of a large variety of experiences and learning strategies. Teachers/lecturers/mentors need to be passionate, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, approachable and well organised in order to: communicate to learners the importance of generic skills in the workplace; help learners to acquire such generic skills; ensure that learners are then capable of transferring these skills to new contexts. A range of approaches are summarised in the report.

## ***Recommendations***

### **Strategic Bodies should:**

- Vigorously promote employability skills programmes and qualifications to a wide range of stakeholders including young people, parents and employers.
- Assist in the development and operation of Education and Business Partnerships.
- Ensure greater continuity of funding for providers offering employability skills courses both to young people who are in training but not in employment and to post-16 NEETs who are generally hostile to 'formal' education and training programmes and government initiatives. At present many providers feel they are on a destructive cycle of funding, constantly applying for short-term grants.

- Allow enough flexibility for providers to customize training/provision to the diverse needs and lifestyles of young people, recognising that there is no 'one size fits all'. For example, e2e is a very positive programme for some, but the entry requirements were raised for it and it has become a barrier for some young people. Many cannot achieve the required attendance within the 16 weeks as they have chaotic lifestyles. As one provider commented, *"they do not do make linear progress, it is more like Snakes and Ladders, they make mistakes and fall down a snake, then pull themselves up"*.
- Commission research to clarify the relationship between the growing range/array of qualifications available for certifying employability skills.
- Ensure that employers are aware of the range and value of the employability skills qualifications and certificates that are being awarded to young people.
- Develop resources, which help practitioners to identify the employability skills, courses and qualifications that are best suited to different groups of learners and learning environments.
- Develop and promote more exemplars of good practice in the teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills.
- Increase the supply of resources that describe good practice in relation to the integration/embedding of generic employability skills in different curriculum areas.
- Plan programmes and design resource materials that make greater use of the experience of individuals and institutions with a track record in delivering employability skills programmes/courses.
- Develop local and regional networking opportunities for teachers, lecturers, voluntary workers, employers at all levels to share experiences and knowledge in this area, recognising the increasing difficulties that many staff have in securing time to attend formal or distant events.
- Increase support for staff who are unfamiliar with the methods of assessment used in relation to qualifications which recognise generic employability skills.
- Ensure that information, advice and guidance professionals are fully aware of the range of employability skills programmes and qualifications that are available in the region.

#### **Providers should:**

- Ensure that employability skills are embedded in their mainstream curriculum offer at all stages from Key Stage 3 to Higher Education.
- Ensure that information about the importance of employability skills is adequately disseminated to all staff and particularly to those new to the delivery of such skills.
- Establish strong links with local employers.

#### **Strategic Bodies and Providers should:**

- Support and extend institutional commitment to employability skills across schools, colleges, universities and other providers, securing the commitment of senior management and ensuring that senior staff are involved in key roles.
- Develop strategies to deal with the fact that there may not be enough good quality work placements available for students in some areas, paying particular attention to the fact that health and safety regulations deter some employers from taking 14-18 year olds.
- Address the fact that in some sectors (e.g. engineering), employers are reluctant to provide work experience opportunities for girls as their workplace is very male-oriented and they are reluctant to change.

- Put forward trainers for the training places on the Deloitte Employability Skills Programme. Deloitte will fund twenty places per year for the next 5 years at a designated Deloitte Employability Centre in the South West. (To manage expectations, most funded places for the current year's courses have already been allocated.) Further training sessions will be delivered at cost of £2,500 and it is anticipated the course fees will come down over the next few years.
- Establish partnerships with other providers with a view to getting teachers/tutors trained on the Deloitte Employability Skills Programme and through this getting access to course materials and ongoing support - this will keep the costs per centre down and enable partnership working amongst local providers.

## Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is the final report of a study of the teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills in the South West of England, which was undertaken by the Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning (CDELL), at the University of Nottingham.
- 1.2 The aim of the project was:
- To identify effective models of teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills in the South West and to identify how these are employed in schools, further and higher education, work-based learning and others supporting young people.
- 1.3 The specific objectives of the project were:
- To review the relevant literature on current policies and strategies in place to develop generic skills in the workforce and in leavers from all areas of education and training.
  - To identify the various programmes in place to deliver generic employability skills and the range of skills being delivered.
  - To conduct case studies of a selection of centres where the practice in teaching and learning in generic employability skills provides evidence of good practice.
  - To develop a framework to identify and analyse the components of good practice in developing learners' generic employability skills in schools, further and higher education, work-based learning, and training.
  - To formulate a set of guiding principles underpinning good practice in the delivery of generic employability skills and their integration into mainstream curricula, especially in schools.
  - To identify factors which are necessary for the successful implementation of these principles.
  - To develop and disseminate a framework for ensuring the effective delivery of generic employability skills in a range of settings and programmes.
  - To make recommendations for providers and strategic agencies in the South West region.

## Section 2 Project Design and Methods

2.1 The core of the methodology was a direct study of 12 centres where the practice in teaching and learning in generic employability skills is thought to provide evidence of good practice. The choice of these centres, the methods used in monitoring what they are doing and the interpretation of the findings, were determined in relation to a review of relevant literature and the development of a structured set of criteria and issues.

2.2 The project was structured into four stages:

- Stage 1 – Desk Research
- Stage 2 – Case Studies
- Stage 3 – Development of Good Practice Framework
- Stage 4 – Reporting

### ***Stage 1: Desk Research***

2.3 This stage included the following aspects:

- Consultations with the Generic Employability Steering Group over the conduct of the study, and the establishment of the project structures.
- A literature review and consultations with practitioners and strategic agencies in the South West, in order to (1) identify current employability-related programmes in the region and (2) develop criteria for identifying good practice in teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills and the issues to be considered in studying this.
- Consultation with the Steering Group over the identification of suitable centres and the compilation of an appropriate sample. Initial contacts made as soon as possible.
- The development of detailed procedures for studying centres involved in the delivery of generic employability skills programmes and the development of instruments to support the first stages of fieldwork.
- Clarification of the structure of case study information required by the Steering Group and identification of reporting requirements.

### ***Stage 2: Case Studies***

2.4 This was the main fieldwork stage. The purpose of the fieldwork was to gain objective insights into the working of the approach to generic employability skills delivery in each centre, using information from the following sources:

- paper-based and other information provided by the centre;
- interviews with selected staff, including team leaders/co-ordinators or similar individuals and a small number of teachers/tutors/trainers concerned with aspects of generic employability skills teaching;
- discussions with small groups of students/trainees/employees;
- evidence from those who have observed generic employability skills in operation in the centre complemented by, as opportunities arose, direct observation of generic employability skills programmes, targeted on specific issues;
- mechanisms whereby practitioners (students/trainees/employees and teachers/tutors/trainers) may offer written or other comments outside the interview structure.

2.5 All of these methods were supported by schedules for fieldworker or practitioner use, with direct written or taped records of interviews and detailed fieldworker reports that identify issues that have arisen.

### ***Stage 3: Development of Good Practice Framework***

- 2.6 The aim of this stage was to develop a framework for ensuring the effective delivery of generic skills in a range of settings and programmes. This was presented in such a way as to be easily accessible and understood by the range of policy makers, providers and teachers/tutors/trainers for whom the framework will be most relevant. It identifies the components of good practice in relation to the delivery of generic employability skills (teaching, learning, assessment and integration/embedding in curricula) and the critical success factors necessary for their implementation in a range of contexts/programmes.

### ***Stage 4: Reporting***

- 2.7 This was the reporting and presentation stage of the project. Following a presentation to the Steering Group/Research Forum, two documents were produced: this report and a 'guide' for providers seeking to integrate/embed and deliver generic employability skills training in their mainstream curricula.

## Section 3      Generic Employability Skills

3.1      This section defines generic employability skills and explain why they are important.

### ***What are generic employability skills?***

- 3.2      Generic employability skills comprise a suite of ‘transferable’ skills independent of the occupational sectors and organisations in which individuals work, and which contribute to an individual’s overall employability by enhancing their capacity to adapt, learn and work independently. Put simply, generic employability skills are those that apply across a variety of jobs, organisations and sectors. They are also known by several other names, including key skills, core skills, essential skills, key competencies, transferable skills and employability skills. These skills are required not only to gain employment but also to progress within an organisation.
- 3.3      While there is general agreement that generic employability skills are important (see below), there is no one definitive list of such skills; instead a wide range of lists have been developed in recent years in the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and North America. These lists include:
- Fundamental skills – such as literacy, using numbers, technology skills.
  - People-related skills – such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, influencing skills, negotiation skills, team working skills, customer service skills, and leadership skills.
  - Conceptualising/thinking skills – such as managing information, problem solving, planning and organising skills, learning skills, thinking innovatively and creatively, reflective skills.
  - Personal skills and attributes – such as being enthusiastic, adaptable, motivated, reliable, responsible, honest, resourceful, committed, loyal, flexible, well presented, sensible, able to manage own time and deal with pressure.
  - Skills related to the business world – such as innovation skills, enterprise skills, commercial awareness, business awareness.
  - Skills related to the community – such as citizenship skills.
- 3.4      Although employability skills frameworks vary in terms of the particular skills and attributes they include, all major generic skills schemes include people-related skills and conceptualising/thinking skills. Moreover recent lists of generic skills developed by employers have emphasised personal skills and attributes.
- 3.5      Generic employability skills and attributes are context sensitive, which is to say they may vary in detail between different work contexts. As a recent DfES report on Employability notes:
- “(the) demands for what might at first be assumed to be a generic skill (can) differ between sectors to an extent that matters. Think about the communication skills required of health workers compared to those retail employers expect - some common areas, some very different (*Employability: Reporting Progress*. 2006. P.14)”
- 3.6      A further complicating factor is that individuals and organisations not only use different terms to refer to generic skills/attributes, but also give different meanings to seemingly identical terms, especially when referring to personal attributes. In the CDELL study of the perceptions of generic employability skills in the South West of England, employers used over 30 different terms to identify personal attributes that they believed were required of young people in their organisations. This was due in part to their use of different terms to refer to the same attribute. Thus, for example, one employer used “time management” to refer to “coming to work on time” (even though this phrase is often used in a much wider sense), whereas other employers referred to this quality as “punctuality”. It should be noted, however, that even when employers used identical terms to identify personal attributes, they did not always define the attributes concerned in the same ways; for example, a nursing home employer defined “respect” in terms of respecting the privacy and dignity of patients, whereas a retailer defined respect in terms of politeness.
- 3.7      Agreement on language and definitions is crucial to the development and implementation of generic employability skills programmes. However, it is also important to recognise that there will probably

never be one definitive list of generic skills because they need to be open to review and re-interpretation over time as working practices change.

### ***Why are generic employability skills important?***

3.8 Shifts in the UK economy, prompted by globalisation, technological change, increased competitiveness, and the growing sophistication of customers and clients mean that employers are increasingly seeking generic skills alongside technical skills as a means of developing a workforce that is able to cope with:

- Increasingly complex work practices;
- Team working;
- Reduced supervision;
- Greater job flexibility and rotation;
- Increased interaction with consumers.

3.9 Generic employability skills are important because jobs today require flexibility, initiative and the ability to undertake many different tasks. They are not as narrowly prescribed and defined as in the past and generally they are more service oriented, making information and social skills increasingly important. Thus, for example:

- the increase in jobs in business, finance and retail sectors all require more staff with interpersonal skills – able to explain things and solve problems related to client needs;
- manufacturing workers are increasingly working in cells or teams and require more internal communication;
- craft workers are often working with more complex processes, which require greater thinking, reasoning and problem solving skills in order to operate machinery or deal with faults;
- decentralised supply chain management and systems integration require greater communication, team leadership, business and commercial awareness from all staff;
- the use of standardisation of computer based packages in many insurance, banking and call centres highlights the significance of communication skills and attitudes such as confidence, judgement and personal organisation.

3.10 Increasingly, employers look for an understanding of appropriate behaviour and relationships in the workplace, self-management skills, team-working to solve problems, balancing group work with the ability to get on independently, and communication, including marshalling an argument and persuading others. Valued attributes include being able to work under pressure, commitment, dependability, imagination, creativity, getting on with people and willingness to learn.

3.11 Employers seek to recruit and retain employees with these skills; thus, education programs that emphasise such skills offer learners a comparative advantage in the labour market. Education providers are also interested in generic skills because they encourage learners to be more reflective and self-directed.

3.12 The growing emphasis on generic employability skills has been discussed in a series of White Papers and policy documents, including *21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential* (2003), *Opportunity for All in a World of Change* (2001), *Productivity in the UK: The Regional Dimension* (2001), *Opportunity for All: Skills for the New Economy* (2000) and *In Search of Employability* (1998). The perspective underpinning these documents is illustrated by the following extract from *Opportunity for All in a World of Change* (DTI & DfEE 2001:20):

The success of individuals and businesses in a knowledge driven economy will depend upon the skills, creativity and imagination of our people. Basic literacy, numeracy, specialist craft and technical skills remain vital, but today's economy increasingly demands people with high-level skills and ability to adapt quickly to changing requirements. Lifelong learning and continuous re-skilling are essential to enable people to cope with change, achieve security in their lives and benefit from growing prosperity.

- 3.13 Generic employability skills have thus become part of a national agenda in education and training for primary, secondary, further and higher education, and their development is a priority for the UK government. They are relevant for everyone from pupils in schools to Chief Executives in large companies, and focus our attention on where and how we are using skills for the purpose of improving the quality of our learning, work and performance.

## Section 4 Mapping Exercise

4.1 This section identifies (i) the contexts within which the generic employability skills of young people are being explicitly developed and (ii) the main qualifications that are being used in the South West to formally certify these skills.

### ***Where generic employability skills are being explicitly developed***

4.2 The table below provides an overview of the main contexts within which generic employability skills are being developed and identifies the range of skills/attributes involved.

	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Providers</b>	<b>Types of course</b>	<b>Skills Developed</b>
1.	14-16	Schools	The Key Skills are taught in schools at Levels 1-2. Some schools are opting to deliver qualifications (such as ASDAN's Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) which incorporate the wider key skills and which are designed to provide formal recognition for personal, key and employability skills.	Application of Number Communication ICT Problem Solving Working with Others Improving Own Learning and Performance
2.	14-16	Schools (often with partners, including employers)	<p>Personal, Social and Health Education</p> <p>These courses and activities are designed to promote pupils' good health and well being. The curriculum covers developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities, preparing to play an active role as citizens, developing a healthy, safer lifestyle, developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.</p> <p>In the South West a number of projects involving schools and colleges or universities have been developed in this area, including several schemes funded under the Arts Council scheme called Creative Partnerships.</p>	Confidence Teamwork Presentation skills Working to deadlines Project planning Giving and receiving feedback
3.	11-14	Schools, colleges, training providers	Alternatives to/modifications of the National Curriculum (including the RSA's <i>Opening Minds</i> programme), which encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and which emphasises the development of generic skills.	Learning to learn Relating to people Managing information Managing situations Citizenship

4.	14-16	Schools, colleges	Alternative provision for KS4 students, such as the Young Apprenticeship scheme, which is designed to allow able and well-motivated students to gain experience of real work and pursue a qualification in a vocational area, whilst continuing to study the core National Curriculum subjects, including English, Mathematics, ICT and Science.	<p>Time management</p> <p>Independent learning skills</p> <p>Team work</p> <p>Self-esteem</p> <p>Self-respect</p> <p>Problem solving</p> <p>Social skills</p> <p>Codes of conduct for work</p> <p>Responsibility</p>
5.	14-16	Schools, training providers	Alternative provision for disaffected young people, which often involves a vocational component. In some cases, this is delivered by independent training providers such as YMCA Training and Skill Force (which uses team building and problem solving skills of former Armed Force personnel to deliver Key Skills to young people).	<p>Key skills</p> <p>Punctuality</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Team working</p>
6.	14 -23	Schools, colleges, youth clubs and organisations, training providers, employer organisations	Intra- and extra curricula approaches to personal and academic development which involve outdoor adventure and sport, including programmes offered by organisations like Young Enterprise South West and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.	<p>Team working</p> <p>Problem solving</p> <p>Initiative</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Leadership qualities</p>
7.	16 plus	Education and business partnerships, training providers, colleges	Preparation for employment courses, such as e2e, which are designed to facilitate progression into employment, employment with training, apprenticeships, full time further education courses, or full time New Deal programmes.	<p>Basic skills</p> <p>Interview skills</p> <p>Writing a CV</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Punctuality</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>Attitudes towards others</p> <p>Communication team working</p> <p>Understanding roles/responsibilities in the workplace</p>
8.	14-19	Training providers	Reengagement programmes for those who are not in education,	<p>Reliability</p>

			employment or training (NEET) – such as Rainer’s Breaking the Cycle programmes.	<p>Taking instructions</p> <p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Initiative</p> <p>Dependability</p> <p>Reliability</p> <p>Punctuality</p> <p>Basic skills (mainly at entry level)</p> <p>Key Skills</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Written skills</p> <p>Team working</p>
9.	14 plus	Schools, independent training providers	Enterprise education, which aims to encourage young people to develop enterprise capability supported by financial, economic and business capability, This includes the substantial provision by Young Enterprise South West, a UK registered charity, which runs a range of business and enterprise education programmes for school pupils, with the support of business and volunteers.	<p>Interview skills</p> <p>Presentation skills</p> <p>Motivation</p> <p>Self-confidence</p> <p>Career planning</p> <p>Business creation</p> <p>Enterprise</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Handling change</p> <p>Handling uncertainty</p> <p>Implementing new ideas</p> <p>Risk assessment</p> <p>Communication skills</p>
10.	16-25	Colleges, training providers	Employability skills initiatives for young people from disadvantaged and social excluded communities. Includes programmes for minorities. For example, Active Employability and Preparation for Employment programmes for people with disabilities or from black Minority Ethnic Groups.	<p>Self-confidence</p> <p>Self-esteem</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Personal planning and organisation</p>
11.	16 +	Employers, colleges	Apprenticeships funded by the Learning and Skills Council which	<p>Adapting to the workplace</p>

			offer training in a wide range of areas, including business administration, construction, accounting, travel, motor industry, customer service, food and drink and electronic services.	Punctuality Managing relationships Team work Attitude Confidence Managing workload
12.	18+	Higher education institutions	Graduate employability skills programmes which seek to develop employability skills through curriculum-based and extra-curricula activities. In some cases supported by work of ESECT, which finished in Feb 2005 and is now subsumed in HEA, which mapped employability skills onto various curriculum areas.	Self-management Communication Teamwork Managing others Problem solving Data handling Management of learning
13.	18+	Higher education institutions	Foundation degrees which are designed specifically around workplace needs, involving a combination of academic study and advanced personal, professional and employability skills.	Key skills Reasoning Professionalism Work process management

### ***How generic employability skills are assessed and certified***

4.3 In some situations, the formal certification of generic employability skills can provide benefits to both learners and employers. Learners will be motivated to acquire skills that are recognised and employers will gain from knowing exactly what skills their prospective employees have attained. Details of qualifications that are currently being offered by programmes in the South West are provided below. Entry Level 3 and Levels 1, 2 & 3 are suitable for both 14-19 year old and adult learners while Level 4 is aimed at undergraduates/postgraduates or employees engaged in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes.

#### **Profile of Achievement (City and Guilds)**

The overall aim of Profile of Achievement is to provide a method of assessing and reporting a learner's progress throughout a period of learning and to provide a clearly understandable record of achievement at the end.

The Profile of Achievement:

- Improves techniques of self-assessment, presentation and maturity in dealing with others
- Helps identification of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Clarifies their own future learning needs
- Provides formal recognition of attainment.

### **Certificate in Preparation for Employment, Certificate in Job-Seeking Skills and Certificate in Career Planning (OCR): Entry Level 3 – Level 2**

This qualification is part of the Career Planning and Preparation for Employment suite, which also comprises:

- OCR Entry Level (Entry 3) Certificate in Preparation for Employment
- OCR Level 1 Certificate in Preparation for Employment
- OCR Entry Level (Entry 3) Certificate in Job-seeking Skills
- OCR Level 1 Certificate in Career Planning
- OCR Level 2 Certificate in Career Planning

The Preparation for Employment qualifications have been designed to develop candidates' knowledge of the work environment and to encourage the development of practical skills which would be of benefit in the workplace. The qualifications will enable candidates to gain accreditation for both the preparation for work experience and also for taking an active part in work experience.

Each of the Preparation for Employment qualifications consists of four units. Candidates can be entered either for a complete qualification (all four units) or for individual units. All units are centre-assessed and OCR-moderated. Work can be assessed and submitted at any time of year. The flexible arrangements enable candidates to gain accreditation at their own pace or as course time permits. The qualifications are available at three levels and represent a coherent progression path that candidates can follow.

The full qualifications are suitable for any candidate taking part in work experience. However, the individual units address a variety of issues (such as health and safety and rights and responsibilities in the workplace) and as such would suit any candidate looking to improve their knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

Candidates undertaking a course of study leading to these qualifications will have developed a range of generic skills that may be applied in a range of different vocational contexts.

All three Preparations for Employment qualifications are supported by a Tutor's Handbook, Evidence Booklets and optional training days. Purchasable candidate exemplar material has been available from December 2005.

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/qualifications.html>

### **Certificate in Preparing for Employment (City and Guilds): Entry Level 3 – Level 1**

The Entry Level Certificate aims to recognise small steps of learning and the skills you have acquired to enable you to progress to other qualifications and employment.

The broad objectives of this qualification are to

Aid progression to vocational qualifications at Level 1

- Address the learner directly
- Be accessible to the learner with appropriate help from tutors/supervisors
- Encourage an active learning style
- Build confidence through the recognition of skills, knowledge and understanding acquired.

Progression is through the two levels of the qualification and on to Level 1 qualifications in all routes of the

National Qualifications Framework, or to employment.

#### Level 1 Certificate in Preparing for Employment

The Level 1 Certificate aims to recognise small steps of learning and the skills you have acquired to enable you to progress to other qualifications and employment.

The broad objectives of this qualification are to

Aid progression to vocational qualifications at Level 2

- Address the learner directly
- Be accessible to the learner with appropriate help from tutors/supervisors
- Encourage an active learning style
- Build confidence through the recognition of skills, knowledge and understanding acquired.

Progression is through the two levels of the qualification and on to Level 1 qualifications and progressing to Level 2 qualifications in all routes of the National Qualifications Framework, or to employment.

#### **Certificate in personal, team work and community skills (City and Guilds) - Entry Level 3 – Level 1 (City and Guilds)**

These qualifications are intended for learners who may not have realised their potential in mainstream activities particularly. The overall aim of the qualifications is to provide opportunities and activities through an understanding of a range of settings – individual and group work; community work and the work place. In achieving the qualification learners will gain confidence, the skills, knowledge and opportunity to develop positive attitudes and approaches to others and their own life.

On completion, you will achieve an accredited qualification at Entry Level 3 or Level 1 which may help you to progress into employment or go on and do other qualifications/programmes of learning.

#### **Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (ASDAN): Levels 1-3**

The Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) provides a qualification outcome for PSHE, Citizenship and work related learning. It arises out of the well known ASDAN Bronze /Silver, Gold and Universities Awards (and in the FE sector the FE level 1 and FE level 2 awards). Featuring an introduction to the 3 Wider Key skills, the Certificate can be used as a stepping stone to the achievement of the three full Wider Key Skills qualifications.

CoPE is available at three levels, mirroring the Silver/FE Level 1, Gold/FE Level 2, and Universities/FE level 3 Awards. The qualifications are included in school/college performance tables with the following points allocated:

CoPE Level 1 (Silver/FE 1) 25 points (GCSE Grade E/F)

CoPE Level 2 (Gold/FE 2) 46 points (GCSE Grade B)

CoPE Level 3 (Universities/FE 3) is allocated 70 UCAS tariff points (Grade A at AS Level)

At Levels 1 and 2 the qualification requires approx 120 guided learning hours and at level 3 approx 150 hours. These include time spent on activities as well as contact time.

The qualification aims to enable the candidates:

- To develop and demonstrate a range of personal, key and employability skills leading to personal effectiveness;
- To broaden experience and manage learning through the enrichment activities provided by the ASDAN challenges

- To receive formal recognition and accreditation for the above.

They must complete the required challenges through which evidence of skill development in six areas is demonstrated to the appropriate level. This involves three main strands:

- Taking responsibility for planning, organising and carrying out a number of activities or challenges and evidencing this work in a portfolio.
- Developing and evidencing the three Wider Key Skills of *Working with Others*, *Improving Own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at the required level. These provide an introduction to the national standards for the Wider Key Skills and must use the ASDAN Plan/Do and Review recording documents.
- Developing and evidencing the three additional skills of *Planning and Carrying Out Research*, *Communicating through Discussion*, and *Planning and Giving an Oral Presentation*, at the appropriate level, based on the Key Skill of Communication.

*For further information on CoPE, including registration details, please contact ASDAN on 0117 9411126.*

*For further general information on ASDAN, see the ASDAN website: [www.asdan.co.uk](http://www.asdan.co.uk)*

*For further information on ASDAN's development role for the future, see the Nuffield 14-19 Education and Training Review website: [www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml](http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml) (then look for ASDAN Discussion Paper entitled 'Nascent Futures'.)*

*For further information on how schools and colleges are using ASDAN awards see the QCA website: [www.qca.org.uk/14-19](http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19) (click on '11-16 schools', then click on 'using qualifications and awards', then click on 'using ASDAN qualifications')*

## **BTEC Level 2 qualification in Skills for Employment (Edexcel)**

### *Course Duration*

1-day training per week over the course of a full academic year, equating to 150 glh

### *Course Content*

5 units:

- Personal effectiveness at work
- Developing personal communication skills
- Preparation for finding work
- Building positive working relationships
- Understanding the working environment

### *Course Purpose*

Highly innovative training delivery involving role-plays, workplace simulations, and practical exercises designed to challenge and develop student's attitudes and behaviours.

### *Trainer Qualification*

The Deloitte Employability Skills project has now developed a new "train the trainer" course for teachers/lecturers who wish to develop the skills to deliver not only the new BTEC qualification, but also generic employability skills programmes in general. The training is a 5-day residential course and will support a new Edexcel Level 4 Qualification in employability skills delivery:

## **BTEC Level 4 Professional Certificate and Awards for Trainers of Employment Related Learning (Edexcel)**

### *Course duration*

5-day residential training course. Qualification has 60 glh.

*Course content*

3 units:

- planning and developing strategies for delivering employability skills
- innovative delivery of employability skills training across a range of sectors
- personal development for employability skills trainers

*Course purpose*

The qualification equips college trainers to deliver employability skills training to students on a wide variety of post-16 courses run by their colleges.

With the qualifications and course materials in place, Deloitte has committed significant funding over the next 5 years in order that many more colleges across the UK can be equipped to deliver the training that all employees require and all employers expect. This funding will cover the full costs of the 5-day residential course, including the costs of travel and accommodation and cover for college staff attending. The target is to train up to 800 new trainers over the next 5 years and for those trainers in turn to deliver employability skills training to up to 80,000 young people. In addition, significant resource will be targeted to ensure sustainability of the programme well beyond this 5-year period.

In order to roll out this teacher-training programme, Deloitte will appoint 5 regional employability centres. Each centre will be a leading FE College with a well-recognised teacher training unit. Deloitte will invest in supporting, training and coaching teacher training staff in order that they can deliver the Train the Trainer programme and qualification in future years. Staff from these colleges will also receive priority-funded places on the Train the Trainer course, enabling them to roll out the delivery of employability skills training across the college. They will therefore be centres of excellence in both the training in and the delivery of employability skills. It is also developing E-learning tools to reduce the number of residential days required in the longer term. The cost per candidate at present is £3,000. In the South West, Deloitte will provide 20 funded places each year. The aim is to train 800 trainers in five years. In turn, it is estimated this will enable the programme to reach 8,000 trainees.

*For further information on the BTEC qualifications, please contact Bob Thust at Deloitte on 020 7007 7981 [Email: [bthust@deloitte.co.uk](mailto:bthust@deloitte.co.uk)].*

For further general information, see the Deloitte Employability Skills programme website:  
<http://www.delivering-employability.co.uk/>

### **Personal and Professional Development Awards (City and Guilds): Levels 2, 3 and 4**

The Level 2 and 3 Personal Development Awards will help you gain recognition of learning which takes place outside a formal programme of study. It is appropriate for 14-19 year old students in schools and colleges but could also be used by adult learners, for example, those returning to study. These awards are of interest to those who undertake a wide range of activities, including leadership, citizenship and entrepreneurship programmes in schools and colleges, voluntary work in the community, or part-time paid work. The awards are assessed at different stages of the activity or programme, on the basis of three interviews and accompanying records, which are completed with the support of a tutor/mentor.

The Level 4 Professional Development Award is primarily aimed at students on higher level programmes, including undergraduates, employees as part of their CPD, and voluntary workers. This award formally recognises and demonstrates to employers, the transferable skills and knowledge that you gain through work experience and a range of other structured activities. It helps you take an active role in your own personal and professional learning and development. The award is assessed by producing a development plan, reviewing progress, and then writing a report of 2000-3000 words.

## Section 5 Case studies

5.1 This section reports on the case studies. These are as follows:

- Case Study 1 - Entry to Employment
- Case Study 2 - Reengaging Young People
- Case Study 3 - Young Apprenticeships
- Case Study 4 - Apprenticeships
- Case study 5 - Programmes for Minorities
- Case Study 6 - Using the Experience of Armed Forces Personnel
- Case Study 7 - Higher Education
- Case Study 8 - Deloitte Employability Skills Programme
- Case Study 9 - ASDAN's (CoPE) Award Programme
- Case Study 10 - The Use of the (CoPE) Award at KS4
- Case Study 11 - The Opening Minds Programme
- Case Study 12 - The GQAL Personal, Employability, Achievement and Reflection for Learning Programme (PEARL)

5.2 Case studies 1-8 provide examples of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic employability skills in schools, further education, voluntary organisations and work-based learning programmes in the South West.

5.3 Case studies 9-11 focus on developments in the school sector which are designed to address the widespread concerns about an apparent lack of the generic skills required in the workplace amongst school leavers.

Case Study 12 focuses on an innovative programme that has developed the UK's first performance based assessment system for measuring and certifying learners' social, emotional and behavioural skills.

## **Case Study 1**

### **Entry to Employment**

#### **The programme**

1. Established in 1990, Somerset County Training (SCT) has 4 training centres in Taunton, Bridgwater, Yeovil and Frome and operates in three main areas of training: **Apprenticeships** (Business Skills, Care and Industry), **Entry to Employment (e2e)** and **Adult Training**, including various work experience and 'back to work' training programmes for the unemployed. SCT works closely with Connexions and is funded through the Learning and Skills Council.
2. The case study focuses on SCT's e2e programme. SCT has the contract for the whole of Somerset for Entry to e2e, a learning programme which is primarily aimed at young people aged 16-18 who are not participating in any form of post-16 learning. E2e is designed to develop young people's motivation, confidence, personal effectiveness, basic and key skills and to provide them with opportunities to gain vocational knowledge, skills and understanding. The average stay for learners is 22 weeks. SCT is encouraged by the funding agency to move the learners on as quickly as possible. Possible positive outcomes are:
  - Progression into employment;
  - Employment with training;
  - Apprenticeships;
  - Full time Further Education courses;
  - Full time New Deal programmes.

#### **The learners**

3. The age range of the learners is mainly 16-18, and mostly male, (However, the progression rates for females are better than males). In the past, SCT got a lot of 16 year olds straight from school but now it tends to be more of a fallback and not the learners' first option. The course therefore needs to be a positive experience which builds the learners' self-confidence after possibly a wrong choice earlier on. Many of the young people do not have the support of their families so the centre teachers have to contend with students whose families do not see, for example, the need for punctuality.

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

4. In addition to showing young people how to write a CV, how to complete application forms and how to conduct themselves in an interview, SCT develop the following personal skills, which are seen as critical to employability:
  - Punctuality
  - Confidence
  - Independence
  - Attitudes towards others
  - Communication
  - Team working
  - Roles and responsibilities in the workplace
  - Health and safety

#### **Teaching and learning**

5. The e2e course is not an easy option for the young people - they are pushed and challenged so as to develop independence and the ability to cope with employment. Sometimes the trainers feel they are working against the tide and have to be very clear on what it will be like in the workplace unless the young people conform.

6. Although there is quite a lot of classroom-based work, each young person works on his or her own Individual Learning Plan in a wide variety of activities. The course is relatively informal, but the learners still have clear targets and expectations to fulfil.
7. All students have to do a work placement. SCT has one employee who finds work placements for the students and each student has a one-to-one with her in order to get the most appropriate placement for their aspirations and needs. If the student is particularly confident, they may make the arrangements themselves.
8. Each student has an initial assessment and each week has an activity plan and a review. All learning is recorded whether it is accredited or not.
9. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic skills in this programme.

#### **Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills**

- Foster skills and build confidence by showing learners' the 'correct' ways to behave.
- Provide as much one-to-one teaching and support as possible.
- Use team-building activities - such as trips on a canal boat, visits to the countryside, cooking lunch - to develop the learners' teamwork and communication skills.
- Use work placements as an opportunity for the learners to put what they have learnt into practice and to see the importance of their behaviour, punctuality, and getting on with others etc.
- Use a wide variety of visiting speakers to talk to the learners as a group.
- Promote self-awareness on the part of learners of the skills and attributes they are developing by continually reinforcing the importance of the skills throughout the course.
- Encourage students to reflect on their skills and to be realistic about them.
- Support the learners in other ways, such as accompanying them to job interviews. Sometimes students are afraid to catch a bus, so they will be helped in that way. The aim of this is to get rid of the fear and to help that young person move on.

#### **Assessing and certifying generic employability skills**

10. Because of the short term of the e2e, the students are not able to do a full NVQ L1, but they do start their Key Skills at L1 & L2 and can take the tests if appropriate. Overall, the level of e2e is L1 and the students get certificates for work done at the equivalent level (a copy of the certificate they get is at the back of the e2e passport). SCT think that the passport shows learners have achieved something intrinsic and extrinsic even if they do not get the requisite positive outcome as specified for the funding body.

## **Case Study 2**

### **Reengaging Young People**

#### **The programme**

1. Rainer is a charity that runs learning, training and development projects with under-supported young people. This case study focuses on Rainer's Breaking the Cycle (BTC) programme and is designed to help young people (both school age and post 16) break out of a cycle of:
  - Low motivation & low achievement
  - Low expectation & (self-) destructive behaviours
  - Sanctions, consequences & problems
2. The programme comprises a range of accredited and practical learning opportunities, including provision for Yr 10 & 11 school pupils who are disengaged/disaffected and young people aged 16+ who are NEET (i.e. Not in Education, Training or Employment). The programme is mainly aimed at reengaging the young people so it often involves a mix of pre-vocational training, PSE and creative projects to provide a stepping-stone into employment. Accredited short courses include:
  - First Aid (Appointed Persons at Work)
  - Manual Handling Certificates
  - HAP – "Handling Conflict", "Customer Service" & "Selling"
  - NCF – "Solving Problems", "Working Together" & "Making Progress"
  - ASDAN – "FE Award"
  - CIEH – Food Safety in Catering (Basic Food Hygiene)
3. Some of Rainers' sites are offering the basic skills qualification, mainly at entry levels, and Key Skills.

#### **The learners**

4. Most of the learners are aged between 14 and 19. There is a wide range of deprivation and disadvantage across the young people. More generally, being part of the voluntary community, the BTC programme picks up young people who would not go to a college or training centre environment, and who avoid government initiatives. BTC take those at a certain stage in their lives where they may need a different structure. BTC does not have a fixed length programme, and the young people can come back and rejoin if they wish (e.g. if they lose their jobs).

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

5. The generic employability skills and attributes which the scheme seeks to foster include:
  - Communication
  - Basic skills
  - Written skills
  - Reliability
  - Working as a team
  - Taking instructions
  - Taking responsibility
  - Initiative
  - Dependability
  - Reliability
  - Punctuality

## Teaching and learning

6. The scheme does not use a typical classroom set up of desks and boards etc. Training is done at various venues such as youth centres, community centres, foyers, and housing projects; anywhere where the young people do not associate with 'government initiatives' or formal education.
7. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic skills in this programme.

### Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills

- Work with young people in an 'informal' way.
- Use lots of discussions so that learners who have poor literacy skills in terms of writing are able to participate.
- Make sure the courses are all very practical and hands on. Teach skills through very practical activities, such as organising an event (e.g. the learners have organised a fundraising event for Children in Need and will record it using cameras and produce a DVD.), or planning a meal (the learners have to do everything themselves, plan, shop, cook, measure, estimate, use money).
- Give the learners as much responsibility as possible by, for example, involving them in setting ground rules, arranging the timing of the sessions, undertaking fund raising activities, and helping to shape the organisation's policy and direction.
- Model the type of behaviour one would expect/not expect in the workplace.
- Make it very explicit at the beginning and sustain the idea that the learners are here to be employable in whatever they choose to do.
- Constantly reinforce the importance of employability skills and have the employer in mind.
- Focus very much on the world of work and talk about it.
- Get the learners to discuss their own development in terms of employability at monthly reviews.

## Assessing and certifying generic employability skills

8. In general, BTC records and acknowledges the learners' achievements based on their Individual Learning Plans. First Aid certificates and some basic skills qualifications are also awarded. The client group tends to have no qualifications whatsoever when they enter the scheme, so certificates are given to show the 'distance travelled'. Because the scheme is not doing specific vocational qualifications, it is deemed important to reward effort.

## **Case Study 3**

### **Young Apprenticeships**

#### **The programme**

1. The Young Apprenticeship programme for 14-16 year olds allows able and well-motivated pupils to gain experience of real work. Pupils on the scheme continue to study the core National Curriculum subjects, including English, mathematics, ICT and science, but they also pursue qualifications in one of the following occupational areas:
  - Art and design
  - Business administration
  - Engineering
  - Health and social care
  - The motor industry
  - The performing arts
2. Teachers and experienced employees or trainers share responsibility for pupils' learning, working together in a partnership of different organizations, which could include schools, colleges, training providers and employers.
3. This is a case study of a partnership between Frome College, a 13-18 middle school, and Norton Radstock Further Education College, which is trialling the Young Apprentices Scheme (this is the second year of the pilot). Year 10 and 11 students attend the Further Education College to do a Young Apprenticeship in motor engineering. The students come to the college once a week for a whole day, as well as undertaking 50 days of work experience in Year 11. Because Norton Radstock College's workshop is classed as a live workshop, the learners can count the work they do there as part of their work placements. This is important because work placements are very difficult to organise in the area. There are few engineering companies and the scheme is not well known. Initially employers are not keen to take under 18s because of the health and safety implications, but those that have, have been very pleased with the majority of the students.

#### **The learners**

4. The learners have to have a minimum of 15 SATS points to get on the course and are highly motivated. The providers involve the learners' parents as much as possible as parental support is seen as critical and this depends upon parents seeing the value in what their children are doing.

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

5. This course is as much about developing generic employment skills as the actual practical skills in motor engineering that the pupils are learning. The generic skills that are fostered include the following:
  - Time management
  - Independent learning skills
  - Teamwork
  - Self esteem
  - Self respect
  - Problem solving
  - Social skills
  - Overall preparation for industrial awareness
  - Work-related codes of conduct

6. The course is not just about learning practical skills, it is also about being a responsible person overall.

### Teaching and learning

7. Employability skills are at the heart of the curriculum. The workshop is treated as a workplace so any training that goes on in there includes employability skills as the learners do their job of work. One of the prime aims of the tutors is to get the learners 'match fit' for their first day at work, wherever it is. They want pupils to have the right approach and preparation for starting a full time job, something that they feel many of the young people they have interviewed for courses in the past had no idea about.
8. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic skills in this programme.

#### Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills

- Include generic employability skills in the schemes of work.
- Use tutors who have worked in industry and who know what the students will need to be able to do out in the real world of competition. These tutors should talk generally to the students about where they have worked.
- Implement work-related codes of conduct: e.g. not wearing a hoodie in class and no headphones.
- Talk about chains of responsibility in industry, the hierarchy within organisations.
- Give the students as much responsibility as possible, depending on the group – for example by getting groups to elect a health and safety officer and a workshop supervisor, and allowing them to monitor themselves.
- Get the learners to quality check each other's work before the tutor does and encourage them to give and receive criticism in a positive way.
- Continually draw the learners' attention to the relevance of what they are learning to the workplace.
- Develop social skills by encouraging the learners to participate in informal discussions (e.g. about what they did last week).
- When students fail to complete a task successfully, avoid discussion of failure, just talk about how they could improve and what they think they needed to do to improve.
- Use role-play and provide instant verbal feedback.
- Set up scenarios which have a confrontational situation and get the learners to discuss and argue.
- Be prepared to deviate from the syllabus, as this can be fruitful. For example, there is a horticulture section on the college campus and one of the tutors there needed a new part for his lawnmower. A Young Apprentice tutor handed the task to the group, who worked out what was needed, planned and made the part. The horticulture tutor was really pleased and invited the group over to see how the part fitted and to demonstrate how it worked, thereby allowing them to see the fruits of their labours and to see the end product in action. This in effect gave the learners a licence to solve problems; it also developed their communication and design skills. It is important to capitalise on these opportunities when they arise.
- Organise events which allow learners to put into practice all the skills they have learned (e.g. the college organised an Enterprise week at the end of term where the students set up a mini company and ran it themselves, using the tutors as managers to consult).
- Reinforce the importance of the idea of employability skills throughout the teaching and learning on the course.
- Emphasise what skills the learners are developing and link them to the workplace.
- Get learners to think about the skills they are developing and how to articulate them.

### Assessing and certifying generic employability skills

9. The students are doing their Key Skills Qualification at school so the tutors will signal any evidence that they think will help towards their portfolio. The tutors make it clear to the pupils that these are employability skills and that their importance is not restricted to the Key Skills qualification.

## **Case Study 4**

### **Apprenticeships**

#### **The programme**

1. The case study focuses on Dorset County Council's (DCC) Apprenticeship in Business Administration course. The apprentices work five days a week and the workshop/ training sessions complement what they do in the workplace. The training is at the council house where many of the apprentices have their jobs, so it does not feel like 'going to college' on a particular day.

#### **The learners**

2. As part of the overall selection process the apprentices have to attend an assessment centre where they do personality tests, a team working exercise, verbal reasoning and work based tasks like replying to a letter. In this way, DCC test their potential and look for the kind of skills that will need fostering as an apprentice. Many of the generic skills deemed important by DCC are thus assessed through the selection process and DCC work on what skills the learners come with and teach them the others.

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

3. The generic skills developed on the course include:
  - Adapting to the workplace
  - Being on time
  - Managing relationships with colleagues
  - Team work
  - The work ethic
  - Confidence
  - Managing workload

#### **Teaching and learning**

4. The apprentices are taught mostly on the job. However, they also have workshop days when they learn to do things like presentations and work on their NVQs, Key Skills and Citizenship.
5. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic skills in this programme.

#### **Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills**

- Emphasise the importance of generic skills in the induction.
- Get the apprentices to work with others on small projects.
- Use student-centred teaching methods, encouraging apprentices to bring their experience from their jobs to any training activity.
- Give the apprentices a lot of responsibility to get things done themselves.
- Have regular reviews where the apprentices can discuss any difficulties they may have but also ensure that they have to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Treat the apprentices as employees and make clear that they should conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- Make sure the apprentices are made well aware of which generic skills they are developing and ensure that they reflect on and use their experience of the job to describe these skills in a contextualised manner.

## **Assessing and certifying generic employability skills**

6. The apprentices have regular reviews in the workplace with their manager and the training supervisor. They assess what the apprentices have achieved so far, discuss how they are getting on in the job and set targets for the next review. DCC find this works very well and is a three-way discussion not just an appraisal as such. The apprentices are treated as an employee and are able to talk about what they feel they need to work on. They are also assessed formally through the NVQ, Key Skills etc.

## **Case Study 5**

### **Programmes for Minorities**

#### **National Star College**

1. National Star College is an independent specialist college working with learners who have physical disabilities or associated learning difficulties. It offers purpose built learning facilities and residential accommodation both on the main campus in Cheltenham and in the community. It caters for students from all over the UK.

#### **The programme**

2. The programme considered in this case study is called Active Employability, which is a six-month programme for young people aged between 16 and 24 with a disability or from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. Participants achieve employability, career planning and/or key skill qualifications at Level 1 or Level 2 to enable them to progress to education, training or employment.
3. The programme involves two delivered sessions a week focusing on preparation for employment and individual planning towards progression. There are also work placements with local employers in job roles matched to the interests, qualifications and experience of individual learners. Delivered sessions are a minimum of 8 hours a week, with work placements between 4 and 37 hours according to availability.

#### **The learners**

4. 21 people with disabilities and 20 from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups were involved in the 2005-2006 programme, and a further 8 have been recruited for 2006-2007. Recruitment is through referral from Connexions, Social Services, and other training and education providers who do not have a suitable programme for the young people concerned.

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

5. In addition to the Key Skills, literacy and numeracy, the programme fosters the development of the following skills and attitudes, which are viewed as providing a solid base for the individual to operate effectively in the future:
  - Self-confidence
  - Self-esteem
  - Communication
  - Personal planning
  - Organisation

#### **Teaching and learning**

6. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic skills in this programme.

### Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills

- Customise training in order to relate it to the labour market and the needs and preferences of learners.
- Identify sectors of business, employers within the sector, individual job roles and the training required for entry and progression.
- Ensure that work placements are successful by discussing with learners the match between their own skills and different job roles, identifying the training required for entry and progression, and producing an action plan.
- Review the action plan on a weekly basis and agree further actions.
- Work with local employers to make sure it is a realistic experience.
- Provide extensive personalised support.
- Use job mentors to promote high levels of learner autonomy through identifying how tasks can be completed independently.
- Use job mentors to provide employers with reassurance on working with the learners and advice on necessary adaptations to equipment or practice and any personal care support required.
- Integrate employability skills in both the delivered sessions and the work placements.
- Whenever possible, use group activities in delivered sessions.
- Develop employability skills through work-related activities such as:
  - liaising with employers or setting up work placements and making associated travel arrangements;
  - learning unfamiliar language associated with employment and job roles;
  - engaging with unfamiliar people in the workplace;
  - writing sample job descriptions;
  - reading, understanding and applying Health and Safety law and procedures;
  - working out pro-rata rates for salaries;
  - calculating tax, national Insurance, VAT and holiday entitlement;
  - calculating a personal budget based on changes to benefits and tax credits if entering employment or full time education.

### Assessing and certifying generic employability skills

7. Learners accredit their achievement at placements through completing:

- Employability – OCR Certificate in Preparation for Employment Level 1 and Level 2 – Units 2 and 3: Demonstrate knowledge of the work environment and demonstrate ability to follow instructions
- Or
- Career planning – OCR certificate in career Planning levels 1 and 2 --- Units 3 and 4: Identify personal career goals and evaluate career options, and present personal information effectively
- Or
- OCR Certificate in Adult Literacy or Numeracy.

This provides evidence to future employers or training providers of skills and aptitude in a real work environment.

8. The programme also incorporates the methodology of RARPA, Recording and Recognising Progress and Achievement for personal and skills development that are not accredited. This involves learners identifying associated areas that will enable their progression (add value to their

learning experience), recording where they are now, and setting a target for achievement - these may include independent travel on public transport, personal presentation for interviews or work, confidence in communicating with people in unfamiliar situations and planning for a working day. The college has two RARPA Champions and regularly delivers workshops on applying RARPA.

## **Case Study 6**

### **Using the Experience of Armed Forces Personnel**

#### **Skill Force**

1. Skill Force is an organisation which uses the team building and problem solving skills of former Armed Forces personnel to deliver Key Skills training to young people. With its origins in a British Army initiative and later support from the Department for Education and Skills, Skill Force is now a not-for-profit company with charitable status. 23 Skill Force teams are currently delivering training for young people in over 130 schools across England, Wales and Scotland.

#### **The programme**

2. This programme observed for this study is based in an inner city school in Bristol. The school uses a range of external providers to deal with children who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from school, and/or are non-attendees. The Skill Force team is based in the school itself and delivers courses for both Year 10 and Year 11 pupils and post 16 students. The school directs children with a variety of needs - including behavioural problems, low achievement and lack of self-confidence - to the Skill Force courses.

#### **The Learners**

3. The learners are Key Stage 4 students (aged 14-16) who are at risk of exclusion from school and/or lack self-confidence/self-esteem.

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

4. The programme fosters the development of the following skills and attitudes:
  - Communication
  - Team working
  - Problem solving
  - Learning skills
  - Confidence
  - Self-esteem
  - Reliability
  - Punctuality
  - Time management

#### **Teaching and learning**

5. Although pupils spend the majority of their time in classroom-based settings, external visits and outdoor activities are key aspects of the Skill Force experience. In the classroom, the Skill Force tutors work in pairs.
6. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic employability skills through both curricula and extra-curricula activities.

### **Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills**

- Build strong supportive relationships with each pupil through the use of individual attention, banter and outdoor activities and visits.
- Use external visits and outdoor activities to build relationships with the pupils, develop team-working skills and build confidence.
- Deal with pupils in ways which are non-confrontational.
- Work with each pupil in order to identify their particular needs and provide alternative ways of resolving issues.
- Develop differentiated teaching strategies which cater for the individual needs of pupils.
- Treat pupils as individuals by being accessible and giving them time as required.
- Give praise and be positive.
- Require politeness - they must learn that they have to earn respect.
- If pupils breach the rules, tell them when the rules have been broken and explain the reasons why they should not be.
- Always adopt a positive attitude – and encourage the pupils to do the same.
- If there is a range of ability in a class (from the bright to those needing a lot of help) put the more able and the less able together so they can help each other.
- Use learning support assistants when classes include pupils with special educational needs.
- Encourage pupils to ask questions.

### **Assessing and certifying generic employability skills**

7. The pupils work with Skill Force towards Life Saving, ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh qualifications – awards they are expected to achieve by the end of the programme Year 11.

## **Case Study 7**

### **Higher Education**

#### **University of Exeter**

1. Exeter University offers traditional academic and largely non-vocational programmes. The University has 15 academic Schools delivering courses in some 40-subject areas. Subject study is dominated by the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Subjects that can be studied at the University of Exeter campuses are largely academic, with occupational and vocational subjects offered by its partner colleges.

#### **The programme**

2. The university's approach to employability combines a broad range of curriculum-based and accredited and assessed extra-curricula activities. These provide students with a continuum of opportunities to enable them to enhance their employability and become more confident and independent learners. This represents a multi-faceted approach to employability and skills development, and making sense of experiences through personal development planning. Every School participates in curriculum-based activities, with each being supported and encouraged to embed centrally developed teaching and learning packages.
3. Extra-curricula activities include: STEP, a UK wide programme supported by various government bodies, which offers undergraduates work placements in small and medium size companies or community organisations; the Graduate Business Partnership (GBP), a 20 week placement programme which enables unemployed graduates living in Devon to work for businesses in Devon; the Student Associate Scheme which provides taster opportunities for undergraduates to see at first hand the challenges of becoming a Secondary School Teacher; and volunteering opportunities, many in local charities, offered by the Guild of Students (NUS).

#### **The learners**

4. The University now has some 9200 full-time students (19% postgraduate) and 2720 part-time students (62% postgraduate). Approximately 90% of undergraduate entrants are under 21 years old at registration and 87.6% of entrants have A Level qualifications. The majority of home undergraduates originate from the South West (26%) and South East (39%) of England. Of the University's international students, the largest group comes from Asia/Australasia (36% UG and PG combined).

#### **Developing generic employability skills**

5. The activities undertaken in relation to employability are underpinned by a skills framework incorporating:
  - Self-management
  - Management of learning
  - Communication
  - Teamwork
  - Management of others
  - Problem solving
  - Data handling

#### **Teaching and learning**

6. Every student and academic engages with the employability agenda within everyday curriculum study, with broader, holistic opportunities provided through additional activities. Over the past decade there has been a significant cultural shift in perceptions, with many more academics interested in these employability skills. This has been a result of a greater understanding of the employability agenda and from evidence that incorporating employability within curricula does not

detract from subject-study. Some academics are still reticent, but with an increasing number of 'Champions' in each School, significant progress has been made in embedding employability-related activities, personal and key skills and PDP within curricula.

7. The following box summarises the key elements of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic employability skills through both curricula and extra-curricula activities.

#### **Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills**

- Support and encourage schools/departments to embed centrally developed teaching and learning packages in curriculum-based activities.
- Develop generic employability skills through every programme of study and make explicit through the learning outcomes in module descriptions.
- Underpin modules with the assessment of skills and self-reflection on each student's development.
- Use team development programmes.
- Use an Independent Work Experience (IWE) module to enable students to reflect upon their experiential learning in the world of work, and closely link this to Personal Development Planning.
- Use degree-based placements with businesses and other organisations as part of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.
- Use Personal Development Planning (including a web-based self-appraisal form and development plan) to integrate all the opportunities for students to develop their employability.

#### **Assessing and certifying generic employability skills**

8. A range of accredited and assessment activities, encouraging reflective learning and supporting the publicity and ethos of employability. For example, undergraduates and graduates on participation in the Graduate Business Partnership gain the Graduate Employability Award, whilst students' achievements on extra-curricula activities provided by the Guild of Students (NUS) gain the Exeter Personal Development Award.

## **Case Study 8**

### **Deloitte Employability Skills Programme**

#### **Background**

1. Over the past four years Deloitte has led an award-winning employability initiative that has sought to develop in 16-18 year-olds the attitudes and behaviours that are needed and valued in the workplace. With support from HSBC, Vodafone, Morgan Stanley and News International as well as development funding from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Deloitte has designed and developed a learning programme that develops young people's employability skills and a 'Train the Trainer' programme for those involved in delivering employability skills courses.
2. There are many different definitions of "employability". All of them seek to encapsulate the combination of skills, attitudes and behaviours that are sought by employers. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is currently working with Sector Skills Councils and the Skills For Business Network to review and define the skills requirements of employers. These include the various technical skills and basic skills of numeracy and literacy that are prerequisites for employment. However, the "softer" skills of communication, team working and personal effectiveness present a different challenge, and they have not always been included as mandatory components of learning for many young people. In addition, personal effectiveness has not been seen as an area of learning that can be easily assessed and certificated. It is on these areas that the Deloitte initiative has focused.

#### **The Deloitte approach to the development of employability skills**

3. The Deloitte approach recognises that without the appropriate attitudes and behaviours, a young person's technical knowledge, numeracy and literacy will be insufficient to persuade an employer to hire them or, if hired, for them to succeed and progress in employment. The learning is contextualised and is directly related to the area of employment where the skills will be put into practice. Thus the skills learned are about the culture of the workplace, the roles and responsibilities of managers and employees, team working, formal and informal channels of communication, customer service, presentation skills, etc as well as generic personal effectiveness skills such as motivation, enthusiasm, commitment, a willingness to learn, giving and receiving feedback and contributing to group activities.
4. A key feature of Deloitte's employability courses is that learning is based around practical exercises, simulations, role-plays and scenarios that replicate real employment and workplace situations. Students are encouraged to regard their learning as a journey of personal development and growth, and they set their own targets and objectives for this process. They thereby develop an understanding of the theory and principles of employability through actively experiencing the practical reality of different workplace situations.
5. The key objectives of the employability skills courses are:
  - to build the self-esteem and self-awareness of students
  - to enable students to experience the reality of life in the workplace
  - to develop the attitudes and behaviours required in the workplace
  - to develop students' interpersonal skills, written and verbal communication skills and team-working skills
6. A new Level 2 BTEC qualification developed by Edexcel now provides a method for assessing and certificating achievement in this area. Extensive tutor support materials are also available through Deloitte.

#### **What makes it successful?**

7. There are two main factors in the Deloitte approach to employability skills training which are key to its success. First, employability skills training is not delivered in isolation, but alongside training in the basic Key Skills of numeracy and literacy, together with the technical skills and knowledge young people require for employment in specific sectors. In addition, colleges are encouraged to give

students the opportunity to put this learning into practice during extended job placements with local employers.

8. Second, employability skills trainers take students through a personal journey that builds and develops their confidence, self-esteem and interpersonal skills described above. To deliver this training effectively it is important for employability skills trainers to be aware of and engaged in developing their own personal strengths and weaknesses. The trainer's role is not just to inform but also rather to empower the student. This is a new approach to the delivery of learning, and it is one that is not yet widely practised in the area of 14-19 education. However, if they have the right competencies and personal skills, such as personal motivation, resilience, persuasiveness and leadership, Deloitte have shown that college personnel can be trained to develop the skills to deliver this type of training effectively.

### **The Deloitte Employability Skills - Train the Trainer Programme**

9. Deloitte has now developed a new "Train the Trainer" course for teachers who wish to develop the skills to deliver this type of training. The training is a 5-day residential course and will support a new Edexcel Level 4 qualification in employability skills delivery (BTEC Professional Certificate and Awards for Trainers of Employment Related Learning), recently submitted to QCA with the support of LLUK.
10. With the qualifications and course materials in place, Deloitte has committed significant funding over the next 5 years in order that many more colleges across the UK can be equipped to deliver the training that all employees require and all employers expect. This funding will cover the full costs of the 5-day residential course, including the costs of travel and accommodation and cover for college staff attending. The target is to train up to 800 new trainers over the next 5 years and for those trainers in turn to deliver employability skills training to up to 80,000 young people. In addition, significant resource will be targeted to ensure sustainability of the programme well beyond this 5-year period.

### **Deloitte Regional Employability Centres**

11. In order to roll out this teacher-training programme, Deloitte will appoint 5 regional employability centres. Each centre will be a leading FE College with a well-recognised teacher-training unit. Deloitte will invest in supporting, training and coaching teacher training staff in order that they can deliver the Train the Trainer programme and qualification in future years. Staff from these colleges will also receive priority funded places on the Train the Trainer course, enabling them to roll out the delivery of employability skills training across the college. They will therefore be centres of excellence in both the training in and the delivery of employability skills.

### **Links to emerging policy**

12. Deloitte's employability initiative directly supports a number of key policy areas and White Paper goals:
  - Capacity-building – emerging as a key theme from functional/employability skills and framework development
  - Helping prepare staff – through training - for the introduction of functional skills, specialised diplomas and units/qualifications covering employability skills
  - Informing future development of employability skills provision, in line with employer and learner needs
  - Piloting approaches to assessing "soft" skills, which will inform the regulator's position on awarding body approaches to assessing functional and employability skills via specialised diplomas and other vocational qualifications
  - Supporting the introduction of LSC New Measures of Success, by helping colleges deliver learning that meets employer needs and provides progression to learners
  - Meeting an identified skills need in line with LLUK/DfES's strategy for teacher training '*Equipping Our Teachers for the Future*', which underpins the development of awards for Initial Teacher Training and Qualified Teacher Status

## What do the qualifications involve?

	<b>Student Qualification</b>	<b>Trainer Qualification</b>
<b>Qualification</b>	BTEC Level 2 qualification in Skills for Employability	BTEC Level 4 Certificate and Award for Trainers of Employment Related Learning
<b>Course Duration</b>	1-day training per week over the course of a full academic year, equating to 150 glh	5-day residential training course. Qualification has 60 glh
<b>Course Content</b>	5 units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal effectiveness at work</li> <li>• developing personal communication skills</li> <li>• preparation for finding work</li> <li>• building positive working relationships</li> <li>• understanding the working environment</li> </ul>	3 units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planning and developing strategies for delivering employability skills</li> <li>• innovative delivery of employability skills training across a range of sectors</li> <li>• personal development for employability skills trainers</li> </ul>
<b>Course Purpose</b>	Highly innovative training delivery involving role plays, workplace simulations and practical exercises designed to challenge and develop students' attitudes and behaviours	The qualification equips college trainers to deliver employability skills training to students on a wide variety of post-16 courses run by their colleges

## Case Study 9

### ASDAN'S CoPE Award Programme

#### Background

1. ASDAN is an awarding body, but is unique in being an educational charity. It is a spin off from activities originally located within the University of the West of England and its remit is now national.

#### CoPE

2. This programme is working on skills that are based on the three wider skills. It grew out of the challenge of assessment methodology and a perception that an over-structured curriculum left little room to develop or recognise other skills that secondary pupils might have. *"In the past we have only valued what we could assess and therefore ended up only considering valuable a narrow range of specific subjects."* Following pilot developmental work the CoPE qualification has formally be available since 2005. Overall there are around 27,000 learners currently involved in the programme in around 1000 centres. Currently ASDAN are registering about 100 new centres a week.

#### Key methodology

3. The focus is on experiential learning and learner responsibility; the use of formative assessment, and self and peer assessment, so that assessment itself becomes a learning tool; a modularised approach that allows small steps to accumulate incrementally; and a ladder of achievement which opens up access routes at each point. ASDAN believes this *"Challenge Methodology is motivational, raises aspirations and helps develop autonomous learners"*. In turn it requires school staff *"to adopt a less didactic and more facilitative style"*. A major focus is on *"changing the learners' perception of themselves and their own role in the learning process"*.

#### Structure of the qualification

4. There is a framework of modules (potentially 12) and learners choose between modules and within them to get a mix that most suits them and meets the needs for demonstrating competence at the respective levels.
  - Communication
  - Citizenship and Community
  - Sport and Leisure
  - Independent Living
  - The Environment
  - Vocational Preparation
  - Health and Fitness
  - Work Related Learning and Enterprise
  - Science and Technology
  - International Links
  - Expressive Arts
  - Beliefs and Values
5. Alongside these sit units which work on the skills relevant to all the modules:
  - Introduction to working with others
  - Introduction to improving own learning and performance
  - Introduction to problem solving
  - Planning and carrying out a piece of research
  - Communicating through discussion
  - Planning and giving an oral presentation
6. One of the strengths is the potential to draw on activities outside of school e.g. involvement in a music band; individual work on developing a home website; care for a relative at home.

## The qualification

7. CoPE is available at three levels, mirroring the Silver/FE Level 1, Gold/FE Level 2, Universities/FE Level 3 Awards. The qualifications are included in school/college performance tables with the following points allocated:  
  
CoPE Level 1 (Silver/FE 1) 25 points (GCSE Grade E/F)  
CoPE Level 2 (Gold/FE 2) 46 points (GCSE Grade B)  
CoPE Level 3 (Universities/FE 3) is allocated 70 UCAS tariff points (Grade A at AS Level)
8. At Levels 1 and 2 the qualification requires approx 120 guided learning hours and at Level 3 approx 150 hours. These include time spent on activities as well as contact time.
9. The qualification aims to enable the candidates:
  - To develop and demonstrate a range of personal, key and employability skills leading to personal effectiveness;
  - To broaden experience and manage learning through the enrichment activities provided by the ASDAN challenges;
  - To receive formal recognition and accreditation for the above.
10. They must complete the required challenges through which evidence of skill development in six areas is demonstrated to the appropriate level. This involves three main strands:
  - Taking responsibility for planning organising and carrying out a number of activities and challenges and evidencing this work in a portfolio.
  - Developing and evidencing the three Wider Key Skills of *Working with Others*, *Improving own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at the required level. These provide an introduction to the national standards for the Wider Key Skills and must use the ASDAN Plan/Do and Review recording documents.
  - Developing and evidencing the three additional skills of *Planning and Carrying Out Research*, *Communicating through Discussion*, and *Planning and Giving an Oral Presentation*, at the appropriate level, based on the Key Skill of Communication.
11. The Information Booklet includes three useful summary case studies from Blackburn Sixth Form College, Mellow Lane School Middlesex and Northcliffe School Doncaster.
12. There is a progression chart showing the links with Wider Key Skills from the different units and the connections with the other ASDAN Qualifications such as the Certificate in Life Skills (Levels 1-3), The Certificate in Career Planning (Levels 1-3) and Skills for Life/Basic Skills (Levels 1 and 2).

## Characteristics of those delivering the programme

13. The teachers' roles are "*much less about leading, teaching and understanding, and much more about nudging, guiding, motivating and encouraging*". Subject teachers have had to radically shift their understanding of their role. They have to help young people see that it's the process that matters. They have to nurture the research skills that are central to this: the need to investigate and find out, and how you do this. One teacher (at St Brendans School) said: "*In terms of research skills we're asking of them things that they don't otherwise get until they reach degree level.*"
14. ASDAN hopes for teachers who are enthusiasts, but sometimes it gets teachers who have had this dropped on them, and who need a lot of help. They come from a wide variety of disciplines. Many of them have experience in PHSE which is useful given some of the overlaps with sex and drugs issues in the content, but they are often teachers who have questions about how to handle those topics and what their relevance is to the learners. In CoPE they find an approach where the process begins to make sense.
15. When working with teachers ASDAN finds they want to talk about 'delivery' and begin by thinking about 'content', whereas we have to try to get them to go beyond that. The teachers are offered a standard

one-day course (run nationally) and then those involved in different parts of the country get chances to come together in regular project support groups. These operate best where there are many CoPE projects in the area (e.g. Bristol, Durham, Wolverhampton, Cumbria).

16. The training very much relies on case studies, using examples to illustrate the approach, presenting pieces of work submitted by students, and in some cases teachers bring along students who will talk to the meeting about what they have done and what it means to them – *“that’s pretty powerful stuff for experienced teachers to hear”*. The teacher training itself is, like the programme, largely experiential; an important vehicle is working through the moderation process in small groups with real work by pupils. In Bristol they are running about 48 small group sessions for teachers each year; some of these are surgery sessions for troubleshooting and problem solving.
17. In most of the schools with which they work there would be 2 or 3 teachers working on the CoPE programme; in some it might be as many as 5 or 6. There is some strength in having a larger group to provide mutual support (i.e. at least 3 and preferably 4). A key aspect of success is the commitment and understanding of the Head Teacher. Bedminster Down School, which is featured in Case Study 10, is unusual, and proves the point, in that the Head is actively involved in running the programme with 5 other staff. Some other Head Teachers just see the point scoring aspect of the scheme: *“how can I move my school up the league table quickly?”*
18. A range of schools are involved including sixth form and further education colleges. Some colleges that are training providers are included too.
19. It is not unusual for pupils to use evidence from work experience or from after-school activities and interests in the school or college.
20. One of the emerging ideas is that this is one of the few qualifications which will enable 18 year olds to demonstrate crucial ‘people skills’ when seeking places on medical training courses at universities. In Sixth Forms they are realising that the higher-level qualification is especially valuable for those wanting to be teachers or doctors.

### **Critical success factors**

21. Inspirational leadership, senior management commitment, someone with a vision who can communicate this to other teachers and to pupils. There is no evidence that success depends on the size of the cohorts in the school: in some schools relatively small groups can work because there is a concentration on a small number of pupils; in others there can be a cohort of a whole year group and such large scale requires team work, co-ordination and a good level of administrative skill. Both models depend on an inspirational leader and enthusiasm for experiential education, and an administrator keen to cope with the considerable paper work.

### **Difficulties**

22. In some places staff turnover is a problem, especially when the programme is dependent on one person. There have been instances of staff thinking they did not need training and imagining it is easy to do and easy to run. *“They think you just have to pick it up and run with it. But they don’t understand the process and just see it as a way of scoring points.”* There is some risk that national concerns about sex and drugs might lead to statutory changes which would disrupt the flexibility of all this by making the PHSE curriculum more prescriptive.

### **Links with AimHigher**

23. There is a HEFCE project that is looking at ways of using this kind of programme to improve take-up of university places in identified low-take-up wards. Bedminster is one of the areas involved as parts of Bristol have very low take-up of HE places.

### **Assessment**

24. Since teachers are so crucial to the assessment process they need help with understanding the levels of the qualification and developing the approach to evidence requirements (*“critically this has to be*

*versatile*). All the teacher assessment is internally moderated and then samples are externally moderated in cross-centre groups of assessors with ASDAN facilitation.

## Case Study 10

### The Use of the CoPE Award at KS4

#### Context

**CoPE was introduced in 2005-2006 in response to difficulties in trying to raise exam performance levels in the school.**

1. The school's catchment area is part of South Bristol which is predominantly white working class – a mix of council estates and privately owned homes in an area with little unemployment, but most adults doing low paid work. The area had been part of the manufacturing engine of Bristol in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but factories had closed, big employers had been lost and most of the pupils' parents now relied on service industry jobs, small-scale self-employed trades and low paid night work. Parents had low aspirations for themselves and for their children. They often expressed the view that they hadn't needed much education, so why should their children. The pupils had few ambitions and were just keen to get out there and start earning, but with no very strong views about what a good job would be.
2. In terms of indices of social and educational deprivation in the area, the DETR index of multiple deprivation in the wards covered by the school were in the bottom quarter of the figures for the city and the country, but not the lowest 10%. However in terms of the index of Educational Deprivation four of the five wards covered were both the four most deprived wards in Bristol and in the bottom 10% of the national figures. These figures indicated low adult skill attainment levels, poor take-up of post-16 education, low application rates for HE, poor primary school attainment levels and high absenteeism in primary schools. All of the feeder primary schools had poor scores in respect of the Fischer Family Trust data which is used across Bristol schools to try to show value added in terms of school results. Most of the pupils on entry to secondary school had poor functional literacy for their age group.
3. The school had suffered a gradual loss of staff – newly qualified teachers coming in, but not staying for very long and looking to 'move out a ring' in terms of local schools in the concentric circle around Bristol. This instability did not help pupils build relationships and confidence.
4. The fact that many parents had more than one low paid job meant that they were often not effectively "parenting" their teenage children. An example of this was a parent who boasted of their real level of concern for their child by saying that they always made sure they were themselves home by 10 so they could check the child had gone to bed so as not to be tired for school. It was symptomatic of this that the Head Teacher had had no parental reaction or engagement with the switch to CoPE and he thought most parents would be unaware of it.

#### The history of introducing CoPE

5. The school had done poorly in several OFSTED inspections and had been close to special measures when the Head Teacher came to it in 2002. Teacher morale was low and there were some immediate problems of discipline and attendance which he worked on. Having tried all the usual measures and attention to detail to get the schools results up the Head had decided that he needed to try another tack. This new initiative was not best timed because the school had secured PFI funding for a new building which was being put up in 2005-6 and the site was (and to some extent still is) disrupted. The new school building is good and has already raised morale and school pride.
6. The Head Teacher had looked at other school improvement schemes which had 'rescued' schools by switching large numbers of pupils to the BTEC route and just letting GCSE results go by the wayside. He had not been happy with that and felt it wasn't a principled approach. *"For me there were some key values about hanging on to GCSEs and trying to use CoPE as the glue that will hold together our work with the rest of the curriculum. It just might give us the chance to hold on to pupils and keep them engaged for just long enough to get some GCSE results out of them."*

## Selection for CoPE

7. The scheme had been introduced around Christmas 2005 with the Head Teacher and another teacher attending ASDAN training. Four other teachers had become involved in the programme with the 44 pupils. The Head Teacher said they had selected the pupils for CoPE on the basis of pupils who would either not make 5 A-C grades in GCSE or were strong in 3 or 4 subjects but never had the breadth.
8. The Head Teacher has not so far considered the value of CoPE for higher achieving pupils although this aspect would have a place in his future plans. Its use up to now had been seen as a rapid remedial measure to get the school “out of the danger zone”.

## Selling it to the pupils

9. The Head Teacher emphasised the application of key skills in the workplace. This was the only aspect pupils were attracted to and they seemed surprised later on as they realised that they were going to get some GCSE equivalents out of it. In selling it to the staff he took the line that this might help to improve the overall GCSE league table performances, and along the way instil a structure into the pupils that might help them get the three or four other GCSEs that were possible. These were not aspects that the pupils would have related to at all.

## Advantages of the scheme

10. *“The beauty of the framework is that you don’t need a curriculum. The focus is all on process and recognising what they are doing already.”* The Head Teacher thought the system had raised the levels of GCSE achievement even amongst those who hadn’t got the CoPE award, but the evidence for this was largely intangible. He thought he had seen signs that working in this way had given them some space to think about learning and how to do things which they might have applied elsewhere.
11. Another aspect of the scheme had been getting them to prepare for and to take (and re-take) the Adult Literacy Skills Tests on-line. The beauty of that was that for some of them this enabled them to get some kind of achievement a few months before GCSE – perhaps their first taste of getting any kind of award and he had noted the impact of that on their motivation. That aspect wasn’t part of the CoPE scheme itself but it had made him think about the advantages of getting a taste of success earlier on and this would inform their longer-term use of CoPE.
12. A big plus for him (and the pupils) was that it allowed them to use achievements and interests outside the school setting – especially in sport, music, IT or voluntary work with children.

## Disadvantages

13. It had been very rushed. The timetabling did not allow much continuity in terms of relationship building with the teachers doing it. The time allowed for project work had been very tight and more fell by the wayside than he would have liked. Because the pupils were introduced to the system relatively late they had had to backtrack into coursework which had been done in the autumn of 2005 to re-jig that as evidence for the CoPE assessment. They had not had the time or the staffing to allow anyone to try for Level 1 qualifications with CoPE, which many of those who apparently ‘failed’ would have been able to manage. The way they had done it was not as powerful as he hoped it would become in terms of shaping the thinking and studying skills of pupils in ways which would support their GCSE work. For most of them it came too late this time.

## Teacher skills required

14. In some subjects there is a natural focus on improving performance or developing processes (including thinking skills and self-review) – subjects such as PE, Art, Design Technology – in which case those teachers better understand the CoPE process. The challenge is for more ‘academic’ subject teachers to grasp learning and learning improvement processes. But the Head Teacher sees this as a key direction for teaching skills to move in. It was the direction that teaching was about to go in the late 1970’s and it got stalled by the attention to curriculum content. But there is

now a wider acceptance that learning how to learn is crucial for the learner and being able to improve performance is critical for the teacher.

15. This first run had hit against the need for a number of teachers to understand the detail of the standards for assessment. They had several times found that the pupils had started on a piece of work without quite enough understanding of what sorts of evidence they would need to be able to gather. He thought this would be easier now they had experience with it, but they need to make sure teachers understood the standards which were a new approach for most of them.

### **Links with work experience and/or employers**

16. The school uses the work experience process run by Connexions locally, and the planning and reflection logs there are very similar to the CoPE framework, which is helpful. In the longer term this will make it possible to use work experience as an ingredient in the CoPE programme as evidence will be able to be collected for both purposes. But this was not possible in any general sense with the first cohort because of timing being almost a year after the work experience. However two of the portfolio examples looked at did include a unit based on going back to the work experience record to use it as evidence.
17. The school has no direct evidence of employer views on CoPE. In a general way the Head Teacher recognised that *“functional skills are important to employers and we’re always being told pupils don’t have them, so this ought to be useful”*. The school does not have very strong employer links yet, although a couple of larger firms were in touch with them.

### **The next steps in rolling out CoPE**

18. This year they have done a wider analysis of the borderline candidates and started the process earlier. Whereas last time he relied on taking pupils out of a curriculum subject (French) this time he was expecting to achieve many of the units through curriculum subjects such as PE, PHSE, Design and Technology. The idea was to use the CoPE “Plan – Do – Review” format for key aspects of subject course work – especially where group work or planning skills were needed. Only some of the core elements would then be covered in a separate CoPE slot in their timetable. One advantage of this was that they would be working with subject teachers who knew them and could guide them better. The CoPE approach would be more embedded into school work generally.
19. As a consequence of needing to engage quite a few more staff in using the CoPE methods the Head Teacher had decided it wasn’t realistic or necessary to train them all up with ASDAN and instead he had designed and developed some highly interactive training materials on the school computer system which could be used to familiarise more staff with the CoPE approach. However he would need to increase the number of staff who were trained assessors in the school (at present two) and he thought they would build up to five of them using some of the teachers who had been involved this last time but had not been trained. His hope was that bit-by-bit the approach would shift the understanding of more teachers in terms of the reflective learning process amongst pupils and ensure better results all round.

### **Plans for the future**

20. This year will involve an expansion of the cohort and a chance to start the process earlier, but it will still be essentially with year 11. However the aim is that preparation will be made for 2007-8 to absorb CoPE into the mainstream as follows: Level 1 CoPE will become part of Key Stage 3 – both giving pupils a chance to achieve something and get an idea how it works, whilst giving the school better information about how these pupils work best and what their needs might be in years 10-11. The process will be part of building the “learning skills” of years 7-9 and will be based on new work already being done in the feeder primary schools to focus on “learning power” amongst pupils. Level 2 will eventually sit alongside Key Stage 4 with the idea that everyone should have got it before they reach GCSEs. The aim is therefore that the framework itself will then support a lot of the course work and GCSE work so driving up qualification levels even with the conventional curriculum.

21. He hopes that by 2008-9 there might be scope for a small number of gifted and talented pupils to start on CoPE Level 3 in year 11 so developing study skills which will be useful in A Levels and perhaps completing the actual Level 3 qualification during their first year of A Level studies.

### **AimHigher links**

22. Since they need to address the low levels of university applications in South Bristol there is a strong commitment to a well-developed local AimHigher programme. They use the school database to identify potential pupils for the scheme looking for ability and disadvantage. There is a programme of visits, master classes, target setting and individual coaching. There have been visits to local universities for both pupils and their parents. The programme is strong on developing study skills and motivational work.

### **Pupil examples**

23. Examples provided by the Head Teacher:

*"You can't always tell whether it's making a difference if you don't know the pupil well yourself. There was one girl `C` who wasn't getting on all that well with CoPE and I didn't think she would get it (she didn't) but one of her class teachers said to me 'Oh you'd be surprised at the difference in her in class. Since she started CoPE she's got much better at taking part in discussions in class, at waiting her turn to speak, at getting her point across and coping with it when people disagree with her. You would be surprised at the change.'"*

*"There was this special needs pupil, a boy, almost 16, and just interested in getting away from school and working in the building trade. His CoPE project was to plan and repair a garden shed belonging to his Dad's mate. One task was around communication and I suggested he work out the materials he would need and ring up a couple of suppliers to enquire about costs. It became obvious that he was not used to using the phone or talking to adults in this way and he was clearly very scared. I talked him through it, coached him in how the conversation might go and he had all the measurements etc but he kept putting off doing it. In the end I sat him down at my desk reminded him of what he was doing and gave him a building supplier's number. Tense and sweating he phoned up and then as the conversation developed the guy at the other end asked him questions – about sizes and what exactly he needed – all of which he'd thought about – and as it went on it was clear the guy at the other end was treating him like another adult unaware he was not quite 16. He began sitting upright and speaking more clearly and got all the information he wanted. When he put the phone down he turned to me and smiled and said "Well that was OK". For him that turned out to be a turning point with regard to confidence and self-esteem."*

*"I didn't collect specific feedback from them at the end. Perhaps I should have done. What I remember was the utter delight of achieving 5 A-C grades and being able to go on to college to do what they wanted to do even if it was still quite a low aspiration."*

*"One thing I did find was that some kids are fearful about over-reaching themselves and trying to be more ambitious than their own families. It sounds odd to you and me perhaps, but for some of them trying to outdo your mum and dad was seen as disrespectful – and I don't quite know what to do about that"*

*"We didn't get any parent reaction. I guess you'd say they were ambivalent: some were thrilled by the achievement of A-C grades; some weren't even aware that their kids were doing this and didn't understand the difference."*

### **Evidence from 3 completed portfolios**

#### **N female:**

- There was an example of small group working (preparing entries and photos for the school year book but being used to show group working skills and planning skills). The four of them met and set up tasks and one of the group `A` was absent from school for a meeting so `N` noted: *"I rang her*

up afterwards at home to check how she was getting on with her bit of it so it didn't hold the rest of us up." Later `A` was absent again and `N` noted: "I decided this time it would be better to ask `P` another girl in the group to ring her up so `A` knew we were all being affected."

- There was a nice example here of her using some voluntary work she did as evidence of citizenship and community work skills. Although quite hostile to school in some of her other comments she revealed that she spent an evening a week working with a Beavers troop of younger boys. There was lots of material here and considerable insight into the needs of young children. Not surprisingly her work experience, which was also used as evidence here, was in a primary school working with 7-8 year olds and she had high praise from the teachers at the school for her skills with little children.

#### **M male:**

- `M` did not do well at academic subjects and couldn't wait to leave school. The CoPE programme discovered that his ambitions in sport (long obvious to the PE teachers) concealed a wish to become a lifeguard and/or a swimming coach. In fact the Head got him to use finding out about lifeguard qualifications and planning how he would get one as a key activity for CoPE and he achieved the basic award. He went on to do some voluntary work alongside a coach at the local swimming pool teaching 8-9 year olds to develop their swimming style. His comments showed how much he enjoyed this and how much thought he had put into understanding the children's point of view.
- As part of his PE course work (used in CoPE) he was involved in planning and delivering some basic coaching skills for new Year seven pupils on the sports field. His work showed how much he enjoyed this and the teacher's feedback was very positive.
- He too took part in some group work on developing a section of the school year book and encountered some of the problems of uncooperative pupils in his group. He wrote: "*I was the keenest one in the group and seemed to be the only one who wanted it to happen. It was important that it be fun and we did have some laughs, but the others didn't seem to care if things got done or not.*" He got quite cross and told them what he thought at various points, but in his review he wrote: "*I could have asked them more calmly. When I chased them up I kept finding they hadn't done anything. I must learn to be more assertive and take control a bit more in the future.*" This was one of the examples where the Head said that had they had longer and a closer teacher-pupil relationship they might have been able to work on that more. His spelling and written work in his evidence portfolio was very poor but there were sparks of enthusiasm throughout the portfolio.
- `M` did his work experience with a general builder – basically some quite heavy labouring and long hours. He commented: "*It was harder and more tiring than I expected. I think I've decided not to be a builder but to go for the sports coaching instead.*"

#### **W male:**

- Another sports enthusiast, `W` did the Junior Sports Leadership Award in his PE course and used a reflective log on this in which he wrote: "*I learn best by actually doing the task.*"
- He used these interests to help run a Sports Festival for years 7-8 on the school fields one Saturday and, according to the PE teacher who observed it, he showed considerable flair in managing groups of younger pupils.
- When undertaking the school yearbook task there was a group session in which he was due to formally "chair" the meeting of four pupils. He asked to plan this with the Head and learnt that the Head plans all meetings with a simple agenda matrix on which he can take notes as well as check that he's on course with the meeting. `W` took to this and prepared his own matrix for the meeting and made clear that he wanted to clarify what they were doing, what they had each agreed to and what he was going to write down. The observer evidence showed he allowed some joking in the discussion but kept pulling them back to task and at the end he made them all agree to a summary of who was going to do what. His own review said: "*I underestimated how long some of these tasks would take and didn't realise some of the others needed reminding of what they were supposed to be doing, but we just about got it done on time.*"

## Case Study 11

### The Opening Minds Programme

1. This case study focuses on the introduction of an Alternative Curriculum at St John's School & Community College, a large (1450 students) 11-18 co-educational comprehensive situated on two sites in Marlborough.

#### Why is an alternative curriculum needed?

2. The Alternative Curriculum is taught in the Lower School (Years 7 and 8 and a pilot group in Year 9) and is a Curriculum for the 'love of learning', raising standards by returning to teaching children how to learn rather than following the rigid pathway laid down by the National Curriculum. The current National Curriculum is viewed as little different to that of the 1960s, which prepared children for a world in which a job was for life. The relentless drive to raise educational standards, whilst laudable in principle, could be argued to be guilty of crushing curriculum innovation, producing a culture of measurement of standards through testing and ultimately a profession populated by people who can only vaguely remember what education of the whole person actually means. More seriously, the freedom to educate in a way that places the needs of the learner at the forefront of our thinking has been wiped out by the immense pressures of accountability through "league tables", performance management and unsustainable workload. The aim of introducing the alternative curriculum is to develop well-educated and competent lifelong learners who are capable of adapting to the demands of the rapid change of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### What is the Alternative curriculum?

3. The work of the RSA in recent years has pointed to the need to re-examine and re-define work and education (RSA, 1995 and 1998). Following the publication of "Opening Minds: education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century" by RSA in 1999 a small number of schools, including this one, began to explore the way forward for the future of education in the secondary sector. For the Head Teacher of St. John's School and Community College involvement in the pilot coincided with a major realisation. After five years of continually raising standards from 55%A\*-C GCSE to 68%, they were beginning to reach the plateau of what could reasonably be expected of the students. The staff had worked exceptionally hard and well beyond the call of duty. Should he continue to demand more and "allow them to drive themselves into the ground" or should he accept that in doing better they would need to start with a blank curriculum sheet? The Head Teacher felt it was important to confront the simple truth that they had not really been as effective as they thought. In the secondary curriculum it is probably the case that no one has an overview of the individual child's experience; subject specialists do an excellent job but have very little idea what is being delivered in other parts of the curriculum. Therefore no one, except the child, knows when duplication of concepts/ideas is taking place and the inevitable outcome is discontinuity and incoherence. There is also the matter of holding learners back: current `wisdom` would suggest that one cannot do the Y8/9/10 curriculum before the Y7 curriculum has been completed.
4. It is a very significant step for a highly successful, oversubscribed school to embark on a path such as this. However, in March 2001 work commenced on developing a curriculum that would place the learner at the centre. The five competencies from the RSA framework (*learning to learn, relating to people, citizenship, managing information and managing situations*) formed the framework for the new curriculum. The existing curriculum delivery position of subjects being taught discreetly, of children moving every hour to yet another teacher, was ruled out. Coherence in the curriculum was regarded as essential if the learners were to make sense of the experience and be able to make visible connections between each facet of the curriculum. The curriculum from the students' view

should be a continuous experience rather like opening a book and proceeding to be engaged and captivated by an exciting story unfolding before their eyes. The teacher and teaching team (six teachers per team as opposed to the normal thirteen plus teachers for each group) for each chapter (module) becomes the courier for the story and interpreter for the child's journey. The interpreter helps to make sense of the story, encourages the child to go beyond the superficial meaning and suggests pathways to aid deeper understanding.

### **How is the Alternative Curriculum taught?**

5. The teaching style requires critical reflection on the part of both learner and guide (teacher). Use of strategies to develop preferred learning styles, exploration of multiple intelligences, use of emotional intelligence, key skills and core competencies flow through all aspects of the work. At every stage the learner is required to take responsibility for his/her learning; tasks are deliberately open-ended and risk taking (with ideas and information) is encouraged. There is no such thing as "wrong" on the journey nor should any child feel constrained or inhibited. Real learning comes from experimentation with ideas, from having the freedom to work in a way which does not recognise limits or boundaries and that places sharing of ideas without fear at the forefront.
  
6. An important aspect of the year 7 course is that it builds directly on the primary school experience. The seamless transfer enables the children to adapt rapidly and securely to the large secondary school. The introductory module examines learning styles, skills for independent learning, including intensive ICT training, emphasises the core competencies and sets the scene. The six modules, written without reference to the National Curriculum, are taught in rotation. An example of the unfolding story comes from "Going Places": the story starts with an introduction into travel and why people move from place to place both historically and today. Stereotyping, customs and styles of world music become enmeshed in journeys through time, the crusades, basic navigation, finding the way using co-ordinates, folk tales, castles and medieval invasions, ballads, and pilgrimages. The journey visits China, India and Italy and ends at the outer limits with a vision of the universe of Stephen Hawking. En-route the students will have built siege engines, used algebra, investigated forces, movement and power; they will have met Leonardo De Vinci and discussed his scientific inventions. Each module seeks to inspire and enthuse in such a way that learning is fun but it is also clear why certain subject matter is being covered. The notion of homework is also being diminished. Going home is an opportunity for extended learning. Quite a lot of the ideas encountered are not usually addressed before Y9/10.

### **How Successful is the Alternative Curriculum?**

The pilot, with 85 students (one third of year 7), proved to be more successful than the Head Teacher had hoped. Both internal and external researchers evaluated the project using the other two thirds of year 7 as the control group. The first project evaluation report will be published at the end of this year/ beginning of next. The early findings are compelling: in the initial thinking certain guiding principles were laid down, which were that this curriculum should not leave the participants in an academically or socially disadvantaged position compared with the control group, that teachers should not feel professionally exposed and that parents should not be given cause for concern. The findings surpassed the wildest expectations: compared with the control group the pilot group performed significantly better in English and Maths in the national Y7 tests. In internal tests (using KS3 SATs papers) the pilot performed at about 15% better in science than the control group. The pilot group is directly comparable with the ability profile of the rest of the year. Behaviour in the pilot was also found to be very significantly better than that in the control group. The pilot children claimed to really enjoy learning and the teachers claimed to really enjoy teaching again and could be found enthusiastically talking about learning and teaching strategies. In the words of one *"I'm finally doing what I came into the profession to do"*.

## **Case Study 12**

### **The GQAL Personal, Employability, Achievement and Reflection for Learning Programme (PEARL)**

#### **The PEARL Programme**

1. The Graded Qualifications Alliance (MANCAT, The University of Exeter, the British Theatre Dance Association and Talent Centre Limited) PEARL programme is the UK's first performance based assessment system for measuring and awarding learners' social, emotional and behavioural skills. It empowers skilled observers to quickly and efficiently screen and profile learners against standardised criteria. The system allows for learners to be given reliable feedback and scores on a variety of individual constructs, enabling a focus to be placed on areas that need to be worked on. The results of performance assessment can also be assessed at an organisational level, e.g. school, college or business, to identify key trends and areas for training and development across the board.
2. The monitoring element is supported by the continuous performance assessments and the progressive nature of the programme, which allows learners to attain a range of grades from entry level through to level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework.
3. The programme can be used as either a stand-alone assessment tool or to give a validation and accreditation framework to other personal, social and emotional literacy programmes such as:
  - DfES Social Emotional and Behavioural Skills programme (SEBS)
  - QCA Personal Learning and Thinking Skills framework (PLTS)
  - Specialist Diplomas (Generic Content)
  - Specialist Diplomas (Independent Project)
  - Pacific Institute Programme
  - RSA Opening Minds scheme
  - Personal Development Curriculum at KS3/4
4. The PEARL programme consists of:
  - a) An assessment framework
  - b) A programme syllabus
  - c) A community of practitioners
5. The assessment framework, including suggested content and examples, is based around the assessment of a set of core skills and abilities (constructs) per unit. The units are:

#### **Social and Personal Development:**

6. Self-awareness, Social Skills, Managing Feelings, Empathy, Motivation

#### **Organisational and Creative Development:**

7. Investigation, Time and Resource Management, Planning and Prioritising, Creative Problem Solving, Managing Change

#### **Cultural Development:**

8. Under development
9. For each unit the skill sets or assessment constructs are outlined in graded form, starting at grade B (NQF entry level) through to grade 8 (NQF level 3). These skills and abilities can be assessed on a

cross-curricular basis or incorporated into a workplace training, management or supervision programme. The emphasis is placed on skills being developed and demonstrated through group work, team challenges, tutor, learner and peer feedback, group discussion, practical activities, creativity and project work in a variety of settings (classroom, workplace, social settings).

10. The assessment framework is based on a series of 'show and tell' snapshots, perhaps as many as ten, but centered upon three clear formal assessments where learners perform and are assessed against the criteria set out by the community practicing in this field. In the first two formal cases it is the teacher or tutor who has had assessor training that will undertake the assessment, the final assessment is performed in front of an independent assessor.
11. An example of this type of system in action would be a highly respected chef or footballer, acknowledged by their peers as being competent and able, being invited to watch a number of learners in their field of expertise (cooking or football) demonstrate their abilities. These experts through their knowledge and experience know what a competent person in their field looks like, indeed many would say they can "smell it!"
12. With this knowledge, the practitioner or connoisseur can very quickly make a judgment as to how able the learner is and place this judgment within a set of scoring criteria and grades. By gathering together the views of a range of connoisseurs, a range of examples, or characteristics as we call them, are set out, thus giving guidance as to what one would expect to see from a learner at each grade.
13. Consider these:
  - Gordon Ramsey knows a good chef when he sees one.
  - David Beckham knows what a good footballer looks like.
  - Paul McCartney knows a good song when he hears it.
  - David Hockney knows a good picture when he sees it.
  - Linford Christie knows what a good athlete looks like.
  - Monty Don knows what a good gardener looks like.
  - William Hague would recognise a good public speaker.

In the same way a good teacher, tutor, employer or manager knows from regular contact with their learners or staff who is highly motivated, who is organised, which learners can build good relationships, who is creative or can demonstrate empathy to others.

14. Assessment only takes place when the learner is ready and is essentially a tool for benchmarking the 'distance travelled' and recognising the achievement of the learner. The assessment process is quick, efficient and clear, based on simple, expert judgments. Clear qualitative data can also be plotted and comparisons made across different parts of the school or organisation, e.g. the ability to identify that one group of learners have far stronger listening skills than their peers or one section of an organisation has very developed skills of empathy.
15. Responsibility for the assessment judgments is placed upon the teacher, youth worker or manager (we call them the involved assessor), as they have the regular relationship with the learner and the close contact needed to build up an understanding of the skills and qualities demonstrated.

### **National Policy Links and Support**

16. In Manchester, through MANCAT, there is now a fully developed framework that promotes and places a range of key competencies and thinking and learning skills at the heart of the curriculum and teaching and learning. The programme has been closely cross referenced with Every Child Matters, the National Healthy Schools Standard and the Secondary Strategy, with a particular focus on Behaviour and Attendance; as well as the national assessment for learning framework and emotional wellbeing guidance. Furthermore, the programme has been cross-referenced with the DfES Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills (SEBS) Programme and the primary version, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), as well as the new QCA Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS).

17. PEARL is the next step - a performance based assessment system that allows these skills and abilities to be measured, progressed, validated and rewarded, which is acknowledged as a key feature for the successful implementation and validation of such work. Throughout this work members of the project team have helped to inform both the development of the national SEBS programme and the QCA PLTS programme. Indeed we have recently registered an expression of interest with QCA to run the PEARL programme as an element of the Specialist Diplomas generic content.
18. In Manchester, the pilot scheme is currently being rolled out across the area, in partnership with the 14-19 strategy team. This local initiative involves Schools, Colleges, Higher Education Institutions and Employers in the service industries (through the Manchester Standard).<sup>1</sup> These different sectors are all working together, recognising and validating the performance assessment system for learners and staff. The attraction for key employers such as hotels, theatres and football clubs is the ability to both develop and measure employability skills.

### **Qualification status**

19. GQAL has liaised closely with the QCA to ensure that PEARL gains qualification status thereby providing our learners (both young people and adult learners) with national credibility and status that QCA validation brings. The QCA has granted the programme pilot accreditation (the programme will be entered on Section 96/97). The QCA have also expressed a desire to see the programme used as a case study for good practice in assessment as well as links being explored between PEARL and the PLTS framework and Specialist Diplomas.

### **Summary**

20. PEARL is
  - Setting out the first national performance based assessment system for measuring and validating social, emotional competence and employability skills.
  - Providing a valuable, credible and practical award to support learners' personal development, employability opportunities and their understanding of their own and others' needs.
  - Adding value to the wide range of social, personal, thinking and employability skills currently being identified, explored and delivered both within and outside of the curriculum.
  - Progressing a teaching and learning and curriculum framework based on a series of measurable key competencies and skills that place practical demonstration at the heart of learning and employability.
  - Providing a realistic and valuable award for schools, colleges and workplaces to measure the success of their social, emotional and skills-based programmes, needs provision and skills gaps across the sectors and institutions.
  - Through the assessment process placing increased importance and value on behaviour skills, attendance and the understanding of ones own learning.
  - Promoting and rewarding the application, values and importance of personal and social responsibility, employability skills and cultural understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [www.worldclassservice.co.uk](http://www.worldclassservice.co.uk)

## Section 6      **Aspects of Good Practice in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Generic Employability Skills**

5.1 This section distils out key learning points across the case studies in relation to the teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills. Good practice in delivering generic employability skills training requires the provision of a large variety of experiences and learning strategies. Teachers/lecturers/mentors need to be passionate, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, approachable and well organised in order to:

- communicate to learners the importance of generic skills in the workplace;
- help learners to acquire such generic skills;
- ensure that learners are then capable of transferring these skills to new contexts.

5.2 Boxes 1-5 summarise a range of aspects of good practice in the teaching and learning of generic employability skills

### **Box 1: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – In general**

- Develop communication strategies to ensure that learners clearly understand what generic employability skills are and why these skills are important.
- Incorporate both skills and personal attributes (such as motivation, positive attitude, creativity, initiative) and recognise the importance of the latter.
- Clearly identifying which baskets of skills and attributes are to be developed and why.
- Ensure that the language used to describe skills and attributes is clear and consistent and find agreement on terminology that is acceptable to all stakeholders - schools, vocational education and training providers, higher education institutions, employers and individuals.
- Recognise that skills vary in terms of what is required in different work contexts, while retaining the central concept of broadly applicable generic skills.
- Show that to achieve some work-related skills, the major skills need to be used in combination. For example, customer service involves both communication and problem-solving.
- Use authentic work experiences as an opportunity for the learners to put what they have learnt into practice and to see the importance of generic employability skills.
- Ensure that work placements are successful by discussing with learners the match between their own skills and different job roles, identifying the training required for entry and progression and producing an action plan. Review the action plan on a weekly basis and agree further actions.
- Foster skills and build confidence by showing learners the 'correct' ways to behave.
- Use team based/building activities to develop learners' teamwork and communication skills.
- Promote self-awareness on the part of learners of the skills and attributes they are developing by (i) continually referring to and reinforcing their importance and (ii) encouraging the learners to reflect on the skills they are developing.
- Have mechanisms for supporting and chronicling individual development.
- Ensure that learners are able to clearly describe the skills they are developing and why they are important.
- Encourage learners to recognise that generic employability skills develop over time and that the ultimate responsibility for developing these skills lies with them.

**Box 2; Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Courses for those who are not in employment, education or training**

- Work with young people in an 'informal' way.
- Use lots of discussions so that learners who have poor literacy skills in terms of writing are able to participate.
- Develop skills through practical activities.
- Give the learners as much responsibility as possible by, for example, involving them in setting ground rules and arranging the timing of the sessions.
- Model the type of behaviour one would expect/not expect in the workplace.
- Make it very explicit at the beginning and sustain the idea that the learners are here to be employable in whatever they choose to do.
- Constantly reinforce the importance of employability skills and have the employer in mind.
- Focus very much on the world of work and talk about it.
- Get the learners to discuss their own development in terms of employability at regular reviews.

**Box 3: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Work-related learning in schools and further education**

- Use learning strategies such as:
  - workplace projects
  - mini-companies
  - enquiry-based learning
  - problem-solving learning
  - reflective learning and workplace practice
- Identify and use teachers/lecturers who have high levels of experience in generic skills and, if possible, workplace experience.
- Develop networks to discuss and enhance practice and/or use team-based approaches to the teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills.
- Develop partnership arrangements with employers, as well as actively involving the worker or learner themselves in promoting, developing and documenting the level of generic skills possessed by an individual.
- Implement work-related codes of conduct (e.g. not wearing a hoodie in class and no headphones).
- Give the students as much responsibility as possible – for example by getting groups to elect a health and safety officer and a workshop supervisor and allowing them to monitor themselves.
- Get the learners to quality check each other's work before the tutor does and encourage them to give and receive criticism in a positive way.
- Develop social skills by encouraging the learners to participate in informal discussions (e.g. about what they did last week).
- When students fail to complete a task successfully, avoid discussion of failure, just talk about how they could improve and what they think they need to do to improve.
- Use role play and provide instant verbal feedback.
- Set up scenarios which have a confrontational situation and get the learners to discuss and argue.
- Organise events which allow learners to put into practice all the skills they have learned (e.g. organise an Enterprise Week at the end of term where the students set up a mini company and run it themselves, using the tutors as managers to consult).
- Reinforce the importance of the idea of employability skills throughout the teaching and learning on the course.
- Emphasise what skills the learners are developing and link them to the workplace.
- Get learners to think about the skills they are developing and how to articulate them.
- Work with local employers to make sure work placements provide a realistic experience.

#### **Box 4: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Higher Education**

- Highlight the generic skills and attributes sought by employers in their graduate recruits.
- Develop generic employability skills through programmes of study and make them explicit through the learning outcomes of modules.
- Show students how the content and delivery of courses enables students to develop generic employability skills and attributes, such as the ability to work autonomously and collaboratively, to communicate effectively, to solve problems, to think creatively and to manage information.
- Make clear how courses are relevant to the expressed needs of employers.
- Help students to expose and articulate the generic employability skills they have acquired.
- Use degree-based work placements with business and other organisations as part of undergraduate and post-graduate degree programmes.
- Use extra-curricula activities to encourage reflective learning and to support the development and ethos of generic employability skills.
- Use modules designed for students to reflect upon their experiential learning in the world of work, closely linking this to Personal Development Planning.
- Personal Development Planning should be used to integrate all the opportunities for students to develop their employability.
- Make use of web-based self-appraisal forms and development plans for Personal Development Planning.

#### **Box 5: Approaches to help foster the development of generic skills – Work-based learning**

- Make generic skills a key feature in job descriptions and recruitment processes.
- During induction programmes, emphasise the importance of generic skills, identify the generic skills and attributes that the organisation expects of its employees and show employees that these are recognised and appreciated.
- Use mentoring approaches in order to help trainees identify the skills and behaviours sought.
- Encourage line managers and supervisors to model the skills and behaviours sought for trainees.
- Use relevant targeted training for workplace supervisors to help them develop the employability skills in their staff.
- Use work-based projects to assist the development of employability skills.
- Use staff appraisal as an opportunity to reflect on these skills.
- Use critical incidents, including dealing with mistakes, conflict resolution or performance problems.
- Give the trainees as much responsibility as possible to get things done themselves.
- Get trainees to work with others on small projects.
- Provide supportive structures which ensure that training, learning and assessment are promoted as normal workplace activities that can reflect and improve actual workplace performance.
- During training sessions, use student-centred teaching methods, encouraging apprentices to bring their experience from their jobs to any training activity.
- Have regular reviews where the trainees can discuss any difficulties they may have but also ensure that they have to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Make sure trainees are made well aware of which generic skills they are developing and ensure that they reflect on and use their experience of the job to describe these skills in a contextualised manner.

## Section 7 Recommendations

- 7.1 Listed below are the recommendations from the research team for future planning and action by strategic bodies and providers.

### **Strategic Bodies**

- 7.2 Vigorously promote employability skills programmes and qualifications to a wide range of stakeholders including young people, parents and employers.
- 7.3 Assist in the development and operation of Education and Business Partnerships.
- 7.4 Ensure greater continuity of funding for providers offering employability skills courses both to young people who are in training but not in employment and to post-16 NEETs who are generally hostile to 'formal' education and training programmes and government initiatives. At present many providers feel they are on a destructive cycle of funding, constantly applying for short-term grants.
- 7.5 Allow enough flexibility for providers to customize training/provision to the diverse needs and lifestyles of young people, recognising that there is no 'one size fits all'. For example, e2e is a very positive programme for some, but the entry requirements were raised for it and it has become a barrier for some young people. Many cannot achieve the required attendance within the 16 weeks as they have chaotic lifestyles. As one provider commented, *"they do not do make linear progress, it is more like Snakes and Ladders, they make mistakes and fall down a snake, then pull themselves up"*.
- 7.6 Commission research to clarify the relationship between the growing range/array of qualifications available for certifying employability skills.
- 7.7 Ensure that employers are aware of the range and value of the employability skills qualifications and certificates that are being awarded to young people.
- 7.8 Develop resources, which help practitioners to identify the employability skills, courses and qualifications that are best suited to different groups of learners and learning environments.
- 7.9 Develop and promote more exemplars of good practice in the teaching, learning and assessment of generic employability skills.
- 7.10 Increase the supply of resources that describe good practice in relation to the integration/embedding of generic employability skills in different curriculum areas.
- 7.11 Plan programmes and design resource materials that make greater use of the experience of individuals and institutions with a track record in delivering employability skills programmes/courses.
- 7.12 Develop local and regional networking opportunities for teachers, lecturers, voluntary workers, employers at all levels to share experiences and knowledge in this area, recognising the increasing difficulties that many staff have in securing time to attend formal or distant events.
- 7.13 Increase support for staff who are unfamiliar with the methods of assessment used in relation to qualifications which recognise generic employability skills.
- 7.14 Ensure that information, advice and guidance professionals are fully aware of the range of employability skills programmes and qualifications that are available in the region.

### **Providers**

- 7.15 Ensure that employability skills are embedded in their mainstream curriculum offer at all stages from Key Stage 3 to Higher Education.

- 7.16 Ensure that information about the importance of employability skills is adequately disseminated to all staff and particularly to those new to the delivery of such skills.
- 7.17 Establish strong links with local employers.

### ***Strategic Bodies/Providers***

- 7.18 Support and extend institutional commitment to employability skills across schools, colleges, universities and other providers, securing the commitment of senior management and ensuring that senior staff are involved in key roles.
- 7.19 Develop strategies to deal with the fact that there may not be enough good quality work placements available for students in some areas, paying particular attention to the fact that health and safety regulations deter some employers from taking 14-18 year olds.
- 7.20 Address the fact that in some sectors (e.g. engineering), employers are reluctant to provide work experience opportunities for girls as their workplace is very male-oriented and they are reluctant to change.
- 7.21 Put forward trainers for the training places on the Deloitte Employability Skills Programme. Deloitte will fund twenty places per year for the next 5 years at a designated Deloitte Employability Centre in the South West. (To manage expectations, most funded places for the current year's courses have already been allocated.) Further training sessions will be delivered at a cost of £2,500 and it is anticipated the course fees will come down over the next few years.
- 7.22 Establish partnerships with other providers with a view to getting teachers/tutors trained on the Deloitte Employability Skills Programme and through this getting access to course materials and ongoing support - this will keep the costs per centre down and enable partnership working amongst local providers.