



# **Real World Learning: Options for Development**

**A Report for Edge and the Esmee Fairbairn Trust**

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**Version 1.0**

**February 2009**

## Introduction

A growing number of educationalists – and students – believe that hands on, applied or practical learning does make a significant contribution to improving inclusion and engagement and raising motivation, leading to improvements in attainment for all types of student. This report supplies the evidence for that case but it also proposes a way of tackling the thorny problem facing many schools, of how to put that approach to learning at the centre of what they are about.

A constant theme in our discussions with teachers and other practitioners in the course of researching this report has been their belief in the urgent need for a shift from a curriculum still largely framed around abstract, classroom learning to a programme driven by hands on learning in real world situations – what we choose to refer to here as Real World Learning.

‘It’s one thing to bring in enterprise days or even diplomas taking up 40% of the timetable, but how do you shift from where we are now to students spending two or even three days a week outside school’. That was how the assistant head of a school in Slough posed the dilemma. And that is where dozens if not hundreds of schools are perched, on the edge of a precipice or a bright new future, nervous and unsure of the next step. Many specialist schools, especially the SSAT’s Applied Learning schools, have taken the first steps and are enthusiastic for more:

*There is an increasingly widespread view that a more collaborative, adaptive and long-term problem-solving approach is the way to go. Getting there requires a different model for change: one which emphasises capacity building, which spreads and uses leadership widely, which enables and encourages rapid knowledge transfer, which fosters and utilises practitioner innovation and creativity, which values system learning and builds for sustainability.*

That is the assessment of Paul Delbridge-Smith, former national coordinator of the Schools’ Enterprise Education Network (S’EEN) who concludes that ‘The problem is that it is not clear how to orchestrate such a pervasive culture change in schools’.

This report, drawing on extensive bodies of research about the processes of educational change, argues that the most effective way of bringing about that pervasive culture change is through a bottom up revolution in thought and behaviour driven by practitioners - and supported by students, managers and the education system as a whole. It sets out a detailed, costed proposal for a national network of practitioners committed to using applied and hands on learning outside the classroom – Real World Learning - to create a new model of schooling fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Structure of the Report

The report falls into two parts.

Part 1 falls into several sections:

Section 1, *The Need for Change*, sets the scene, providing evidence of the need for a change in secondary education.

Section 2, *Why Real World Learning*, begins with a definition of the term, explores why RWL matters, considers the evidence for its value and considers various approaches to RWL.

Section 3, *Understanding how system and whole school transformation takes place and can be promoted*, reviews the available research evidence in an effort to identify the strategies that are most likely to generate system change.

Section 4 is called *Supporting practitioners in innovatory programmes*. It points to three areas of activity as being central to bringing about practitioner-led change: teachers as learners; continuing professional development linked to classroom practice; networked or professional learning communities.

Part 2 uses the research evidence reviewed in the first part to construct a programme for implementation.

Section 1 – *Programme Options* - argues for a RWL programme and explains its fit with Edge and Esmee Fairbairn aims and its relevance to government policy. It then identifies three possible ways of implementing the programme: a professional learning network for teachers and other practitioners; a national network of RWL schools; and a local model for RWL. Having considered a number of issues, including overlap and complementarity with other networks and initiatives, this section concludes that the best way forward is by setting up a practitioner learning network (PLN).

Section 2 - *the Project Plan* – sets out a detailed plan for the PLN under a series of headings: Setting up; Management; Outcomes; Evaluation; Dissemination; Funding; Sustainability.

Finally, there is a list of references for the report as a whole.

## **Methodology**

This report is the outcome of a large number of interviews, visits and discussions stretching over the second part of 2008. It has been informed by the views of educational practitioners, including many teachers, headteachers and agency staff and by a major programme of reading. An appendix contains details of the individuals and agencies consulted in the course of this study, and a summary of the key points in each case.

The methodology was designed to test two propositions

- That applied and practical learning has a significant contribution to make to improving the motivation, engagement and prospects of young people
- That a practitioner learning network focused on real world learning or a network of real world learning schools could create the momentum that would enable schools to shift from a traditional classroom learning model to a curriculum driven by applied and practical learning outside the classroom.

An extensive literature review was carried out to test the first proposition looking at three bodies of research:

- The evidence for the motivational and attainment impact of applied and practical learning, and an overview of the main approaches being developed principally in England and US;
- The factors that count in bringing about system change in education

- The circumstances under which practitioners are able to develop and shape change.

The evidence from the literature review was used to create a set of options for delivery that would fit with the objectives of the two bodies that have funded this research and would also fit with the main lines of government policy towards secondary schools. These options were also compared with similar existing networks and initiatives to identify overlaps, complementarity and gaps in provision. Out of this emerged a recommendation to create a real world learning I network for practitioners.

I am grateful for the help of the many individuals and organisations who have lent their time to supporting this study, especially my colleagues at Edge and Esmee Fairbairn, and my unofficial advisers who have always been generous with their time: Liz Cousins, Tim Brighouse, Richard Pring, Valerie Bayliss and Pat Cochrane.



## Summary

To be added

## Part 1

### Section 1 Need for Change

There is a growing sense that young people leave school without the practical skills and knowledge they will need in later life. Recent surveys of employers and young people indicate that

- 1 School and college leavers often do not have the necessary practical skills valued by employers.
  - 2 Practical experience and skills are crucial to the recruitment decision making process for employers.
  - 3 There is great demand for more work experience, work placements and practical learning.
- (Edge nd, p3)

These are the symptoms of a set of inter-related problems:

- disadvantaged and disaffected young people
- poor staying-on rates at age 17 and lack of alternative provision outside GCSEs and A levels
- too many young people leaving the education system without a sound grounding in the basics of English and maths and the skills they need for employment
- the most able young people not being stretched.

At root, the issue seems to be that for many young people, secondary school fails to motivate and engage them. This is not a new problem. A survey of 7000 students in the early 1990s showed

- 70% of pupils agreed that they count the minutes to the end of their lessons
- 30% believed that school work is boring
- 30-40% took the view that they would rather not go to school. (Barber 1994)

But the problem seems to have got worse. Steady progress in raising attainment measured by 5 A-C GCSE now seems to have plateaued – especially if the numbers not gaining English and Maths are taken into account- while the percentage of NEETs has remained the same over the last ten years (Nuffield NEETs). Recent government reports on young people’s aspirations and on social mobility show that the social and education gaps have not closed since Labour came to power, although there have been some important improvements in child poverty which may bode better for the future. (Cabinet Office 2008; Cabinet Office 2009) All this despite perhaps the biggest investment in schools for decades.

As the authoritative Nuffield Review of 14-19 learning notes, ‘Many young people, of all ability levels, are simply not being engaged and stretched by a predominantly classroom-based academic model of learning’. (Nuffield 2008). The 2005 14-19 White Paper identified three groups within the disengaged:

- students who drop out at least partly because the curriculum, qualifications or learning styles available do not motivate them;
- students whose low achievement may be due to personal problems which have nothing to do with the curriculum or qualifications on offer; and
- students with learning difficulties. (p.67)

Steedman and Stoney have shown that the reality is more complex, with apparently similar groups displaying a range of needs which must be taken account of in designing effective responses. For

example, within the group 'whom we will characterise as the '1-4 A-C Grade' group, some may have reached their full potential but others will be capable of much more if interest and enthusiasm can be aroused'. (p.30)

So how has the education system responded? In three main ways

- By improving the learning experience in order to motivate learners
- By targeting more resources on disadvantage in order to reduce the attainment gap
- By placing greater store by enterprise learning, work placements and practical learning than in the recent past.

Our focus will be mainly on the third of these given the subject matter of this report.

### **Improving the Learning Experience**

Alongside a massive programme of school building and refurbishment, the government has introduced major changes to the National Curriculum, including the liberalisation of KS3 and the new Diplomas, and overseen big improvements in the school workforce. Many of the changes have come under the banner of personalisation, with increasing support for individual students, especially in the areas covered by the National Challenge.

There can be little doubt that these changes have brought improvements but the results do not seem to tally with the scale of the investment.

### **Targeting Disadvantage**

Excellence in Cities, the National Challenge, mentoring, one to one tuition in English and Maths, the Academy programme, extended schools: these are some of the main ways in which the government has determined to tackle under-attainment. But again, progress has been frustratingly slow. (Cabinet Office 2008; Cabinet Office 2009)

### **Enterprise and Applied Learning**

The Government, recognising the benefits of enterprise and applied learning, has pressed ahead with a series of programmes including

- Enterprise Pathfinders, eventually involving more than 700+ schools. Their purpose was to test strategies for embedding an enterprising approach to teaching and learning within the school culture
- The creation of the Applied Learning specialism
- A requirement that schools dedicate at least 10 days per year to enterprise education
- A requirement that the Principal Learning component of the new Diplomas include at least 50 % applied learning . In practice, this means that just over 25% of the whole Diploma programme must be applied learning plus 10 days of work experience.

The results so far on this front are mixed:

- QCA research shows that in state secondary schools, representing 60% of all schools but over 90% of pupils, only 7.7% of the qualification points earned come from vocational qualifications.

By contrast, the figure for CTCs is 24.1% but these represent less than one percent of the total number of institutions.<sup>i</sup>

- Ofsted's review of Learning to be enterprising at Key Stage 4 found that, encouragingly, pupils are motivated by enterprise learning and through it develop a good range of skills; however, insufficient attention is given to pupils' learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes, and courses are rarely planned as part of a coherent programme of vocational and work-related learning. Overall only 14% provided enterprise education opportunities. (Ofsted (2005) Work-related learning: the story so far p2)

A report for the DfES suggests that one reason for this low level of engagement with enterprise education is the multiplicity of enterprise initiatives and the lack of coherence in this field.<sup>ii</sup> More recently (2008) in a report on young people's economic and business understanding, Ofsted has pointed to the sometimes poor quality of the teaching 'because of the variation in the availability and quality of professional development for the subject' and to students' lack of direct contact with employers and local businesses, even on applied and vocational courses, [which] continued to be a weakness in around half the schools and colleges.(Ofsted 2008, p4.) 'This made their learning experiences, particularly for those taking applied and vocational courses, less directly relevant'. (p.6) Not surprisingly, in the circumstances, the report found that coursework was almost the only means of assessment and expressed concerns about students' ability to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding (p.5).

The evidence about teachers' experience and employer links poses a serious question about schools' current capacity to deliver the applied and practical learning which is central to the Government's ambition for the Diplomas. The risks are only too obvious, that the design and delivery of the new qualifications 'is only notionally related to employer needs, only weakly related to workplace practices, and rarely delivered by those with actual experience and industry expertise', as Ruth Silver and Wendy Forrest put it (Silver and Forrest, p.78). If schools are unable, for the most part, to develop solutions to these problems on their own they may need to draw on collective resources such as 14-19 consortia and practitioner networks, drawing on expertise in vocationally-orientated CDP programmes such as Lewisham College's Practice Makes Perfect.

But there is a second capacity problem of which schools and those who work with them are aware, and that is the gap between a desire to embed practical and applied learning at the heart of the curriculum and the availability of tried and tested strategies for doing so. This is a journey on which schools find themselves almost entirely alone and dependent on their own genius. The point that increasing numbers of schools has reached is typified by membership of a national network, by specialist status and by experimenting with one of the many learning and thinking skills schemes. Very few, however, have reached the point of using enterprise and practical learning to drive whole school change.

### **The Change Gap**

This is the nub of the problem. Despite the many changes of the past decade – in buildings, equipment, curriculum – most secondary schools are essentially the same as they were twenty years ago. Students move from lesson to lesson as the bell chimes, and they spend most lessons copying down information on which they are tested on paper each term and each year. Yet the gap between the experience of school and the skills and knowledge young people need to thrive in the world outside school is getting wider. Businesses which fail to adapt to that process of rapid transformation are doomed. Can schools be any different?

Most schools are understandably nervous of more rapid and thorough change even if they know the direction that should take. A growing number have opted for limited change, often as members of a national network. But some – dozens at the most - have embarked on thorough-going programmes of internal reform, usually involving the adoption of a method or programme to drive change. These demonstrate that transformation is feasible and it does not have to lead to perdition. iii

## Section 2 Why Real World Learning

*By the skills to succeed I mean the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and also communication, teamwork, enterprise, creativity, resilience and so forth. The motivation and confidence ... to continuing learning and be successful. And appropriate ambition ... young people need a good understanding of what they enjoy and are good at, and who they want to be. The point is that these skills and attributes are not developed in the classroom alone but require interaction with the real world – practical and vocational learning. Which is Edge’s mission. Andy Powell, Edge Chief Executive<sup>iv</sup>*

*Both practical and theoretical knowledge, to be meaningful, need to be related to experience, that is, to the ‘lived world’ of the young person. Too often that is not the case. Schools are places set apart, and the experiences, which actually shape the young person’s perceptions, interests and thinking, are often disconnected from the learning programmes they have to undergo – let alone allowed to shape those learning programmes in any way. (Nuffield 2008, p2)*

This section sets out to test the proposition that applied and practical learning has a significant contribution to make to improving the motivation, engagement and prospects of young people. It also attempts to pinpoint some of the factors that underpin its impact.

### A Sea Change

Although applied and practical – or hands on - learning has traditionally been a part of the British school curriculum, a series of reforms pushed it to the margins in the 1980s. Its marginalisation began to be addressed by a series of commentators during the 1990s, most notably by Tom Bentley in his now classic *Learning beyond the classroom: Education for a changing world* (Demos, 1998). As he acknowledges, a key influence in this new thinking had been the revolutionary work of Howard Gardner on human intelligence. Previously, there had been a widespread assumption that intelligence was a constraint, and that only a minority were capable of high learning achievement. Gardner laid the basis for understanding that through the exercise of different kinds of intelligence, it was possible for a student to excel in applied or practical learning and that this was as valuable as academic or abstract learning. Of course, there was no dispute about this in the faculties of medicine or engineering in the great universities, but the British system had erected a hierarchy of merit that placed practical and vocational education beneath abstract learning (unless it took place in those great universities).

Gardner was not the first to question the constraints of traditional IQ thinking – a series of government reports had laid the basis for a massive expansion of the university system in Britain – but he provided a rationale for taking seriously the talents of every student and for ensuring that they were developed. Although the results of this change have not seeped through to every part of public and media opinion (see the annual debates about education standards when GCSE and A level results are published), global change is forcing the realisation that the nation’s future depends on its ability to develop the talents of all young people, not just the minority best adapted to academic

study. Without this sea change in thinking about education, the case for applied and practical learning would be very much weaker.

## Definitions

A confusing variety of terms are often used interchangeably so it would be useful to clarify their use in this report. Pring distinguishes between learning that – which he also refers to as propositional or theoretical knowledge – and learning how or practical learning. He also refers to experiential learning because both theoretical and practical learning have to be qualified by learning from experience or hands on learning. (Pring 2008) The table below shows how applied and practical learning differs from traditional classroom learning v:

Classroom	Applied and Practical Learning
Individual learning and accomplishment of tasks	Social learning, joint accomplishment of tasks
Knowing what	Knowing how
Learning takes place in the classroom	Integrates learning outside with learning inside the classroom
Learning by memory	Learning by doing, learning using tools
Abstract, decontextualised learning	Learning in a context, situation specific learning
Class of students instructed by a teacher	Teacher or expert as guide and mentor

Some writers prefer use the terms to work-related or vocational learning rather than applied and practical learning. The term widely used here is applied and practical learning which is also intended to encompass experiential or hands on learning and the application of knowledge to work or vocational contexts. Occasionally, one or other of these terms creeps in, especially through quotations but I hope that the focus of the report is clear. What is excluded from this study is vocational education or training, that is, specialist preparation for a specific work or vocational route or sector.

## The Value of Applied and Practical Learning: UK Evidence

The claim - that applied and practical education can made a significant contribution to improving inclusion and engagement and raising motivation, leading to improvements in attainment for all types of student - is often made. It has been argued, too, that ‘Without the incorporation of practical learning, Diplomas cannot address the outstanding problems with existing provision’.<sup>vi</sup> The 2005 White Paper which introduced diplomas provided evidence for the value of vocational education to the country and to individuals, and argued that a stronger vocational and work-related route would help to ensure that there were a range of educational offers to reflect the range of young people’s needs. But it stopped short at providing any evidence for the view that ‘More practical, work related learning motivates a large group of learners to achieve and progress’. (DES 2005, p.45).vii

Not surprisingly, for little research has been carried out in the UK into the impact of applied and practical learning in improving engagement and attainment (Cullen 2002; Stasz 2004). On the basis of the literature survey carried out by Cullen et al in relation to the 14-16 phase, the authors' cautious conclusion was that 'programmes and activities aimed at 14-16 year olds are more successful at enhancing affective outcomes than enhancing their knowledge and skills. Participation in vocational learning may enhance employment opportunities for some students' (p.20).

Certain programmes have shown success in achieving positive outcomes such as in raising attainment, although usually with specific types of student. Good examples are the Increased Flexibility Programme where staying on rates improved, and BTEC which, almost uniquely in Britain, has proved that a qualification can retain the confidence of employers over a long period because it is a reliable indicator of students' work-related capacities (Shoesmith 2008). Ofsted's review of the Learning to be Enterprising at Key Stage 4 programme found that, encouragingly, pupils are motivated by enterprise learning and through it develop a good range of skills. (Ofsted 2005, p.2) A similar outcome was found for an evaluation of work-related learning projects involving 225 schools and 10,918 students in the project groups with 8,522 students in comparator groups: 'Students in the project group generally attained GCSE results at around the same level as the average year cohorts for their schools. Since disaffection was a criterion in selection for several project groups, this represents a considerable achievement'. (Watson et al 2000, p.i) The value of group work, more generally, is highlighted in the TLRP study, Improving Teaching and Learning in Schools:

*We showed that group work can influence academic progress more positively than other forms of teaching and learning. It can raise engagement in learning, encourage children to become more actively engaged in the learning process, and facilitate more thoughtful learning. This suggests an alternative to the current approach to school discipline, where the trend is to concentrate on whole-school managerial solutions designed to control rather than eliminate the problem.*<sup>viii</sup>

Edge's more recent research review also strikes a hopeful note: 'Reports by Ofsted and others suggest that the growing use of vocational qualifications in schools at Key Stage 4 (14-16) is motivating some students to do better than expected in GCSEs as well'. (Edge 2008, p.22) Similarly, Lord's work for QCA suggests a positive association between 'practical and learner-centred teaching and learning' and learner motivation (Lord, p.13). This view is supported by the experience, albeit short-lived of the Active Learning Schools project, which took place in nine secondary schools in 2007. An evaluation by MYA pointed to 'improvements in attendance, motivation and behaviour and in some cases personal transformations in attitudes to school, learning and life chances. It has also excited staff with the potential for change: "The personal growth, development and sense of achievement has been inspirational for me as a teacher to witness' (Cedar Mount)'" (Yarnit, 2007a, p.2). One London authority, Barking and Dagenham claims that vocational GCSEs helped it to improve the percentage gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A-C from one-third to over half of all 16 year olds in the ten years to 2002, a steeper rise than other London boroughs, although this claim is disputed (Steedman and Stoney 2004, p.25).

Or we can consider the experience of one secondary school - New Heys, Liverpool - that has taken practical and vocational education more seriously than most:

*100 Y9 students are selected every year to take part in the Young Managers programme. 20 are attached to each of the five employers. By Y12 they are spending two days a week in the workplace, following a training programme designed by the employer. Twenty out of twenty five hours is devoted to the programme plus business studies. The result has boosted the school's reputation: its*

*sixth form has doubled over the past year and is projected to grow to around 160, and it is regaining some of the students it had previously lost to neighbouring schools. Its 5 A-Cs score is up to 44% (2006 - compared with Liverpool 54% and England 58%). Two other indicators are that teenage pregnancies are down and teacher recruitment is up. (Yarnit, 2007c, p.2)*

This kind of evidence is on the cusp of the anecdotal, and it has to be said that there is no shortage of that. Surveys carried out by Edge among the general public, employers, teachers, lecturers, and young people show that many are convinced of the value of practical learning, to individuals and businesses. Around three in four would like to see more learning by doing in the education system. (<http://www.edge.co.uk/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?ContainerID=439&ContainerName=News>)

Most emphatically of all, the need for the expansion of practical and vocational education has been a constant policy theme of governments over a period of decades, although some commentators are less sold on this approach (Wolf 2002; 2007). Nor is everyone convinced by the argument that curricula need to become more relevant.<sup>ix</sup>

Indeed, the authors of a study involving students in pupil referral units concluded that 'there is little evidence to support the claim that disaffection experienced by these pupils is the result of an inappropriate curriculum. Rather, it reflects a deficiency of motivational and coping strategies perhaps not best dealt with in 'out-of-school' contexts'. (Solomon and Rogers 2001) It needs to be said that this is a study of young people who might find it hard to thrive in extramural situations.

## **US Evidence**

Evidence for the value of applied and practical learning comes from a variety of sources in the US where the research community is large and where there is a growing interest in this field of activity. A dedicated research centre, the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, comprising a set of institutions with its hub at the University of Louisville, has been funded by the US Government 'to improve the engagement, achievement, and transition of high school and postsecondary CTE students through technical assistance to states, professional development for CTE practitioners, and dissemination of knowledge derived from scientifically based research'. CTE, broadly speaking, is equivalent in Britain to vocational and practical education at key stage 3 and 4 in schools, in further education and the early years of key stage 5. Key research interests of the Center include integrated CTE and academic programmes and CPD for CTE.

A recent synopsis of research covering the period 2000-2007 shows that taking part in CTE courses leads to higher high school graduation levels and also shows that regardless of high school attended, taking a higher ratio of CCTE classes to academic classes reduced the risk of drop out. (NRCCTE 2008, p5).

A recent item on the Center's website (<http://136.165.122.102/mambo>) reports that "MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) scores for the 26 [CTE schools] have jumped 40 percent since 2001, and 6 of the 10 most improved high schools on the 2008 MCAS are, in fact, [CTE] schools. Statewide, [CTE] schools' graduation and MCAS pass rates both top state averages, and dropouts are less than half as frequent as in other public high schools."

On the other hand, it needs to be recorded that practical and vocational learning does not figure in the effective programmes identified by the Institute of Education Sciences What Works website. Funded by the US Department of Education, the website reviews the impact of programmes and initiatives in terms of their impact on outcomes and the weight of the evidence. (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/topic.aspx?tid=12>)

Nevertheless, there are a number of US school reform programmes rooted in the value of learning by doing. The Big Picture Schools, a non-profit organisation set up to bring about changes in American education, manages a small but growing network of small schools built on three principles:

- 1) Learning must be based on each student's interests and needs.
- 2) Curriculum must be relevant to the student and allow them to do real work in the real world.
- 3) Students' growth and abilities must be measured by the quality of their work and how it changes them.

(<http://www.bigpicture.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/big-picture-brochure.pdf> )

The Met Centre, Metropolitan Regional Career & Technical Center, a network of six small schools in Providence, Rhode Island, has a total enrolment of 700. It was founded in 1996 by the Big Picture Company. On average, 98 % of the graduates are accepted to college, the graduation rate is 94 % (the city's average is 54 %) and the attendance rate is 92.1 % (the city's average is 80 %). According to Rhode Island's School Accountability for Learning and Teaching Surveys, the MET has consistently ranked among the state's top high schools for parent involvement, school climate, and quality of instruction. (CERI/OECD 2008, p4)

These are impressive results especially considering that half the students come from low income families. The organisation of the school, pedagogy and the curriculum are all distinctive:

*Students are organised into advisories: groups of 15 individuals in the same grade level and led by an advisor, who stays with them for all four years of high school. Students are also paired with adult mentors who share their career interests. This is because school based learning is blended with outside experiences through an internship programme. For each student, a challenging and personalised learning plan is developed every quarter by the students themselves, their advisors and their parents. Instead of multiple choice tests and exams, each student defends his work in exhibitions each quarter in front of advisors, parents, mentors and peers. Instead of grades, students receive quarterly narratives from their advisors, in which the advisor describes the student's academic and personal growth in detail. There are no standard fixed-time classes. The MET is not just a school but also a community centre where community members are involved in the daily workings of the school. In addition, parents are involved in the development of their children's learning plan and in assessing their child's work. A health centre is also part of the MET. (CERI/OECD 2008, p4)*

Learning by doing in the real world is central to the Big Picture approach:

*The main component of every student's education is the Learning Through Internship program. In this minimum 10-12 hour, two-day-a-week internship with an expert mentor in the field of the student's interest, the students complete authentic projects that benefit the student and the mentor.*  
(<http://www.bigpicture.org/2008/11/learning-in-the-real-world-lti>)

The internship programme takes up two days a week starting in January. The previous term students are paired with a mentor and are prepared for the internship, learning how to dress and what to expect. This is similar to the Young Managers programme at New Heys Community School, Liverpool which involves two days a week learning alongside adults at an employer's site.

Apart from Big Picture Schools, Expeditionary Learning Schools is the US initiative closest in theory and practice to applied and practical learning:

*Students in Expeditionary Learning schools learn from fieldwork, experts, and service in addition to learning from text. They use the natural and social environments of their communities as sites for purposeful fieldwork and service connected to academic work. Students working in the field are active investigators using the research tools, techniques of inquiry, and standards of presentation used by professionals in the field. Schools develop procedures and protocols to ensure that fieldwork is safe and productive. In addition to having students conduct research outside the school, teachers bring experts from the community into the classroom. Older students participate in internships and apprenticeships that engage them in the real world and service learning. These experiences maximize students' motivation to learn.*

<http://www.elschools.org/design/CPB-1-4.pdf>

The name requires a little explanation for a British audience. Although expeditionary does refer in part to the underpinning philosophy of learning outside the classroom and outward bound activities, it is mainly about exploration through cross-curricular projects. ELS has been rated as 'highly promising evidence of effectiveness' on the John Hopkins University Best Evidence Encyclopaedia which aims to 'present reliable, unbiased reviews of research-proven educational programs'.  
<http://www.bestevidence.org/index.cfm>

An example of this approach is the *City as School* High School in New York City, the

*original and leading external learning or experiential learning model for high school students. Founded in 1972, City-As-School re-engages students in learning using the depth and breadth of New York City's businesses and resources, primarily through internships. Students are in 11th and 12th grades (16-19 years old) and at risk of not earning a high school qualification. Students and staff map the academic 'credits' required by each individual student into an internship so that this work placement forms the basis of learning in math, history, English, science and other academic areas (Young 2007, p9).*

## **Elsewhere**

To help inform practice in England, Ofsted has carried out studies of similar provision in other countries. The report on Pathways to parity 14–19 suggests that in some key aspects of vocational education there are lessons to be learned from Denmark, Netherlands and New South Wales, Australia, about parity of esteem, staying-on rates and the role of employers in developing and assessing qualifications. In these countries, vocational education focuses more specifically on the development of skills for particular types of employment, and courses provide clear pathways to higher education and employment and are held in high regard by both young people and the community. Staying-on rates into full-time education or training beyond the end of compulsory education are also higher, and employers are much more directly involved in determining the content and assessment of vocational courses. Significantly, teachers of vocational courses are normally required to have industrial experience. (Ofsted 2005, *Work related learning: the story so far*, p.3)

## Learning in the Real World

The evidence could be stronger and more consistent but it is clear that applied and practical learning generates a number of benefits for learners, improving motivation, attendance, behaviour, attainment and staying on rates. It is also clear that some part of that benefit comes from the learning being experiential and taking place in contexts whose relevance learners understand.

For that reason it is useful to refer to *real world learning* meaning

*practical, applied and experiential learning that takes place outside the classroom and entails students applying the knowledge they have acquired in school to situations they experience in the world outside.*

The use of real world learning (RWL) in this sense is becoming widespread – see for example, Charles Leadbeater's 21 Ideas (p.69).

RWL encompasses hands on or experiential learning, involving the experience or simulation of an activity which students may encounter in the world outside school, of preparing a performance, for example, or working in a public service or providing a consumer service or making a product. Typically, it may involve working as a member of a team or solving a problem. In other words, it should be situated in a specific context and connected to a body of subject knowledge and general principles. (QCA 2008, p10)

RWL in this sense should be differentiated from two other uses of the term:

1. By a consortium of organisations including the RSPB to refer to field studies exercises
2. By the Centre for Real World Learning at the University of Winchester to refer to the study of the acquisition of skills and knowledge which can be used to improve the performance of any human activity from playing games to designing energy efficient machines. 'At the heart of our work is the realisation that practical intelligence is, contrary to much received wisdom, learnable', comments Bill Lucas, one of the founding directors of the Centre. x Real World refers to the Centre's focus on 'developing competence, about learning to do things, not just learning about things'.

RWL in the sense used in this report could encompass (1) above - providing the out of school learning is the point of the exercise rather than merely an illustration for a classroom lesson - and can also be seen as a sub-set of (2) above.

It is useful to explain RWL's relationship to vocational education. Again there is common ground between the two terms but RWL is not confined to learning for a specific career or sector of employment although it may form part of such a learning programme.

The concept is being applied in the US through the Big Picture, a network of 60 high schools in the US built on three principles:

In the US RWL is also referred to as out of school learning, a concept first proposed by Lauren Resnick, and where it often refers to leisure and community service activities which may be organised by bodies such as the YMCA and which are detached from the school.<sup>xi</sup>

## **Conclusions**

Despite the lack of experimental evidence about the impact of applied and practical learning, especially from the UK, it is possible to attempt the answers to two key questions: does it have an impact on learning outcomes and how is this achieved? The evidence is far from crystal clear but there is a similarly positive message from both sides of the Atlantic. The most impressive results seem to come about when work-related and enterprise projects entail a well organised and authentic experience of the workplace or some other setting in the world outside school run by people – usually adults - with relevant expertise who treat students as responsible and capable of making a useful contribution. Given the opportunity, young people rise to the occasion in a way that sometimes astounds their teachers. The Young Managers programme and the Big Picture Schools exemplify that approach as does Learning to Lead, a project that is described in section 3, Understanding how system and whole school transformation takes place and can be promoted.



### Section 3 Understanding how system and whole school transformation takes place and can be promoted

*The kinds of prescriptions given by educational research to practice have been in the form of generalized principles that may often, even usually, be right, but in some circumstances are just plain wrong. ... But more often research findings also run afoul of the opposite problem: that of insufficient specificity. Many teachers complain that the findings from research produce only bland platitudes and are insufficiently contextualized to be used in guiding action in practice.*

(Wiliam quoted in Thompson and Wiliam, p.6)

Dylan Wiliam is right; that what counts in the end as far as student learning outcomes are concerned is classroom practice. He argues that three generations of school effectiveness research show that an effective school is a school full of effective classrooms because classroom-level differences in value-added are large and school-level differences are small in most countries. (Wiliam, 2008) But the single most difficult issue that policy makers, practitioners and researchers grapple with is how to translate change at the level of the school into system-wide transformation; how to scale up change, in other words.

This section reviews the available research evidence in an effort to identify the strategies that are most likely to generate system change and whole school transformation.

Internationally, OECD has led the ambitious Schooling for Tomorrow programme of conferences and research.<sup>1</sup> Two key documents are *Emerging Models of Learning and Innovation*, policy paper prepared for the conference in Merida, Mexico, June 2006 and *Futures for Learning*, Tom Bentley's paper for the same conference. Both are strong on the global context that is driving the need for educational change, and both recognise the need for a better understanding of how to translate local change into system innovation. Alongside this large transnational programme and in some cases contributing to it, is the work of three individuals: David Hargreaves, Michael Fullan and Michael Barber, architects of some of the most advanced thinking and practice in the field of system and school change: Hargreaves in his work for SSAT, Fullan as teacher and policy adviser, Barber, in a variety of roles, most notably the head of the Number 10 Delivery Unit.

This is a large field of thinking and research to synthesise but it is possible to identify some emerging conclusions, even if they do not always command universal assent.

Hargreaves (2008) has come to see personalised learning as the new business model for schooling, ('a complex fusion of mass customisation and peer production') and peer innovation networks as the means to drive change, often against the opposition of principals and governments. So he looks to the new internet generation

*- of young teachers and their students - that need to be empowered to form the core innovation networks in education - innovation networks based on co-construction by teachers and students through real-life and Internet-based conversations. This means investing in them the necessary authority, time and resources to do the job.*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_35845581\\_31420934\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_31420934_1_1_1_1,00.html)

But government, according to Hargreaves, is instinctively opposed to this emerging movement for change and:

- *Adopts command-and-control strategies, seeing itself as the transformer, not as being transformed as well as schools/teachers*
- *Feels its control is threatened if any innovation is not already part of, or will actively contribute to, the government's current agenda and priorities*
- *Expects innovation, but is risk-averse, and has a standard model for schools that discourages them from taking risks.*

As a result, he says, government cannot take the steps necessary to unlock the transformative potential of the education system in the 21st century. The solution is for government to recognise that innovation comes from the bottom and to support and integrate it, and for principals to support innovation networks and to empower younger teachers and students as innovators and leaders.

Michael Fullan, while expressing a less jaundiced view of government, reaches similar conclusions (2006). Fullan stresses the importance of multi-layered cultural change involving government, the school system as a whole as well as individual schools and practitioners. The Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), a major research initiative led by the Institute of London, stresses 'a sense of purpose and agency, active engagement' and the futility of ring-bound procedures manuals. It argues that students, teachers, managers and parents all need to be actively engaged, and that 'communication and collaboration' between these are essential. (TLRP, p.43) In addition, Fullan points to the importance of creating a critical mass of change agents at every level (2006, p12).

He also warns against a risk with networked or professional learning communities (PLCs):

*For system change to occur on a larger scale we need schools learning from each other and districts learning from each other. My colleagues and I call this 'lateral capacity building' and see it as absolutely crucial for system reform (Fullan, Hill and Crevola, 2006; Fullan, 2006). Put another way, individual, isolated PLC schools are 'verboten' in any deep scheme of reform – and PLC as an innovation can easily slip into this trap. The third problem then is how PLCs can unwittingly represent tunnel vision, reinforcing the notion of the school as an autonomous unit, not as part and parcel of a wider system change. (Fullan, 2006, p7)*

Another trap, according to Fullan, is to focus too much on improving individual practitioners and leaders because, he argues, 'our theory of action informs us that any strategy of change must *simultaneously* focus on changing individuals and the culture or system within which they work. (p7) For Thompson and Wiliam, the sheer scale of the need for individual improvement rules it out:

*It is not enough to devise a program of professional development that works effectively when it is delivered by its original developers and their hand-picked expert trainers. Where would we find the army of experts needed in the 100,000-plus U.S. schools that could benefit from AfL [Assessment for Learning]? There simply are not enough qualified coaches and workshop leaders to be found, and the mechanisms for disseminating learning through such top-down models are dauntingly complex and expensive. (p14)*

Instead, they advocate the deployment of networked learning communities 'because their grassroots character lends itself to scaling up the intervention' (p14). As a method of bringing about

grassroots change and engaging the practitioners, there is clearly a lot to be said for this, as we will see later.

But what is the evidence to show that scaling up can generate large scale or system change? The studies of the impact of Assessment for Learning in the US at district and state level certainly indicate change although the evidence on student learning outcomes is still hazy (Wylie, 2008). The evidence from the Toronto change programme, in whose design Michael Fullan has played a key role, shows promise. High school graduation rates rose by 5% between 2003-2005 and the number of failing schools was cut by 75%. The approach applied in Toronto – of developing capacity at every level - has been scaled up and rolled out across Ontario, Canada's most populous province.

Less impressive has been the history of the embedding of assessment for learning (AfL) in secondary schools in England. What began promisingly as a grassroots or at least local initiative, seems to have lost its way as government imposed AfL as part of its national strategy. In 2004, the *TES* reported on one of the most positive evaluations in recent years, by a research team from London University that found that 100% of the staff in the Scottish primary and secondary schools involved said the project was highly successful in adding to their understanding of the role assessment can play in learning and in improving their motivation.

*More than nine out of 10 had changed teaching and assessment practices as a result of their involvement, and were now more focused on the needs of pupils. The "Assessment is for Learning" project, run by Learning and Teaching Scotland, is also credited with improving pupils' learning skills (by 94% of staff), learning and motivation (89%), quality of work (88%) and attainment (78%).* <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/assessment.html>

It was not, however, totally successful: 'One in six schools struck problems and failed to overcome them while a lack of supply cover stymied others'. But there was enough success for the British government to be persuaded that Assessment for Learning should be introduced south of the Border. Several years later Ofsted's report, *Assessment for learning: the impact of National Strategy support* (2008) tells a sorry tale: 'The impact on achievement and provision [in English and Maths] was no better than satisfactory in almost two thirds of the schools visited. It was better developed in primary than in secondary schools. Surveys of other subjects provided additional evidence of its variable impact'. In the end, Fullan's judgment may be right:

*"The core question is how do you get large-scale change in a way that motivates the field to see the agenda is in their interest and not just a government agenda," said Mr. Fullan, a former dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and an internationally recognized expert on educational change. "The essence of this is to have the direction from the center and to end up with joint ownership from the field."* (Olson 2004, p.1)

### **Driving Change: the Learners**

Teachers and other practitioners loom large, quite correctly, in the system change thinking of Fullan, Barber, Hargreaves and others. They also refer to the importance of personalisation in the creation of independent learners. But there is less attention given to the active role that learners might play in system change. As the US academic Cook-Saather put it: 'Decades of calls for educational reform have not succeeded in making schools places where all young people want to and are able to learn. It is time to invite pupils to join the conversations about how we might accomplish that' (Cook-Saather 2002). Theory and practice about this is in its infancy, although Jean Ruddock's contribution to the field dates more than a decade. She argued that, as well as developing precisely the qualities

that the adult world says it looks for in young people – ‘a capacity for independent initiative, working collaboratively, and competence in the management of time and task’ – ‘students’ views can help mobilise staff and parent opinion in favour of meaningful reform’. (Ruddock 2007)

Few schools have begun to exploit the potential of student voice as *a driver for change* but the Blue School in Wells, Somerset is an exception. This is where Learning to Lead was created by two teachers as a ‘vehicle for social change, by engaging disempowered young people and releasing their astonishing creative energy’. The starting point is a survey of the whole school to identify the issues that students feel most strongly about. A community school council is the forum through which ideas and issues are pursued. In the Blue School, over 300 students are involved in one of the 25 teams set up by the community school council. Ofsted reports that ‘Students speak eloquently about the chances they have to take ownership of projects, to take risks and to make a difference to the lives of others’. In 2007 members of The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee visited the school, and this led to a one off grant of £100,000 over two years from the Edge Foundation to run a national pilot. Twelve schools have formed a pilot network and they have given evidence to the Engaging Youth Enquiry, collaboration between the Nuffield 14 -19 Review and the Rathbone Trust. (Learning to Lead 2007) There are indications that Learning to Lead can drive change in schools, but it is perhaps too early to expect definitive evidence of this.

Student action teams have been set up in schools in Bolton and Bedfordshire to work with adults in the community to develop personalised public services for children, young people and adults. The teams work beyond the classroom on projects valued by the students and the wider community, and which are linked to the curriculum. (Innovation Unit 2009) Again, to expect hard evidence of impact may be premature.

The implications of these two examples of active student engagement are, nonetheless, potentially far reaching in driving change in schools. First, they offer the possibility of students opting for active learning in the world outside the classroom and developing vehicles for bringing this about. Second, they show that students can develop real expertise in fields that are valued in the real world – by businesses and public services, and that they may become experts and consultants in their own right, the model developed by the Kaospilot programme. (Cousins and Yarnit 2007, p.55) This means becoming adept at problem solving and collaborative working, and it requires a thorough grounding in organisational theory: exactly the sort of skills and knowledge that schools need if they are to transform themselves.

### **System Change: Some Lessons from the Research**

Whole system change has to begin with change in the classroom, or in the relationship between students and teachers, argue Thompson and Wiliam. Fullan warns of the danger of attempting change in one school. To achieve change it is necessary to bring about a change at every level – classroom, institution, system-wide, to achieve simultaneously change in individual practitioners and the culture they work within.

Government, at best, can provide a framework for reform and support for change; at worst, it acts as a block, says Hargreaves. Principals are often not much better than government, he argues, so they have to learn to support the change agents.

Fullan and TLRP is the most inclusive, Hargreaves the most suspicious of governments and centres of power. For him, change has to be driven from the bottom up, by networks of practitioner and student change agents. Only in this way, according to Thompson and Wiliam, can there ever be

enough people engaged in the change process. Only grassroots learning communities are capable of scaling up.

The evidence from examples of system change in Canada and England suggests a more complex reality than Hargreaves allows for. Ontario suggests that top down and bottom up need to be coordinated. The introduction AfL in England confirms that initiation by government diktat can kill off the most promising innovation.

Learners also have their part to play in driving change, but the limits of this approach need to be recognised:

- Learners are most likely to be effective in a single institution rather than system wide
- They will tend to take their lead from the members of staff with whom they are in direct contact, the classroom practitioners

In any case, learner voice is still in its infancy and it is too early to produce hard and fast evidence about its impact.

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<sup>i</sup> QCA (2006) Report on vocational learning provision at Key Stage 4; Annex 1: Analysis of DfES Performance Tables Data 2004, p.40

<sup>ii</sup> Higham, J. et al (2004) 14-19 Pathfinders: An Evaluation of the First Year, Research Report 504, DfES, p.53

<sup>iii</sup> See, for example, the Young Managers Programme at New Heys Community School, Liverpool, the Learning to Lead programme at the Blue Coat School, Wells, and the community engagement programme at the City Academy, Bristol.

<sup>iv</sup> Notes to presentation to Trustees on Edge's forward strategy (2008)

<sup>v</sup> I'm grateful to Lauren Resnick for this schema and the Big Picture (<http://www.bigpicture.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/big-picture-brochure.pdf>). Resnick explores the role of schools in preparing people for employment, lifelong learning skills, and community responsibility. By re-introducing apprenticeship programs, improving students' development of mental skills, and increasing opportunities to work together, the gap between in-school learning and out-of-school learning can be lessened. See the much quoted and reviewed Resnick, L. B. (1987) 'Learning in school and out', *Educational Researcher*, 13-20. December.

<sup>vi</sup> Kate Shoesmith, City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, *Practical Learning for 14-19 Year Olds* at [www.skillsdevelopment.org.uk](http://www.skillsdevelopment.org.uk)

<sup>vii</sup> Although it provided an example (p.68) of the impact of practical learning:

***Motivating and achieving through the performing arts in Coventry***

*The Belgrade Acting Out project is a joint venture between Coventry local authority and the Belgrade Theatre, designed to motivate young people with attendance, behaviour and learning difficulties. Young people from mainstream and special schools work together towards a BTEC First qualification. They spend up to a day each week off the school site and are introduced to drama, theatre production, dance and music. They create, produce, and perform their own pieces of original theatre, developed from issues affecting their lives, their interests, thoughts, ideas and feelings. The impact on students has impressed parents and inspectors alike. HMI Clive Kempton commented, "pupils have moved a tremendous distance in confidence, self-esteem, and reformed behaviour. Some pupils spoke of how they felt different back in school". A parent reported how "the project has helped our daughter tremendously with her self-confidence, her relationships, and consideration of others". The results are also impressive. In 2004, 22 of the 24 who started completed the course. 17 achieved a*

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*BTEC First in Performing Arts. Five pupils who attended special schools were not entered for the full qualification, but achieved parts of some units.*

<sup>viii</sup> p.30 [http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/TLRP\\_Schools\\_Commentary\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/TLRP_Schools_Commentary_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>ix</sup> 'We take issue with the QCA, which maintains that you can teach children learning skills which they then apply to assemble their own body of knowledge through research and experience. This philosophy runs back to the 1920s in America and does not work'. Nick Gibb, Conservative schools spokesman, 'Bringing Education Back into Focus', p.15 – the Conservative Frontbench View, <http://www.informedexecutive.co.uk/05/05-11.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> See press release at <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/?page=9953>

<sup>xi</sup> See the useful Wikipedia entry: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out\\_of\\_school\\_learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out_of_school_learning)

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## Section 4 Supporting Practitioners in Innovatory Programmes

For transformatory change to be sustained it has to be driven by the educational practitioners, especially classroom teachers and their managers. Imposed change is unlikely to survive the next management upheaval. Those are two clear conclusions to be drawn from the research evidence on system change. How to bring this about is the central question posed in this section.

Whilst Fullan (2006) and Brighthouse (2007) have focused for a decade or more on the central role of the practitioners in bringing about and sustaining change, it is only recently that the research evidence has begun to generate clear findings about how to bring that change about. As always in this study, the ultimate concern is to relate the evidence base to real world learning, to show how teaching and learning needs to be organised to embed applied and practical learning linked to the world outside the classroom.

The research points to three areas of activity as being central to bringing about practitioner-led change:

1. Teachers as learners
2. Continuing professional development linked to classroom practice
3. Networked Learning Communities

The focus on teachers is supported by a 'growing research base on the influences on student learning which shows that teacher quality trumps virtually all other influences on student achievement'. (Coffield, p.23) Or as Wiliam puts it, 'an effective school is a school full of effective classrooms'. (Wiliam, 2008). But for teachers to become effective they need to review and reflect on their practices, adapting them, discarding them or adopting new approaches. A growing body of research evidence suggests the most effective ways of going about this, in particular, a systematic process of learning and collaboration linked to classroom practice. Hence our second focus on continuing professional development (CDP).

This is a complex field in the UK with a bewildering array of courses and programmes. What is clear, as Ofsted reports (2006), is that schools which had designed their CPD effectively and integrated it with their improvement plans found that teaching and learning standards rose. The challenge here is to identify the design features which appear to lead to a positive impact on student outcomes. Bringing about change in single schools has been the subject of getting on for two decades of school improvement theory and practice and we now know more about how crucial teachers are to this process. But how can teacher change be replicated at the level of school systems? Networked Learning Communities seem to offer a way forward.

### Teachers as learners

Fullan's notion of the reflective teacher has been gathering ground in the policy sphere, as can be seen in initiatives such as the NCSL's research bursaries and the creation of Teachers tv. (Fullan, 2006, p.10).<sup>xi</sup> Cordingley argues that 'We need to think just as hard, perhaps even harder, about teacher learning as we do about pupil learning'.<sup>xi</sup> Practitioners need to reflect and live their learning – it needs to enter their DNA so that it forms part of their beliefs and shapes their day to

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day behaviour as professionals. Precisely how teachers learn to get better is still under-researched but a number of factors are becoming clear, bearing in mind Slavin's point: the problem is not lack of knowledge about how children learn but lack of knowledge about how to help teachers apply research-proven methods (Slavin 2008).

The ESRC funded Teaching and Learning Research Programme (2006, p.44) identifies two helpful steps:

- Supporting teachers in engaging collaboratively with evidence about their practice, especially underlying factors concerning pupils' experience of schooling
- Increasing the opportunities for teachers to observe each other in action

This implies, as Thompson and Wiliam argue, that 'Schools must treat teachers as learners (by providing suitable learning environments), so that teachers will begin to see themselves that way'. (p.24) Fullan refers to 'deep cultural change, which many people resist, tacitly or otherwise. Consider, for example, the de-privatisation of teaching – through observing and improving classroom teaching. This has proved to be one of the most intractable aspects of getting at continuous improvement'. (Fullan , 2006, p.13) But it can be done:

*Inquiry helped teachers to understand that teaching the curriculum harder and longer would never improve the learning outcomes for many pupils. They began to think again about the factors that underpin learning, such as pupils' pleasure in learning and their self esteem. Teachers realised that they could directly influence these factors. (TLRP, p.43)*

Assessment for Learning (AfL) was a key development from this point of view, enabling a deeper understanding on the part of practitioners of what makes for successful learning through dialogue between teachers and by listening to the views of students. The value of AfL in opening up collaborative enquiry about improvements to practice is also noted by a team of scholars led by Thompson and Wiliam. But what is required to enable AfL to generate improvements in student learning outcomes? Dylan Wiliam argues that the problem is not lack of knowledge but a lack of understanding of how to apply it. (William, 2008) Experience alone is not enough; teachers need to be able to reflect on their experience in systematic ways. And that requires learning together, and de-privatising the classroom experience. It also means recognising the limitations of old practices and abandoning them. All this entails sustained and systematic development.

### **Continuing professional development linked to classroom practice**

*As teachers adjust their practice, they are risking both disorder and less-than-accomplished performance on the part of their students and themselves. Being a member of a community of teacher-learners engaged together in a change process provides the support teachers need to take such risks.*

Thompson and Wiliam (2008) p.15

CDP, as currently understood for teachers, poses several problems. First, there is the sheer complexity of the offer, as Neumark notes (2007):

*Currently there are 80 postgraduate professional development (PPD) providers running courses from September 2008, with nearly 30,000 places available. The GTC's Teacher Learning Academy accredits four levels. There are also CPD courses run either directly by the National Strategies, including subject-specific professional development, or through local authorities. And there is the forthcoming masters degree in teaching and learning.*

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Second, it is not clear how effective it is in building professional capacity where it really matters – in the classroom – and thereby impacting on students. This is one reason why practitioners and their managers are sometimes reluctant to participate in CDP programmes. This was a comment we heard on more than one school visit. An assistant head in a Kent school told me how difficult it was to buy in ready made CDP packages that met her school's distinctive requirements.

Third, CDP is too often offered in isolation, from school development strategy, from initial teacher training (ITT) and from useful and sustained follow up activities. This is a further reason why practitioners and their managers are sometimes reluctant to participate in CDP programmes.

A number of writers and researchers as well as agencies such as Ofsted and the General Teaching Council have considered these issues and proposed some ways forward. It remains to be seen whether their ideas add to or reduce the complexity of the current offer but they do try to tackle the other problems referred to above.

Integrating CDP with classroom practice has become an increasing concern for Fullan who argues that 'nothing will count unless people develop new capacities' (p.9). But quoting Elmore (2004), he notes that the problem is that 'there is almost no opportunity for teachers to engage in continuous and sustained learning about their practice in the settings in which they actually work, observing and being observed by their colleagues in their own classrooms and classrooms of other teachers in other schools confronting similar problems'.(p9). There is weighty support for this view.

In their Policy Exchange report, *More Good Teachers*, Freeman, Hargreaves et al argue that *School-led CPD has to build not on the model of the external INSET course, but on what teachers do in their classrooms: the observation-led model intrinsic to mentoring. From the very beginning of their careers, teachers learn to tinker, to modify their carefully planned lessons to meet the unpredictable responses of their pupils. This is how teachers build up their craft knowledge.* (Freedman 2008 p.49)

Thompson and Wiliam go further, arguing for a clearly defined development framework which they characterise as tight and loose. The process is simple: 'our overall theory of action reflects the three-step model common to all interventions predicated on teacher professional development: (a) teachers learn about a better way to teach through professional development, (b) teachers adopt the better approach to teaching, (c) student learning is improved because of these improvements in teaching'. (Thompson and Wiliam, p.21) What has to be tight in their view are the objectives and principles underpinning the strategy. But in its application there has to be considerable space for teachers to experiment and improvise although there is a limit to the looseness. Thompson and Wiliam go to great pains to design learning modules and to spell out the sorts of approaches that are most likely to work (see below).

Set against this are the clear findings from a review of research about professional development in vocational education carried out by the US National Research Center for Career and Technical Education:

*For professional development to produce changes in teacher behaviour, teachers must be partners in designing the changes to be made and in planning the ways in which those changes will be implemented.* (NRCCTE, 2008, p12)

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A good example of how to integrate CPD with practice and a focus on outcomes has been adapted from Japan:

*In Lesson Study, Japanese teachers form collaborative inquiry groups and work in each other's classrooms to innovate and transfer new practices. They work together to form hypotheses about what adjustments to lessons may improve learning, based upon data about their pupils' learning, their collective teaching experience and the knowledge available to them from research. They do this in Research Lessons in which one member of the team teaches and the others observe. They pay close attention to 'focus pupils' who each typify a group of learners in the class – maybe high, middle and lower attaining. They discuss their observations and formulate further hypotheses, which are tested in subsequent Research Lessons. After several iterations they may reach conclusions about what did or did not work. They will then perform and discuss a public research lesson inviting local teachers, advisers and university colleagues. In the UK, a pilot study has been carried out into a development project funded by CfBT and NCSL, involving school networks including those involved in the main TLRP project. (TLRP 2006 p.42)*

This might best be described as a face to face action learning set, as opposed to a networked learning community which enables learning to take place largely but not exclusively through electronic communication. Wiliam proposes a format for an action learning set (what he calls a teacher learning community or TLC) about 90 minutes long focused on AfL (Wiliam, 2008):

- Activity 1 Introduction and housekeeping (5 minutes)
- Activity 2 How's it going (35-50)
- Activity 3 New learning about AfL (20-45)
- Activity 4 Personal action planning (10)
- Activity 5 Summary of learning (5)

The TLC has a facilitator charged with ensuring regular meetings, maintaining a non-judgmental tone, enabling everyone to take part, promoting constructive feedback and ensuring that everyone has an action plan to guide their next steps. There is a growing body of evidence on how to build and sustain TLCs (Thompson and Wiliam, p.12). The key to their effectiveness is also becoming clear:

*We note a pattern in this literature—if the practices you are hoping to get teachers to change are recurrent, central, and entrenched within everyday teaching and school culture, then teachers will need sustained support to change them. Not only must the support be sustained over time (at least a year and often much longer in many of the studies cited above), that support must embed teachers' learning within the realities of day-to-day teaching in their own schools and classrooms and allow for repeated cycles of learning, practice, reflection, and adjustment within their native context. (Thompson and Wiliam, p.12)*

As well as the approach discussed here, a variety of other models for developing the action learning approach within and between schools have been emerging. Philippa Cordingley, founder and chief executive of the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education, has co-authored four influential studies on professional development. Most recently in a report for the General Teaching Council she offers case studies of what she refers to as a strategic approach to CDP:

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*Schools which were strategic about their CPD policies and processes geared professional development to student learning. Consistent with this, evaluative processes took account of student outcomes as key indicators of impact. For example, at Piper Hill, staff learning outcomes were expressed in CPD planning and target setting in terms of student learning outcomes, and so the extent to which those targets have been achieved is the measure by which the impact of the CPD is evaluated. At Sweyne Park... the school also used pupil panels as a powerful diagnostic tool and as a way of measuring impact. (Cordingley p.31)*

She goes on to argue that the key benefits of aligning staff professional development with school, departmental and individual priorities through the performance system are that:

- CPD becomes a clear means to an end
- professional learning is focused on and driven forward through the lens of pupil learning
- staff are more confident and enthusiastic about their professional learning and more willing to take risks and open up their practice – partly as a result of the focus on pupil learning
- collaborative learning creates a learning culture within the school. Each learning benefit experienced by a teacher is immediately fed back into learning benefits for pupils – and vice versa. (Cordingly p.32)

In other words, for the classroom practice focused approach advocated by Thompson and Wiliam, Fullan and Hargreaves to work, this must be integrated with a broader, strategic view driven by school priorities.

The characteristics of effective CPD can be looked at from two points of view according to Cordingley: schools and practitioners.

Schools which take a strategic approach to CPD:

- Put student learning at the heart of all professional learning
- Provide opportunities for staff to collaborate and to be proactive about their own learning
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and share the school's approach to professional learning
- Align school, departmental and individual staff priorities and set them in the context of national and local priorities and resources
- Use a mix of whole school, departmental and individual pupil data to inform CPD decision making
- Locate the leadership of CPD at senior management level
- Use a mix of specialist expertise and collaborative coaching (Cordingley, 2007, p.26)

From the point of view of the practitioner good CPD is

- sustained, probably over 2 to 3 terms;
- linked to work in classroom;
- collaborative;
- personalised –with time for reflection;
- connected to school goals;
- entitled to mentoring and coaching;
- focused on the needs of learners. (Neumark)

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Another example of a within school model is offered by Peter Walker, Principal of the Evelyn Grace Academy in Brixton, London:

*My motivation was always to find a point where you could create system change and with Evelyn Grace there is an opportunity to create a potentially scaleable model. We are creating a different small school model within the academy where the small school heads are responsible both for standards across all subjects and for generating a smaller-scale learning environment where every student is known, challenged and supported. Instead of heads of departments, we've got consultant subject leaders. As the lead practitioner, that person is freed up from any line-management responsibilities. Their prime task is to generate outstanding teaching by coaching. When you get to the point where you have clusters of small schools, that role can potentially work alongside practitioners in other schools, starting to generate a community of practitioners. (Walker, 2008, p.12)*

Fielding and his colleagues, in their study of the transfer of good practice, review a number of examples of school partnerships. They distinguish between originators and partners – those who share and those who receive practice. (Fielding, 2005, p.13). Schools and practitioners that perceive themselves as originators, they discovered, found it easier to reflect on and use their learning as a result, 'the best got better' (p.76). Conversely, the partners' tendency to be diffident and self-deprecating could be intensified by their contact with the more confident originator schools. The aim, the authors argue, should be to enable schools and practitioners to regard themselves as both originators and partners, trading on their strengths and recognising the areas of weakness in which they could benefit from help. More easily said than done, of course, but they offer a solution which would be for every school to appoint an AST to lead an area of strength so that expertise is focused and developed systematically (Fielding, p.78).

### **Applied Learning, Vocational Learning**

Surprisingly little attention has been given in schools to the development of the skills and knowledge needed by teachers for applied and practical learning, perhaps because this is still a marginal part of the curriculum. Yet, the trend is clear, with a growing curriculum emphasis not simply on applied learning but also on closer linkages with vocational preparation, especially in diploma lines such as engineering and construction and the built environment. And, as Stanton argues, the demands on teachers are going to be great:

*Planning an effective vocational programme also requires a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, and the relationship between learning in different contexts (such as the classroom, the workshop and the workplace). In this it is more complex than academic teaching, yet it has been written about less, it is less well represented in teacher training, and there are fewer and less well-supported communities of practice. (Stanton 2005)*

Even in further education, CDP for vocational lecturers is under-developed. Edge has combined forces with leading further education providers to draw up 'a blueprint for effective, inspiring vocational learning'.

*With the direct support of FE colleges, including highly regarded Lewisham College, the Perfecting Practice project aims to outline the key problems facing vocational learning and look carefully at ways to solve them. It explores the skills and qualities that teachers need to deliver effective practical learning. And it designs innovative ways of training new teachers to build on past successes.<sup>xi</sup>*

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The initiative at Lewisham College draws on a clear conception of the features of good vocational education:

- 'Learning is like being at work. Tasks set are authentic and performance is judged against professional benchmarks' (Silver and Forrest, p.70)
- 'Learners become job-ready, work-ready, ready to be 'one of us'. (op.cit)
- 'Learning that opens the door to the world of work must be delivered by experts in a working environment. It does not have to be real but it must be realistic: it has to get as close as possible'.(op.cit)
- 'The environment and the task will only seem real if the relationships are also based on work'. (op.cit.)
- 'It's not just about what you can do but also about how you behave... All our vocational teachers shaped new behaviours by getting learners to think from the customer point of view'. (op.cit.)
- Teachers must know their trade and be up to date.(op.cit.)
- '...traditional work cultures can also be conformist and excluding. Effective teachers prepare their learners to challenge, not simply comply'. (op.cit., p.72)
- Problem solving in real work situations (op.cit)
- Work skills are not enough: excellent teachers help prepare students for the unpredictability of the future – developing 'generic behaviours that would secure the learners a future as well as a place at work was all part of 'becoming one of us'' (op.cit., p.74).

Many of these points chime with recurrent emphases in the literature. For example, the importance of vocational education staff being up to date (Brookes and Hughes) and the importance of expansive learning, that is, learning which connects application to a theoretical knowledge base. (Fuller and Unwin 2008).

Silver and Forrest sound a cautionary note about how their approach can be translated into practice in schools. In some subjects, such as IT, it is possible for schools to provide state of the art equipment, but in most vocationally-related areas of the curriculum, this is simply not feasible. Only FE colleges, Skills Academies and Skills Centres can hope to provide realistic learning environments that resemble those in the world outside the classroom. In any case, it is clear that those expected to teach on practical and work-related courses in schools need CDP support that updates their skills in work environments and provides them with opportunities for secondments and work shadowing, much like their colleagues in FE (Brookes and Hughes, p.20).

### **Networked Learning Communities**

One approach to linking schools CDP which has enjoyed growing support is the creation of Networked Learning Communities. These are not entirely new in education: subject organisations such as the Association for Science Education typically promote their curriculum area, provide CDP and curriculum materials, operating through journals, bulletins, annual conferences and, more recently, through virtual contact. The ASE has a variety of websites serving specialist interests within the field. Formed in 1963, it demonstrates the path to longevity. But recent years have seen an explosion or an 'epidemic' (to use Hargreaves' term) of networking.

Networks, according to two US academics who have studied them closely, seem to provide

*opportunities for teachers to both consume and generate knowledge, a variety of collaborative structures, flexibility and informality, discussion of problems that often have no agreed-upon*

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*solutions, ideas that challenge teachers rather than merely prescribing generic solutions, an organizational structure that can be independent of, yet attached to, schools or universities, a chance to work across school and district lines, a vision of reform that excites and encourages risk taking in a supportive environment, a community that respects teachers' knowledge as well as knowledge from research and reform.* (Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996)

Above all, they seem to offer a way of scaling up the transformations which can occur in single schools or departments but which are so difficult to generalise. No wonder governments on both sides of the Atlantic have been keen to invest in their development. The Networked Learning Communities programme was probably the largest programme for learning networks in the world to date. More than 134 school networks took part, involving approximately 35,000 staff and over 675,000 pupils. The programme was launched in September 2002 by NCSL and ran until 2006.<sup>xi</sup>

Professional learning communities (PLC) aim to develop communities of learners in which teachers and school leaders work together to improve the learning conditions and results of students in given schools.

New networks are being launched all the time. For example, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust has recently received £200,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation towards the cost of developing a schools innovation network to explore ways of providing pupils with better support and mentoring. So what is the evidence that they work, what are the features that make them effective and what are the implications for Real World Learning? CUREE's review and synthesis of the research evidence (Bell 2006) provides some answers to these questions. They found that

*Pupil impact included improved attainment, engagement, motivation, self-confidence and increased independence as learners. Pupils gained new skills, such as problem solving, leadership, social and higher order thinking skills. In some cases, a greater number of pupils were found to be completing their schooling, attending college and progressing into employment.*

*Teacher impact included gains in knowledge, understanding and skills, leading to more inclusive practice, better classroom level skills, new communication and networking skills and greater understanding of the learning process.*

*School impact included increased community liaison, development of professional learning communities and skills in importing new ideas. There were also changes in school and classroom organisation and management structures.*

*Other impacts included increased parental involvement in goal setting, assessment and support, school decision-making and parental mentoring programmes.* (Bell p5)

The study suggests that networks are effective in promoting collaboration between schools to tackle thorny issues such as student inclusion for minority groups. On the other hand, 'systematic use of networks for taking initiatives to scale is too new to provide systematic evidence about transfer beyond network boundaries'. (Bell p12) A key constraint on scaling up was that 'the actual behaviour change or transfer of practice still depended on teacher-to-teacher, or teacher-to-specialist interaction'. (Bell op.cit).

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A study of networked or professional learning communities in the US concluded that the keys to effectiveness are

- a focus on learning
- a collaborative culture stressing learning for all
- collective inquiry into best practice
- an action orientation (learning by doing)
- a commitment to continuous improvement
- a focus on results (Dufours et al, 2006)

The CUREE study as well as the findings from a review for the NCSL of the Networked Learning Communities<sup>xi</sup> corroborates much of this.

*Starting points seem to be a clearly defined rationale for the network with a strong sense of shared purpose and ownership. It was clear from the evidence in this review that more effective networks had more specific goals than less effective networks. They also tended to target specific groups of pupils such as socially excluded, minority or underachieving pupils. (Bell p6)*

A case in point and a significant case study from the point of view of Real World Learning is an education business partnership in Los Angeles described by Adler (1995):

*The Los Angeles Area Business/Education Partnership involved partnerships between business, industry, universities, high schools and parents. The network targeted at-risk, underachieving students with hands on approaches to vocational and academic learning. This was a publicly funded vocational training network consisting of seven school districts in Los Angeles County. The targeted students were unlikely to graduate from high school or go to university and had trouble gaining employment. The network ran for five years and aimed to provide students with skills and attitudes needed for successful entry into the workforce. Intervention and control group data plus other qualitative and quantitative data from 550 students showed a significantly higher proportion of participating students graduated from high school than did control group students; more than two-thirds of intervention group attended college (less than half of control group) and 87 per cent of intervention group found fulltime employment (64 per cent of control group). (Bell p5)*

So, a focus on student learning outcomes generates results. Networking as a part of a CPD strategy seemed to be particularly effective, especially when teaching materials and approaches were being generated that were seen as useful by practitioners. On the other hand,

*It is worth noting that none of the networks identified the use of ICT as an effective networking process, although the use of email and websites to facilitate knowledge transfer was referred to in passing in a small number of studies. This does not mean that it was not used; merely that it was not particularly remarked. (Bell p10)*

And

*Face-to-face contact was more widely reported than ICT or printed communications. This ranged from collaborative on-site planning and reflection to coaching and mentoring. (Bell p6)*

Indeed, peer to peer collaboration and expert input were factors in nearly all the studies with Thompson and Wiliam seeing rank and file teachers as potential leaders of the learning process. (Thompson and Wiliam, p16). On the other hand, 'Size, scale and geographical spread' appeared to

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bear little relation to effectiveness, suggesting that it is the quality of the collaboration between local clusters within networks upon which effectiveness may turn', the authors report.

Three specialist networks throw some light on this. The Creative Partnerships network was set up to promote links between schools and creative workers in a wide variety of fields such as artists and poets. It has reached 2500 schools and involved 3500 creative organisations. Key factors in the spread of the network are enthusiastic practitioners, Creative Partnerships' area managers and supportive local authorities (Ofsted 2006, p16-18). The Opening Minds network was created by the RSA to promote the development of a competency based approach to the curriculum. Events at which curriculum materials could be discussed have been central to the development of the network which has grown to include 204 schools since 2001 (RSA, 2008). Musical Futures began as an attempt to revive practical music making in schools and then evolved into a network connecting practitioners. In each case, it was the desire of the practitioners to make links with their peers to transfer practice and to exchange ideas that drove the growth of the network. But there were other factors as David Price, the Director of Musical Futures, reports:

*...the availability of the teacher materials was the key thing. But largely, I think it was word of mouth (informal) and the CPD events (semi-formal).* (David Price, email to the author, 20 November 2008)

But in the end the common factor with these networks was that teachers have used them to learn a new way of enabling students to learn:

*I think you should think of Creative Partnerships as being a professional development programme for teaching staff. That is what we do. What we have learnt in our experience from working with teachers is that teachers are not terribly good classroom learners; they are very good experiential learners, and when you go and talk to a teacher in the first case and say, 'You could do this,' when you get them in a seminar room, what you tend to hear a lot is, 'Oh that's very good and that's a good example but it would not work with my children.' Until you have done it in their class with their children it is very hard to persuade them that it is really going to work, so therefore what we are really doing is going into their classrooms with their children, with other professionals, and showing them that it works. Once we have done that they then adopt it for themselves.* (HoC, para36)

The majority of networks reviewed by CUREE had been running for two year or more 'reinforcing the common sense link between duration and network effectiveness'. (Bell p9) Finally, parents emerged as key network partners. 'A number of the networks reported increased parental involvement. This ranged from becoming involved in goal setting, assessment and support, to greater involvement by parents in school decision-making and more participation in a parent mentoring programme'. (Bell p8)

A study arising out of the NCSL Networked Communities points to some practical tips for making networks effective:

*Start with a group of enthusiasts no matter how experienced or inexperienced in enquiry. Make sure the learning is seen to be part of the real work of the school – Plan regular sessions when members share their enquiry work with colleagues as part of regular school business. For example, include these on staff meeting and departmental meeting agendas.* (DfES 2007)

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## Conclusions: Implications for Real World Learning

This brief review of the research suggests the ways in which teachers can become adept at helping students to learn. Indispensable to this process is providing ways for teachers to reflect on experience and to improve their understanding of what works for their students. This means sharing the classroom experience with peers, trying and comparing the effect of different approaches and adopting more effective approaches. The evidence is that collaborative continuing professional development (CDP) linked to classroom practice is essential in bringing this about. The tight and loose framework advocated by Thompson and Wiliam seems to be well suited to a variety of school contexts, ranging from a cluster to a large state or county partnership, whilst Cordingley makes the case – with Ofsted endorsement - that CDP is most effective when it is integrated with whole school planning.

But what if we want to scale up to improve learner outcomes? How do we go about engaging schools and practitioners in larger numbers? Networked learning communities offer a method of scaling up which seems to generate impacts on students, teachers and schools. But the communities must share a common purpose, be focused on learner outcomes, be owned by practitioners and effectively led.

Let us now consider the implications of these findings for Real World Learning and for bringing about a transformation in the purpose, pedagogy and content of the curriculum.

We can draw several conclusions:

1. the literature on teacher change shows that when the conditions are in place the transformation of teaching practice can be generated in a wide variety of contexts: different schools systems; different pedagogic and curriculum focuses, so there is no reason for supposing that it cannot take place in relation to RWL. Indeed, the Active Learning Schools pilot suggests that it can.
2. The research suggests that the introduction of RWL at the heart of the curriculum has to be integrated with CDP and the purposes and strategies that schools set for themselves. This does not mean that everybody in a school has to be a RWL enthusiast but it does mean that its place within the school should be clearly understood by all the stakeholders and advocated by the leadership as well as the enthusiasts.
3. The process of adopting the RWL approach must above all be seen by all concerned as contributing directly to improving learning outcomes.
4. The tight and loose approach (Thompson and Wiliam) tells us that while the RWL strategy and principles should be held dear, there has to be scope for teachers to set the change agenda themselves, deciding on precisely what changes in practice need to take place. Teachers should work together within and across schools to build an effective toolkit of techniques and approaches based on a study of what works.
5. The enthusiasts should be supported by senior managers, governors and local authorities, and resourced to create an epidemic of change.

As Hargreaves puts it,

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*Once the system, rich in intellectual and social capital, has ... acquired a stronger and more resilient capacity for improvement through innovation and peer-to-peer transfer of best practice, then transformation is within our collective grasp. (Hargreaves 2003 p75)*

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## Part 2

### Section 1 Programme Options

#### Introduction

This section of the report

1. explains the background to the programme options put forward here
2. sets out the aims of the programme, their fit with Edge and Esmee Fairbairn aims and their relevance to government policy
3. explains the options, their rationale, evidence base and intended outcomes, costs and benefits
4. shows their complementarity with other networks and initiatives
5. draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the way forward.

#### 1 Background

Applied and practical learning in the world outside school– or real world learning - is widely regarded, as we have seen, by policymakers, educationists, students and the general public as essential to a good education at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This view is reflected in the practice of many schools to some degree. But most schools have yet to develop the capacity to deliver it effectively and for very few has it become a high priority, affecting every aspect of organisation. The proposals developed in this section are intended to address that problem. They reflect the research evidence reviewed in the first part of this report. The views of schools, education agencies and others who have been consulted about the proposals are summarised in an appendix.

#### 2 Programme Aims

The analysis of need and the research evidence set out in the first part of this report points to the need for a new programme focused on real world learning. We would argue that its aims should be to

- create or support a national cohort of schools with real world learning expertise, encouraging others to follow suit, and helping to frame a new public debate about the value of practical and vocational learning
- develop the expertise of teachers and other education staff in running real world learning
- improve young people's motivation and attainment by giving them practical experience of running community or business projects at KS 3 and 4
- make a lasting impact on national policy and practice.<sup>xi</sup>

Two key aspects of the programme would be that it

- focuses on and measures the impact on learners

- 
- specifies evaluation criteria from the outset and builds evaluation into the implementation of the programme from the beginning.

These aims have been drawn up to reflect and complement the priorities of Edge and Esmee Fairbairn and the opportunities presented by current government policy priorities. The two foundations share a set of core values which are set out in the RSA Education Charter to which they have both contributed:

***Every young person has the right to develop to their full potential***

*Ability comes in many forms and learners need to be supported to enjoy success no matter where their talents lie.*

*The educational success of learners should not depend on their background. Schools, communities and families must work together to close gaps in attainment.*

*The curriculum in schools and colleges should balance abstract and practical knowledge so that every learner can access high quality academic and vocational opportunities.*

*Education should engage the learner with exciting, relevant content and opportunities for learning through experience and by doing. (<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education/education-campaign/education-for-the-21st-century-a-charter>)*

## **Edge**

Edge's raison d'être is to raise the status and quality of practical and vocational learning and to achieve parity with traditional educational routes to success. The Six Steps to Change Manifesto sets out a road map for achieving this. This is also the stated aim of government policy (White Paper 2005). A key aim for Edge is to create a cohort of schools and colleges which share that aspiration and which demonstrate its feasibility and benefits. Edge is also committed to improving the skills of vocational teachers and to strengthening the voice of learners. It has invested heavily in projects which provide young people with hands on experience in the real world and which strengthen the links between education and business. The ultimate test of Edge's value will be in a lasting change in national policy and practice.

## **Esmee Fairbairn**

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Like Edge, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation is passionately committed to the aim of a modernised education system that meets the diverse needs of children and young people. In particular, it wants to develop new models of schooling that increase the flexibility and relevance of learning for young people at Key Stages 3 and 4. (This might involve testing changes to school structure, curriculum, teaching and assessment methods) It also wants to see stronger bonds created between schools and their communities. With long experience in supporting educational interventions, Esmee Fairbairn puts high store by projects that can demonstrate a significant impact on the well-being and attainment of children and young people, and therefore requires robust evaluation plans from the outset as a condition of funding.

## **Government**

The Real World Learning approach is relevant to several of the government's most central policies for modernising the secondary school system.

### ***Making sense of personalised learning***

Hefty resources have been earmarked for personalised learning, close on £600m., but it still sometimes feels like a solution in search of a clearer problem. A significant injection of RWL could sharpen the focus of personalised learning as a contribution to raising young people's motivation and aspirations.

### ***Work-related and Enterprise Learning***

From September 2004 schools have been required to include work related learning within the curriculum for all students in key stage 4, regardless of where learning takes place. Enterprise education became a statutory requirement for key stage 4 in September 2005.

Work related learning is defined as 'planned activity that uses the context of work to develop skills, knowledge and understanding useful in work....It is done through the experience **of** work, through learning **about** work and learning about the skills **for** work.' The learning objectives have been designed to reflect the QCA framework and will be achieved by co-ordinating and building upon existing good practice.

Enterprise education consists of three strands, enterprise capability, supported by financial capability and business and economic understanding. 'Enterprise capability is the ability to handle uncertainty, respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas and ways of doing things, to make reasonable risk/reward assessments and act upon them in one's personal and working life.'

Enterprise education supports WRL and learning outcomes include

- Knowledge and understanding of concepts such as organisation, innovation, risk and team work.
- Skills such as decision-making, leadership, problem solving and managing risk.

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- Attributes such as self-reliance, open-mindedness, a ‘can do’ approach, ambition and commitment.

RWL could help to strengthen business-education links, the subject of a recent critical report, *Building Stronger Partnerships*, from the National Council for Educational Excellence (NCEE, 2008). One of the NCEE’s strategic priorities is to ‘bring real world context and applications of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths into the classroom’ which can only be done by developing closer working ties between schools and the world of science and technology.

RWL could also help to address Ofsted’s recommendations for improving young people’s business and economic understanding (Ofsted, 2008):

- [to] ensure consistent and high-quality professional development and training for teachers of business education to help them improve their teaching (p.6)
- [to] provide opportunities for students taking business courses to engage with employers and businesses (p.7)

### ***Diplomas***

RWL could also help to strengthen schools’ capacity to deal with applied learning and reduce the risk that the Diploma programme will be unbalanced towards classroom based learning. RWL could also contribute teaching materials and strategies for embedding practical and applied learning across the curriculum, including English and Maths.

### ***National Challenge***

It remains to be seen whether the relative success of the London Challenge will be repeated in the areas to which the Challenge programme has been extended, but again RWL could help to make the difference by pointing to solutions to a critical problem identified by the former national coordinator of S’EEN, Paul Delbridge-Smith:

*There is an increasingly widespread view that a more collaborative, adaptive and long-term problem-solving approach is the way to go. Getting there requires a different model for change: one which emphasises capacity building, which spreads and uses leadership widely, which enables and encourages rapid knowledge transfer, which fosters and utilises practitioner innovation and creativity, which values system learning and builds for sustainability. The problem is that it is not clear how to orchestrate such a pervasive culture change in schools.*  
[\(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cei/centrelink/clinknov08.pdf>\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cei/centrelink/clinknov08.pdf)

RWL could demonstrate the routes by which schools can move from being traditional, classroom schools divorced from the world outside to becoming 21<sup>st</sup> century centres of learning innovation integrally linked to the workplace and the community.

## **3 Rationale and Options**

### **Rationale**

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Real World Learning has been proposed in an earlier section of this report as a means of engaging young people as self-directed learners, leading to improvements in motivation and attainment. The central question this poses is how best to embed this approach in schools in order to bring about system change. The earlier review of research suggests that there are a number of critical components to the answer to that question:

- The interventions need to be catalytic and able to bring about a change from a factory school – one that uses traditional approaches – to a 21st innovative learning environment
- The change needs to take place at every level to succeed - from the individual teacher and student to through the level of the school and the system as a whole
- The change has to be owned by classroom practitioners and has to impinge directly on learning outcomes
- It has to engage and motivate young people so that they become independent learners, capable of driving their own learning.

These conditions suggest that an effective approach to embedding an RWL model should

- Take place at every level, from the classroom, through to a local system or cluster of schools, and eventually to the national system
- Entail interventions that have the critical mass to transform practice
- Prioritise the development of teachers and other practitioners.

The first condition suggests that the proposed programme or intervention should take place to scale, either in a given local authority area or areas or through clusters of schools, working together and influencing their sister institutions locally and regionally. The second condition suggests that the interventions are of sufficient scale to propel fundamental change. For example, a change to the curriculum needs to affect a large proportion of the timetable. Or, a change involving teacher practice needs to involve at least a large minority of practitioners. The third condition suggests that teachers should be given the freedom to determine the conditions of their own development, and that CDP programmes are driven by their needs and views. The research evidence suggests that professional learning networks at best are the most effective means for bringing about deep and lasting change in teachers' practice and for ensuring relevant CDP.

This leads to the conclusion that there are three main ways in which an RWL programme could be taken forward, by

1. setting up a national practitioners learning network to develop the real world learning expertise of teachers, learning mentors and other education staff and to enable them to share ideas and practical solutions
2. identifying small clusters of schools and colleges around the country that might act as centres for developing real world learning and whole school transformational approaches.
3. working with schools and teachers in one or perhaps two local authority areas to develop a strategic approach.

The three options proposed here are seen to fill a gap in existing approaches and to offer ways of embedding real world learning in secondary schools. They are designed to complement other initiatives such as the employment of employer links coordinators in schools and colleges. (Duckett and Moore, p.5) and the work of education-business link organisations, including Edge's on-line brokerage (<http://www.businessinschools.co.uk>) The options could also be considered as part of a package rather than as mutually exclusive solutions.

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## Practitioner Learning Network (PLN)

The first option proposed here reflects three main considerations

1. It takes account of the learning about how teacher development takes place
2. It reflects Hargreaves' view of the important role played by practitioners as change agents in breaking about system change
3. It takes account of the deficiencies in professional capacity exposed by a number of reports and the recommendations for improving that capacity

It also reflects the views of teachers, headteachers and other consulted in drawing up this report. Teachers who can reflect on their practice and work with others to make it more effective for student learning are central to any improvement in education: 'genuine improvements are only likely to come if more expansive learning environments are created in which teachers can learn through participation in a supportive learning culture'. This is a powerful message from recent research programmes such as TLRP in the UK which is echoed from around the world. (James, 2005 p.1)

The proposal takes account of the lack of materials, strategies and courses focused on

- real world learning and
- the problem of moving schools to the point where RWL is a driver for whole school change.

This lack has been identified in a number of reports: see, for example, the evaluation of Applied Learning Specialist Schools. (Higham and Yeomans 2008, p.17) Of the national agencies, neither TDA, GTC, NCSL nor LSIS directly address these needs. LLUK programmes for 14-19 practitioners are pitched at a general level as is the DCSF's *Delivery 2009 and Beyond: Professional Development Support for Diploma Consortia* (DCSF 2009). The regional networks set up for each diploma line have concentrated on the nuts and bolts of delivery including CDP but this tends to be general, dealing for example, with preparation for assessment systems. (<http://www.diploma-support.org/trainingandsupport/olnetworks>)

Typical of the bespoke materials is *Talking teaching, training and learning*, a package prepared by the QIA. This is a suite of resources designed to explore more effective ways of teaching and new or 'hard to teach' topics. The problem is that the materials have been designed for classroom use, rather than generated from the direct experience of the practitioners. The resources draw upon an 'active learning' pedagogy consisting of ten pedagogical approaches, eg assessment for learning, cooperative learning. The approach is linked to organisational improvement through continuing professional development facilitated by a subject learning coach. This is a useful feature but it needs to be embedded in a package developed at the chalkface in direct response to the problems of engaging learners in practical learning. (<http://teachingandlearning.qia.org.uk/tlp/pedagogy/introducingthe1/index.html>)

More relevant to RWL are the 1 day visits to workplaces for diploma staff which promise to develop 'practical ideas on how to apply Diploma learning using the workplace as a learning environment and develop opportunities to apply work-related learning to the Diploma, and embed it in your delivery'. (<http://www.diploma-support.org/trainingandsupport/insidetheworkplace>)

At local level, few local authorities or 14-19 consortia had established systematic strategies for practitioner development when Harkin carried out his survey in 2007. (Harkin 2007, p.66) But there is a developing realm of practice. For example, a project on improving teaching and learning on vocational courses involving six schools in Essex used a hands on approach:

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- Attend a project launch / briefing meeting
  - Receive a school visit by one or more of the project team to observe teaching and give feedback / coaching / support to staff
  - Attend a project feedback / dissemination meeting
  - Write up the outcome of the project stating how they were able to develop teaching and learning as a result of taking part in the project.

(<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/VLNO/details.aspx?outputID=789> )

The practitioner network proposed here would link practitioners at all levels – from classroom assistants and mentors to senior teachers - who were enthusiasts for Real World Learning using a mix of real and virtual communications. It would draw on effective practice such as the highly praised Diploma learning visits and the hands on Essex course. The network would be facilitated by staff with expertise in RWL and the capacity to support their peers, possibly ASTs, who would be based in schools across the country. They would create an exchange of ideas and good practice about issues defined by those active in the network.

The network would focus and link the efforts of individuals who sometimes feel isolated within their own area and institution, and build a critical mass of professionals keen to develop RWL approaches. Its activities would be linked with local and national CDP programmes such as the proposed RWL modules at University of Wolverhampton supported by the Edge Foundation or the similar course at the University of Warwick. It would draw on the experience of vocational CDP including Practice Makes Perfect at Lewisham College. Those expected to teach on practical and work-related courses in schools need CDP support that updates their skills in work environments and provides them with opportunities for secondments and work shadowing, much like their colleagues in FE (Brookes and Hughes, p.20). In some situations, it makes sense for school and college staff to train – and therefore – to network together. (Harkin 2007, p.45)

Research suggests that a minimum level of resource is essential to enable facilitators to function well. This might consist of release from a couple of periods a week to provide time to keep in touch and to keep developments on the move. Or it might consist of release for a day a week to provide time to support network communication (emails and discussions), to liaise with other facilitators and CDP providers or organisers, as well as senior members of staff, FE staff, employers and leaders of local 14-19 consortia.

The network's outputs could include

- Effective ways of embedding practical learning across the curriculum, especially in Diplomas, Maths and English
- Most effective approaches to building deep links with employers and other bodies beyond the school gates how to make use of periods of work experience as a means of improving learning in the classroom;
- Assessment systems for what is learned/achieved in a work placement environment;
- how to synthesise the elements and skills of employment to make best use of a variety of employment experiences to the benefits of all learners
- Ways of supporting pre-level 2 students with poor skills, poor behaviour and low attendance

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- Generation of teaching materials to be used on school or university-based CDP programmes such as the proposed Edge-University of Wolverhampton two module programme at Master's level.

The key outcome would be the development of effective practice impacting on student learning outcomes.

### **National Schools Network**

A national network of RWL schools would link those institutions which had made an advanced start on building RWL into their teaching and learning strategies so that they could exchange ideas and good practice. External assistance would act as an incentive for change by releasing a senior member of staff to lead the initiative and to integrate it with wider change processes. Close working links would be fostered with similar national networks and initiatives such as Paul Hamlyn's Learning Futures and the RSA Opening Minds project. To take part, schools would need to demonstrate an existing practical commitment to RWL and the capacity to take it forward through its own internal means and through external partnerships.

The National Network would bring together schools which are seeking ways to move from the point where RWL is at best marginal to their development plans to the point where they could demonstrate the feasibility of transformative change.

The outcomes would be

- The creation of a cohort of schools to act as model for others in embedding RWL across the school and its partnerships, to provide detailed guidance in how to, and to feed into Edge 2015 Schools Today programme.
- Published and easily accessible guidance for schools dealing with issues such as timetabling and curriculum organisation, cross-phase and sector links, staffing, employer engagement, teaching materials.

### **Developing a Local Model**

The third option would involve all or most of the 14-19 providers in a given area, including FE and private training providers and would entail the development of a local model for RWL. It would require the full hearted support of the providers, the 14-19 consortium and the CYPS.

The rationale for this approach is two-fold

- Increasingly schools are drawn into a local network of provision through 14-19 consortia and inter-institution linkages involving shared timetables and resources. Could link with other local multi-agency initiatives (see Bolton and Bedfordshire example below).
- A functioning RWL model involving all or most of the 14-19 providers in a given locality could be seen as a strong argument for the viability of this approach.

The outcome would be a seeing is believing model for scaling the RWL approach up across the country.

The table below explains in more detail how each option might operate, its rationale and intended outcomes.

<b>Option 1</b>	
<b>Practitioner Learning Network</b>	
Operation	Peer to peer professional learning network using a mix of real and virtual communications, facilitated by well prepared teachers (ASTs?) based in hub schools in each region. Exchanging ideas and good practice about issues defined by schools eg developing deep two way working relationships with employers or embedding practical learning across the curriculum. Supported by school senior teams and 14-19 consortia officers.
Rationale	Sustainable change will be driven by practitioners, working collaboratively across schools and regions. Change theory undermined in practice by lack of capacity (Fullan 2006, p.9) Practitioners as change agents (Hargreaves 2008)
Research evidence	Draws on Perfecting Practice Experience, Lewisham College CUREE, Thompson and Wiliam, Brookes and Hughes
Outcomes	Growing network, developing and disseminating effective practice impacting on student learning outcomes. Creating an epidemic of excitement about the value of RWL. Generating teaching materials and operating procedures feeding into local CDP programmes linked to University of Wolverhampton RWL qualification.

<b>Option 2</b>	
<b>National network of RWL schools</b>	
Operation	Identifying schools with the will and capacity (eg developed partnerships with other schools and employers).  Links with other similar networks: Learning Futures; Opening Minds etc.
Rationale	Develops whole school models of transformation driven by RWL. Provides seeing is believing demonstration models in every region across the country for maximum impact and to promote rapid dissemination. The S'EEN project leaders believe exemplification is a key element in promoting new thinking about innovation and they are in the process of identifying examples of work in schools to make available to others online.
Research evidence	Active Learning Schools; (CUREE 2007a, p.26)
Outcomes	Cohort of schools to act as model for others in embedding RWL across the school and its partnerships, to provide detailed guidance in how to, and to feed into Edge 2015 Schools Today programme. Published materials based on participating schools' work dealing with issues such as timetabling and curriculum organisation, cross-phase and sector links, staffing, employer engagement, teaching materials.

Option 3 <b>RWL Area Model</b>	
Operation	RWL Programme twins with schools and colleges in one or two local authority areas eg Barnsley and Knowsley to co-develop a transformation model with RWL at its heart. In the case of two areas, twinning and shadowing arrangements between them would promote learning and cross-fertilisation.
Rationale	Schools and colleges increasingly bound together through local 14-19 consortia planning, resourcing and timetabling arrangements.
Research evidence	Easier for schools to achieve transformation when they form part of a collaborative system-wide change (Fullan).
Outcomes	Whole area model for RWL based education and training from which other areas can learn. Published materials based on participating schools' work dealing with issues such as consortium timetabling and curriculum organisation, cross-phase/sector links, staffing, employer engagement, teaching materials.

### **An Example of a Hybrid: Innovation in Enterprise**

Another way forward could be in the form of a hybrid, involving a teacher network with a linked CDP programme and a school network. An example of this approach is the Innovation in Enterprise initiative, a partnership between the GTCE Teacher Learning Academy, DCSF, the former DTI and SSAT.

*It is also supported by S'EEN, which provides access to an extensive set of 'hub' and 'spokes' schools in nine regions of England. The 51 hub schools are Business and Enterprise Specialist Schools that have taken a lead role in spreading enterprise education to other Business and Enterprise Specialist Schools (spokes schools) and to non-specialist mainstream schools. (CUREE, 2007a, p.25) The aim of the initiative is to engage all school staff, in all schools, to enable them to embed enterprise pedagogy in teaching and learning / leadership, and empower them to develop an enterprise culture in education. (See [www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/SEEN](http://www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/SEEN).)*

*The initiative began with a group of schools in Worcestershire consisting of a lead, or hub, school and eight other schools. This gave the project leaders the opportunity to trial teachers' use of the toolkit activity materials and to make appropriate changes to the materials and/or the way in which they deployed them. This was followed by the launch of the toolkit at the SSAT conference for Business and Enterprise Specialist Schools in February 2007. (CUREE, 2007a, p.26)*

*The process of exemplifying the materials and facilitating their use through coaching has continued through presentations and workshops offered by the project leaders in the hub schools. The hub schools came into the role through a process of self-selection and form the backbone of S'EEN. Each hub school is linked to three spokes schools that, in turn, form a network with other schools in their locality. Hub and spokes schools are funded by the DCSF to support innovation and enterprise in their local secondary schools. This includes providing free CPD for enterprise education. (CUREE, 2007a, p.27)*

*The Innovation in Enterprise project is developing tools to encourage innovative thinking among teachers and learners. Transfer will be based on dissemination of the resources in electronic form and*

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*coaching of Business and Enterprise hub leaders as the first stage of a 'cascading' process. The initiators model the use of resources at training events targeting hub-leaders, who, in turn, will be supported in developing practice in their networks. Once champions have received coaching in how to employ and develop the resources, they will in turn coach practitioners in their networks, adapting the resources to local circumstances. (CUREE, 2007b, p.14)*

*Going to scale in the case of this project entails reaching all of the SSAT Business and Enterprise networks nationally (comprising a total of 218 schools) through a series of Regional Development Agency events and ongoing coaching support. There is no financial inducement to participation in the initiative beyond the entitlement to two days of INSET provided through S'EEN. The project leaders believe that the initiative will be sustained as teachers see the benefits of innovation thinking in terms of measurable impact on students' learning and on the methods they use to approach learning tasks and projects. (CUREE, 2007a, p.29)*

*The initiators of the Innovation in Enterprise initiative are utilising two networks to disseminate resources (S'EEN and SSAT), and SSAT itself collaborates with the Regional Development Agencies to stage support events. Such inter-agency working ensures innovation connects with the rest of the system, enabling practitioners to perceive greater coherence among, and make more sense of, various initiatives. This may ultimately mean the creation of core objectives across initiatives, and it is important that these are articulated in terms of learning outcomes. (CUREE, 2007b, p.13)*

## **5 Complementarity and Value Added**

A key factor in deciding on which of the three options to take forward is the question of complementarity and value added. The first step to making an assessment of these is to consider what currently exists.

### **School Networks with Similar Aims**

The RWL options proposed above should complement and add value to other school networks, otherwise there is a risk of duplication and confusion which will only render more difficult the job schools face in making sense of a welter of initiatives and programmes all promising change and improvement.

### **Enterprise Network**

DCSF has funded SSAT until March 2011 to take forward the work begun by S'EEN (see above). The new Enterprise Network will include primary schools and FE colleges as well as secondary schools.

*The vision for the Enterprise Network is to create a sustainable network of 80-90 Enterprise Learning Partnerships (ELPs) this will be based on the 155 LA areas. We envisage that the ELPs will be schools and organisations within the LA area who wish to proactively support enterprise education. The ELP will be given funding to support the enterprise journey 5-19 within their geographical sphere of influence. The vision for the network is to build upon the previous phase and to expand and widen existing local networks relating to enterprise education with their aim being to support the 5-19 enterprise agenda.*

*The Network will be organised at a regional level through 9 SSAT Regional Enterprise Coordinators. These will be full time roles to support the local partnerships based on and in the Government*

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regions. The Regional coordinators will form and oversee 9 regional advisory groups supporting enterprise education in their region. The main aim and purpose of these groups will be to link up with the main players in the enterprise education arena in the government regions, work with stakeholders to add value to existing initiatives and also form the strategy for the Enterprise Network in the region.

The Network will be organised at a local level through Enterprise Learning Partnerships [ELP], each with a lead organisation i.e. School / LA / EBP who will hold the funding on behalf of the partnership. It is envisaged that most of these will be schools. The local partnership will form a local enterprise board which will be chaired by a Head Teacher whose school is represented on the board. The chairing of the local board can be rotated over the duration of the programme. Each local partnership will be asked to provide the details of a named local enterprise coordinator who will provide 1 day a week admin support to the local partnership. The role of each ELP is to support all schools in their area across all phases 5-19 to improve the quality and quantity of enterprise education. The local enterprise board will decide on the strategy needed for the area.

(See [http://www.enterpriseinschools.org.uk/folders/about\\_us](http://www.enterpriseinschools.org.uk/folders/about_us) )

The SSAT Enterprise Networks cover similar ground to the national network of RWL schools discussed above, although the latter would focus explicitly on strategies for strengthening links between the school and the world outside. The national network of RWL schools would sit well alongside existing initiatives and qualifications including Creative Partnerships, ASDAN, BTEC, Young Apprenticeships and the suite of Young Enterprise schemes such as the Company Programme and the Quickstart Music Programme which – with Edge’s support - aims to give young people experience of the music industry.

### **Applied Learning Schools**

The Vocational Specialism managed by the SSAT was recently replaced by an Applied Learning Specialism at the government’s request, although this may have been partly because for some schools the v term was a cause of embarrassment with parents (Higham and Yeomans 2008). According to SSAT:

*Applied Learning specialist schools will play a key role in driving up the numbers of young people achieving level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications (including English and mathematics) and reducing NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures. They will:*

- *Develop partnerships to offer all students in their area more interesting and alternative career pathways*
- *Work with others to offer all students in their area a broader skill base for their future employment*
- *Work in partnership with others who could teach all students in their area new skills in new ways*

([http://www.specialistschools.org.uk/uploads/documents/In%20this%20school%20we%20do%20flyer%20June08LR\\_892.pdf](http://www.specialistschools.org.uk/uploads/documents/In%20this%20school%20we%20do%20flyer%20June08LR_892.pdf))

Enterprise Networks and Applied Learning Schools together cover almost exactly the territory that an RWL National Network would settle on, except that RWL would more explicitly advance a whole school transformation model.

### **Future Schools**

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Building on the Opening Minds programme, the RSA is working to establish a 'network of schools to explore what a school for the 21st century should look like, what it should teach and how it should change...The network will be about both about what pupils learn and how schools can be transformed'. The philosophy of Future Schools is expressed in the RSA Education Charter which provides a common ground of values with other school reform initiatives including Learning Futures and Studio Schools (see below).

### **Learning Futures**

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has created a Learning Futures network based on four principles:

- Ensuring relevance of learning (for young people themselves)
- Co-constructing the curriculum and pedagogy with young people)
- Valuing and incorporating learning experiences and processes both in and out of school contexts
- Varying the learner /teacher mix, recognising the value of a much wider range of roles

These networks share an agenda of innovation, skills, relevance, co-construction with RWL schools but the latter may depart from them in wanting to take schools from the point where enterprise and work-related learning is an important part of the agenda to the point where it *drives* the agenda. Nevertheless, it seems that there is a large amount of commonground between RWL, Learning Futures, Future Schools, Applied Learning Schools and the Enterprise Networks.

### **Studio Schools**

The notion of a school that provides real experience of setting up and running an enterprise is one that is shared between the Young Foundation's Studio Schools and Denmark's Production Schools. There are also similarities to the Expeditionary Learning Schools and Big Picture Schools in the US and the Workshop Schools in Spain. Once established, the Studio Schools will represent a new model of secondary education that may take root and spread. But one important aspect of the model can be seen in a growing number of schools, and that is the notion of in-house enterprise which is about making and selling. Bakeries and hairdressing salons, long familiar features of FE colleges, provide a model for the enterprise villages which many BSF projects now incorporate. RWL schools should learn from and develop both approaches – the fully-fledged Studio School and the Enterprise Village.

### **Teacher and CDP Networks with Similar Aims**

#### ***Enterprise Pathfinders***

An evaluation of the Enterprise Pathfinders by the Centre for Education and Industry at the University of Warwick identified a number of effective school CDP strategies.

*An approach to teacher training has been found useful in which enterprise teaching and learning styles are linked to areas that any teacher would want to develop in their lessons, e.g. good behaviour and student motivation. Business partners are involved in identifying ways of addressing these areas and in delivering the training. Teachers who go through the training are then seen as 'champions' who are able train up others.*

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*Two hours per fortnight are allocated in one school for staff development – looking at assessment for learning, including learning styles etc. – delivered by the Enterprise Education co-ordinator; she also delivers training in vocational courses for other schools. In addition the LEA has sent in two trainers, looking at peer assessment etc. The whole staff view has changed. Teachers now come to ask for funding to run mini-enterprises in their own departments. (CEI, p.29)*

These examples from the Pathfinder programme show how practitioners respond to what they consider useful materials and approaches. This practitioner led approach to CDP seems to be the way to address the issues arising from the introduction of the diplomas that teachers are facing in (for example)

- Working across subject boundaries
- Supporting learners with core skills problems
- Making links with employers
- Embedding core skills

A great deal of CDP material has been devised to support the introduction of the diplomas but it has been developed for the most part at arm's length from the practitioners. The research evidence reviewed earlier in the report suggests that this is not the best way to engage practitioners in change. Not only is there currently a shortage of CDP programmes designed to develop capacity to deliver applied and practical learning, there are few opportunities for practitioners to work together on these issues according to agendas they have set themselves.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Earlier we proposed three possible ways of strengthening and embedding real world learning: through a practitioner learning network, through a national network of RWL schools and through a local RWL model.

1. Priority should be given by Edge and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundations to supporting the first of these because
  - No such network currently exists
  - The research evidence suggests that a practitioner network is essential for driving change
  - Such a network would be in tune with the aims of the two foundations.
2. The ground covered by a national network of RWL schools is occupied by a number of national networks and so there is no case for setting up a new network. Edge should instead consider working more closely with Learning Futures, Future Schools, Applied Learning Schools and the Enterprise Networks with which it has a shared value base.

3. There is some value in taking further the proposal made by Barnsley to Edge, to form a partnership to develop a local model of applied and practical learning imbued with Edge's distinctive approach. As well as Barnsley, there have been indications from other areas of interest in this approach including Knowsley and Manchester and through EBPs in Leeds and on Humberside. In this case, it may be worth an approach to DCSF to consider funding a local RWL model in one or more places, perhaps funded from the National Challenge or 14-19 Implementation programmes.
4. The next section of this report sets out a project plan for implementing a practitioner learning network.

## Section 2 Project Plan

This section sets out proposed arrangements for the Practitioner Learning Network.

<b>1 Setting Up</b>	
Outline	<p>The practitioner network proposed here would link practitioners at all levels – from classroom assistants and mentors to senior teachers - who were enthusiasts for Real World Learning using a mix of real and virtual communications. It would draw on effective practice such as the highly praised Diploma learning visits and the hands on Essex course. The network would be facilitated by staff with expertise in RWL and the capacity to support their peers, possibly ASTs, who would be based in hub schools across the country. They would create an exchange of ideas and good practice about issues defined by those active in the network.</p> <p>The network would run for two years in the first instance.</p> <p>Supported by school senior teams and 14-19 consortia officers.</p>
Aims	<p>To build a national network of education professionals keen to develop RWL approaches, supported and facilitated by trained facilitators, linked to local CDP programmes.</p>

<p>Work Plan: Dates, Tasks, Targets</p>	<p>Set up Management Committee and agree selection criteria for project team and facilitators: month 1</p> <p>Recruit project team: months 1-2</p> <p>Recruit hub facilitators and negotiate release with schools: months 2-3</p> <p>Train facilitators – 1 national event followed by three supra-regional events: month 4</p> <p>Create website: months 3-4</p> <p>PR for network launch: month 5</p> <p>Launch: month 6</p> <p>National network event: month 12</p> <p>Sustainability planning event for facilitators and schools: month 18</p> <p>Start self-sustaining programme: month 25</p>
<p>Selection process</p>	<p>Invite applications to be facilitators via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project website</li> <li>• Existing school networks (SSAT, LF, FS, Microsoft, NCSL)</li> <li>• Edge website and Business in Schools</li> <li>• TES ad.</li> </ul> <p>Short-listing by project team</p> <p>Check availability with schools</p> <p>Selection by sub group of project team and Steering Group</p>
<p>Selection criteria</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Track record</li> <li>2. Standing within school</li> <li>3. Links with peers, other schools, employers</li> </ol>

Student engagement: arrangements for embedding the student voice in the design and delivery of the programme at every level	
Schools partners: community projects/organisations and employers/FE and other education	Develop links between network and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 14-19 consortia</li> <li>2. ITT and CDP providers</li> </ol>
CDP	Develop link with ITT and CDP providers so that materials form content of modules and network activity counts towards qualifications.

## 2 Management

Identify Project Team: Leadership and Staffing of the Project and their Qualifications/Experience	Project team leader and two assistants recruited by Edge from experienced school network facilitators. Employed for 24 months. Expected to develop plan for sustainability.
Identify Administrative Support	Where appropriate for project team leader
Define Remit and Operation of Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit and manage project team</li> <li>• Review project aims, plan and performance</li> <li>• Sub-group of Project Steering Group (see below) comprising representatives of Edge, Esmee Fairbairn, two schools and 1-2 independent members</li> <li>• Meet project team three times a year to review performance and revise aims if necessary</li> </ul>

Propose Remit and Membership of Project Steering Group: with possible representation from students, schools, colleges, academics (eg Andrew Pollard) , senior/influential; figures (eg John May) agencies (eg SSAT), other networks (eg Learning Futures) and employers

- Agree project aims, plan and performance indicators
- Meet annually to review above and to make recommendations if necessary
- Comprising representatives of
- Edge, Esmee Fairbairn, 4 schools, 4 students, 2 other education institutions, 1-2 independent members, 1-2 academics, 3 school networks

### 3 Outcomes

Impacts Summarised	<p>The outcomes depend on choices made by an autonomous network. But the network's outputs could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective ways of embedding practical learning across the curriculum, especially in Diplomas, Maths and English</li> <li>• Most effective approaches to building deep links with employers and other bodies beyond the school gates how to make use of periods of work experience as a means of improving learning in the classroom;</li> <li>• Assessment systems for what is learned/achieved in a work placement environment;</li> <li>• how to synthesise the elements and skills of employment to make best use of a variety of employment experiences to the benefits of all learners</li> <li>• Ways of supporting pre-level 2 students with poor skills, poor behaviour and low attendance</li> <li>• Generation of teaching materials to be used on school or university-based CDP programmes such as the proposed Edge-University of Wolverhampton two module programme at Master's level.</li> </ul>
Impact on Students	<p>The network will seek to engage with students and learners forums to press together for the embedding of RWL. Specific impact measures will be developed by the Steering Group.</p>
Impact on Schools	<p>The network will create a critical mass of enthusiasts in schools who will encourage their peers to adopt the RWL approach. Specific impact measures will be developed by the Steering Group.</p>
Impact on Education Policy and Practice	<p>The network will demonstrate that practitioners can drive the process of change in schools by developing new ideas and approaches to RWL that work for teachers and learners. Specific impact measures will be developed by the Steering Group.</p>

#### 4 Evaluation

<p>Write Research Brief including Purpose, Methodology and Impact Measures</p>	<p>The purpose is to review the development of the project and help to identify ways of improving its performance.</p> <p>Evaluation will take place at several levels using impact measures developed by project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on education policy and practice</li> <li>• Impact on schools</li> <li>• Impact on students</li> <li>• Impact on participants</li> </ul> <p>Methodology includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with policy makers and key figures in national agencies</li> <li>• Interviews with headteachers and other senior staff in a sample of schools directly affected</li> <li>• Interviews with students in a sample of affected schools</li> <li>• Interviews with participants</li> </ul>
<p>Identify potential evaluators</p>	<p>Institute of Education, University of London</p> <p>Centre for Urban Education Institute of Education Manchester Metropolitan University</p> <p>The Centre for Real World Learning University of Winchester (formative evaluation; context setting)</p>

## 5 Dissemination

Links with Edge initiatives: Putnam film and 2015 Schools Now – identify practical links and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange for showings of film in hub schools</li> <li>• Arrange on-line discussion between network and Edge</li> <li>• Insert link on Edge website to the network</li> </ul>
Links with Related Initiatives: RSA Campaign; Learning Futures – identify practical links and actions	<p>Insert link on websites to the network</p> <p>Promote joint meetings/events</p>
Other links – look for linkages with the plans of other organisations and with major government initiatives and set out actions	Arrange meetings between project team and policymakers in government, key agencies, trade unions and thinktanks
Insert features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers tv</li> <li>• TES</li> </ul>
Other	Invite Secretary of State to take part in on-line debate

- Should there be special dissemination events (eg like the ALS Showcase event in Westminster) or should other media/channels be used?

## 6 Funding

Costs	Total staff 12		
	1 project team leader working on project two days a week		
	10 regional facilitators two of them also acting as assistant project leaders.		
	1 project administrator working two days a week in support of the team leader and assistants		
	Regional facilitators work one day a week. Assistant project leaders work 1½ days a week.		
	Assume facilitator teachers are paid between minimum (£2478) or maximum (£6056) of TLR for September 2009. Assume remainder of salary + on costs paid by school or consortium.		
	<b>Annual Costs</b>		
	Team leader	6056	6056
	2 Assistant team leaders	4000	8000
	8 other Facilitators	2478	19824
Administrator	21937 pro rata + on costs of 40% (Grade H7 scp26)	12284	
Office costs including IT, meetings		15000	
Events, materials, publications, website		35000	
Evaluation		15000	
Total		111164	
<b>Cost for two years: £222328</b>			

Benefits	<p>Engages enthusiasts to spread the message from school to school.</p> <p>Potential direct impact on learner outcomes through improving teaching and learning strategies.</p> <p>Feeds live materials and experiences into linked CDP programmes.</p> <p>Assuming the active involvement of 10 regional facilitators, each in contact with an average 25 other practitioners, the work of 250 teachers and others could be positively affected for an outlay of £203.</p>
Sources of funding	Joint Edge and Esmee Fairbairn

## 7 Sustainability

<b>7 Sustainability</b>	
Explains how Project will be carried forward and embedded	<p>At 18 months project team will develop plan for sustainability and present to management committee. Plan will show how network contributing to objectives of national, regional and local government.</p> <p>Plan will lay out options including bid for funding to government (14-19 implementation); part funding from schools; part funding from RDAs</p>

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## Appendix People and Organisations Consulted; Key Points

The table below summarises the people and organisations consulted during the course of this study and key points from the discussion.

**Key** P = Phone call M = Meeting V = Visit

Name and Position	Organisation	Date	Key Points
Claire Thompson Assistant Head	Cornwallis Academy Maidstone, Kent	16.1.09 M V	Cornwallis Academy (NOR 1611) opened in September 2007 after merging with two other schools. It forms South Maidstone Federation along with New Line Learning Academy. Both Are BSF schools. Cornwallis has a sixth form. New Line was one of the Active Learning Schools.
Andy Powell Chief Executive	Edge	14.1.09 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edge is keen to see the recommendations of the RWL report and keen to collaborate with Esmee Fairbairn, possibly on a teacher education programme.</li> <li>2. There is no commitment from Edge to implementing the RWL report recommendations, however.</li> <li>3. Edge is in talks with Wolverhampton University over a practical learning CDP programme.</li> </ol>
David Price	Learning Futures PHF	15.1.09 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning Futures and RWL share common ethos even if LF is not centred on practical, hands on.</li> <li>2. Word of mouth was a key factor in the spread of Musical Futures</li> <li>3. MY will alert schools to the LF offer asap</li> <li>4. There may be scope for collaboration depending on which RWL option is implemented and which schools are involved.</li> </ol>

Denise Barrow	PHF	24.7.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PHF trustees have given a go ahead for a year or so subject to review for LF</li> <li>2. LF would welcome collaboration with other networks including RWL</li> <li>3. We will keep each other and DP in touch with developments</li> </ol>
Edna Sutton	Barnsley CYPS	16.9.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Barnsley keen to partner Edge to develop a local model of hands on secondary education.</li> <li>2. Secondary sector in process of reorganisation with several BSF projects. Existing schools will be replaced by a number of community learning centres catering for all ages.</li> <li>3. Keen to continue the discussion with Edge.</li> </ol>

Sue Hanby + DHT	Edward Sheerien School	16.9.08	<p>This is a smaller than average school with 769 pupils on roll. The school draws the majority of its pupils from areas containing significant pockets of deprivation and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. The school has recently admitted a number of Eastern European pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school is part of the national pilot for the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and hosts a satellite City Learning Centre (CLC) on site. In addition, the school has achieved the Artsmark as well as the Healthy Schools standard and is an approved test centre for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). Edward Sheerien School is part of the local Excellence in Cities cluster (EIC).</p>
Neil Clarke + DHT	Dearne High School	M	
	Barnsley		<p>The Dearne High School is a larger than average size mixed comprehensive school in the village of Goldthorpe on the outskirts of Barnsley. The above average proportion of the pupils eligible for free school meals reflects the levels of deprivation in the area. Few of the pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of the pupils designated as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified teachers.</p>

Edge/Carillion Eco Homes Competition West London		9.10.08 V	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edge collaborated with construction firm Carillion in setting up a design award for an eco home for which West London school students competed.</li> <li>2. Competition provides a good example of RWL in practice and was well supported by schools and Carillion. But setting it up has taken a lot of resources.</li> <li>3. Key coordinating role is played in West London by the EBP which leads on enterprise and work placements. It is willing to help identify schools that could take part in RWL.</li> </ol>
Sandra Cooper Manager	Humber EBP	9.10.08/22.10.08 M	<p>The Humber EBP manages Work Experience and the health and safety and quality assurance visits, on behalf of the East Riding Council, Hull City Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Humberside EBP keen to work with Edge to set up links with local schools for EBP.</li> <li>2. Discussion centred on the characteristics of participating schools (see report).</li> <li>3. Reviewed possible schools across the sub-region. Decided to visit pairs of schools in Hull (because they are led by keen, pro-active heads who could point a way out of Hull's awful predicament at the bottom of the league table) and Goole (because this is an area with good employer possibilities)</li> </ol>

Peter Mitchell	Edge	30.10.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PM made clear that Edge no longer had resources to fund RWL.</li> <li>2. Agreed that the research project should go ahead nevertheless given that both Edge and Esmee Fairbairn had agreed to fund it.</li> <li>3. They would consider what to do when the report was finished and delivered.</li> </ol>
Marilyn Eccles	School of Education Manchester Met. University	18.12.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marilyn Eccles was seconded from Manchester City Council to set up an urban education centre that could provide evaluation expertise and help the development of new approaches to learning.</li> <li>2. Currently working with the new Manchester academies.</li> <li>3. Keen to work with Edge on RWL which is close to their thinking.</li> </ol>
Employer Engagement for the Diplomas: DCSF Demonstration Visit	Liverpool CYPS	10.11.08 V	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This visit to Liverpool was part of a series organised by local authorities to display progress on various aspects of the diplomas and also to discuss challenges.</li> <li>2. Visited a diploma centre based at Alder Hey Children's Hospital from which students will be prepared for work placements, and a city learning centre which is located on an industrial estate in an attempt to promote links with employers and something akin to a real world learning experience for students.</li> <li>3. Liverpool is doing RWL but it takes effort and resources to make it work, and schools need a great deal of support and hand holding.</li> </ol>

<p>Visit Hull schools, meet HTs</p> <p>Gary Mangan</p> <p>Ged Fitzpatrick</p>	<p>Andrew Marvell</p> <p>St Mary's</p> <p>Hull</p>	<p>17.11.08</p> <p>M V</p>	<p>Andrew Marvell Business and Enterprise College is larger than the average secondary school. Many students do not come from affluent households. The proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. Very few students are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is above average. The attainment of students entering the school is below average. As its name indicates, Andrew Marvell is a specialist business and enterprise college and is one of the Coop Movement's network schools whose ethos is built into the school's outlook.</p> <p>The headteacher is keen on taking advantage of all help in transforming the school into a high performing institution and would like to discuss collaboration with Edge in principle about RWL.</p> <p>St Mary's College is a larger than average Roman Catholic comprehensive school with sports college status. The number of students entitled to free school meals is below average and there are lower than average percentages of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language. However, the number of students with English as an additional language has risen significantly over the last few years. There are lower than average percentages of students with statements of special educational needs or who need additional help with their learning. The school has achieved Investors in People status, Healthy Schools Award and International School status. It is a training school, supporting the continuing professional development of staff, and part of a pilot for a collaborative extended school.</p> <p>The headteacher is a high flyer with a high performing school and was sceptical about the RWL concept although he did recognise that however well his students performed academically they still needed the skills and experience that can only be picked up outside the school. A partnership with this school is unlikely, although it exemplifies the challenge</p>
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<p>Visit Goole schools, meet AHTs</p> <p>Roger Woolen</p>	<p>Vermuyden</p> <p>Snaith</p> <p>Goole</p>	<p>18.11.08</p> <p>MV</p>	<p>Vermuyden is a mixed 11 to 19 comprehensive school which serves the town of Goole in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The school is situated in an area of social and economic deprivation and pupils' attainment when they enter Year 7 is below average. Students who enter the small sixth form also begin their courses with below average attainment. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>The assistant head is enthusiastic about Edge and its message. He and his colleagues would like to enter into a partnership with Edge to develop RWL capacity in areas like employer links and embedding practical learning across the curriculum. Their head of CDP could be one of the participants in a practitioner network.</p> <p>The Snaith School has specialist status as a business and enterprise college. It is smaller in numbers than average and serves the town of Snaith and the surrounding rural area. Overall the social and economic background of the students is relatively advantaged and a well below average proportion of students is eligible for a free school meal. Few students come from minority ethnic groups and there are very few whose first language is not English. Below average proportions of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>We met an assistant head who showed little enthusiasm for RWL.</p>
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Bill Lucas	Centre for RWL University of Winchester	24.11.08  M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We agreed that we needed to distinguish carefully between the different meanings of RWL used by me and by the Centre. Theirs was much broader.</li> <li>2. Bill sees the rationale for the three RWL options.</li> <li>3. He argues that the system for selecting schools to take part needs to take account of known potential candidates and at the same time to be open for all comers perhaps through an ad. In tes.</li> <li>4. Their Centre could support the RWL programme by providing formative evaluation, by carrying out specified research and by providing a link to ideas and debate.</li> </ol>
LEACAN Conference – to make RWL presentation with Peter Mitchell		28.11.08	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1. Our presentation to a group of local authority 14-19 consortia coordinators focused on the scope within the diplomas and the evolving national curriculum for RWL. We set out the three RWL options.</li> <li>2. 2. We did not succeed in engaging with this group, perhaps because they are preoccupied with complex delivery issues and don't see the Edge offer as relevant. .</li> </ol>

<p>Neil Wilson</p> <p>HT</p>	<p>Newall Green School</p> <p>Manchester</p>	<p>3.12.08</p> <p>P</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Newall Green took part in the Active Learning Schools pilot and Neil Wilson is keen to develop the relationship with Edge.</li> <li>2. Situated in South Manchester, Newall Green High school is a co-educational comprehensive school with 946 students on roll and a waiting list for all years. It is a city comprehensive serving Wythenshawe and Benchill, the most socially deprived ward in England. 52% of students are entitled to free meals and 35% are on the special needs register. It is one of the most successful schools in the country, rated outstanding by Ofsted and one of the top ten for CVA.</li> <li>3. Developing new 6<sup>th</sup> form centre</li> <li>4. Active as SSAT Applied Learning School</li> <li>5. Would give serious consideration to working with Edge</li> </ol>
<p>Pam Jervis</p> <p>HT</p>		<p>3.12.08</p> <p>P</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comprehensive change process affecting all Knowsley's secondary schools/learning centres</li> <li>2. Increasing collaboration between centres</li> <li>3. Partnership with Microsoft and their innovative teachers network</li> <li>4. Keen to develop applied and practical learning – benefited from taking part in Active Learning Schools project</li> <li>5. Would give serious consideration to tie up with Edge.</li> </ol>

Tim Brighthouse		8.12.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tim exemplifies the Edge problem: he doesn't put practical learning in his top priority list but concedes its importance when prompted.</li> <li>2. His priority is teacher development and he would like to see a bursary scheme to enable practitioners to choose what to study or research. He has been in touch with potential funders, including Edge.</li> <li>3. There may be a way of involving Tim with RWL if it is focused on professional development.</li> </ol>
Gloria Hyatt Liverpool	Member GTC	12.9.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gloria received her MBE for services to education in Liverpool, especially to the BME communities. She set up a full time supplementary school that has been absorbed into the mainstream.</li> <li>2. She is a member of the GTC's Finance and General Purposes Committee and has acted as an advisor to a number of local authorities.</li> <li>3. With her background, she would be well placed – and willing – to provide support and coaching for schools taking part in a RWL programme.</li> <li>4. She can also advise on the most effective ways of setting up a practitioner network.</li> </ol>
Pat Cochrane Chief Executive	CapeUK	17.9.08 M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creative activity has been effective in all types of schools in engaging students</li> <li>2. CAPEUK are keen to collaborate with other networks</li> <li>3. Would give serious consideration to working with Edge</li> </ol>

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Mike Cooper Manager	Leeds EBP	26.11.08 P	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Focus on social enterprise is the way they are taking forward applied and practical learning</li><li>2. Have a social enterprise worker LEGL funded working with 40 Leeds schools</li><li>3. Could identify at least six teachers who would be keen to be involved with a RWL practitioner network.</li></ol>
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