

## Careers education and the cross-curriculum dimensions at key stage 3

*Anthony Barnes explores the scope for providing career learning and development opportunities linked to the cross-curriculum dimensions in the new secondary curriculum.*

### Introduction

The new secondary curriculum which is being rolled out progressively between 2008 and 2011<sup>1</sup> gives schools greater freedom and flexibility to innovate and to personalise learning for young people. The watchwords of the new curriculum are 'disciplined curriculum innovation' to provide 'compelling learning experiences'. Subject teachers have been given powerful tools to support curriculum development. For each subject, these include the 'importance' statement, the key concepts and processes, the range and content and the curriculum opportunities. These facilitate long-term planning and keeping sight of the 'big picture'. In addition, the functional and personal, learning and thinking skills frameworks and the cross-curriculum dimensions framework provide further tools for unifying young people's learning experiences and making them more relevant and authentic. This briefing focuses on the scope for enhancing career learning and development linked to the cross-curriculum dimensions.

The position of career learning and development in the curriculum has changed since 2008. A new non-statutory subject called Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHEe) has been created which the government plans to make compulsory by 2011. PSHEe has two programmes of study covering 'personal wellbeing' and 'economic wellbeing and financial capability'. Careers education (already a statutory requirement at KS3 and KS4) along with work-related learning and enterprise education (already statutory at KS4) and financial capability make up the programme of study for economic wellbeing and financial capability<sup>2</sup>. Two further requirements have been placed on schools: one to implement the principles of impartial careers education<sup>3</sup> and the other to include information on all 16-18 options and especially apprenticeships<sup>4</sup>.

Careers education is not restricted to the economic wellbeing and financial capability programme of study. There are elements of careers education related to health, decision-making and equality and diversity that are implicit in the programme of study for personal wellbeing; and other subject programmes of study make reference to the relevance of career-related activities in subject teaching. The new secondary curriculum gives schools considerable flexibility over the way that they provide career learning and development opportunities for their pupils.

<sup>1</sup> Full details are on the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency's website (<http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/>).

<sup>2</sup> The non-statutory programme of study for economic wellbeing and financial capability at key stage 3 is available at <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/PSHE-econ-ks3.pdf> Careers education is statutory for Years 7-11 (1997 Act, 2003 Education Regulations).

<sup>3</sup> DCSF (2009) *Statutory Guidance: Impartial Careers Education* Available: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/DownloadHandler.aspx?ProductId=DCSF-00978-2009&VariantID=Statutory+Guidance%3a+Impartial+Careers+Education+PDF&>

<sup>4</sup> Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (Section 250)

The main possibilities are:

- a separately-timetabled careers course
- distinct careers modules or units within a composite course, e.g. a PSHEe course
- embedded or integrated careers activities within a subject or thematic learning activity or event.

In practice, many schools will use a combination of all three approaches. The challenge for curriculum designers then becomes to ensure that learners experience a coherent and personalised careers programme. The QCDA curriculum planning and review model helps schools to meet this challenge. It is based around three questions:

- What are/were we trying to achieve?
- How can we/did we organise learning to achieve our aims?
- How well are we achieving/did we achieve our aims?

## Cross-curriculum dimensions

QCDA has identified seven cross-curriculum dimensions<sup>5</sup> to help young people gain insights into the world around them and their place in it. The cross-curriculum dimensions are focal points for subject and thematic teaching that help to unify aspects of young people's learning. The dimensions have been chosen for their relevance, topicality and challenge. Young people need to engage with and be part of the solution to the issues raised by the dimensions. Careers education linked to the cross-curriculum dimensions has the potential to provide compelling learning experiences.

Box 1 lists the cross-curriculum dimensions with examples of links to career learning and development themes.

### Box 1: Cross-curriculum dimensions and career learning and development themes

#### Dimensions

Learning about **identity and cultural diversity** (ICD) can help young people to live and work together in diverse communities in the UK and the wider world. It can also help them develop their identity and a sense of belonging, which are fundamental to personal wellbeing and the achievement of a flourishing and cohesive society.

#### Career learning and development themes

- Vocational identity and self-concept
- Religious and cultural attitudes to work, especially gender issues
- The value of cultural diversity in the workplace
- Work ethics and cultures
- The meaning of career: individualism -v- collectivism, social cohesion (also CP)

<sup>5</sup> QCA (2009) *Cross-curriculum dimensions: A planning guide for schools*. [http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/uploads/Cross%20curriculum%20dimensions%20-%20a%20planning%20guide%20for%20schools%20publication\\_tcm8-14464.pdf](http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/uploads/Cross%20curriculum%20dimensions%20-%20a%20planning%20guide%20for%20schools%20publication_tcm8-14464.pdf)

<p>Learning to live <b>healthy lifestyles</b> (HL) can contribute to young people’s personal, social and emotional wellbeing, helping them to function well in life, learning and work. The healthy lifestyles dimension spans the entire planned learning experience, supporting young people to balance what they eat and drink, including drugs and alcohol, with the exercise they take, the time for social interaction and the amount of sleep they get. It equips learners with the skills and experience to make healthy lifestyle choices, both now and in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life-work balance</li> <li>• Occupational health</li> <li>• Lifestyle careers</li> <li>• Health and safety at work</li> <li>• Hazardous work</li> <li>• Exploitation in the workplace, e.g. child labour</li> </ul>
<p>The <b>community participation</b> dimension (CP) enables young people to learn about and feel valued by the communities that they belong to. By providing opportunities to participate equally alongside other community members, young people develop a greater sense of belonging, responsibility and an understanding of how communities support democracy. Young people have a voice that is listened to, their views are valued and they take part in real decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition mentoring, e.g. peer mentoring of new Y7s</li> <li>• Learner voice planning and evaluation of careers provision, e.g. pupil focus groups/forums, Connexions shadow youth board</li> <li>• Understanding interdependence, e.g. <i>The Real Game series</i></li> <li>• Careers/job clubs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enterprise</b> education (EE) encourages young people to handle uncertainty and respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas and ways of doing things, and to take and manage risks. It helps young people develop a ‘can do’ attitude and the drive to make ideas happen, raising their aspirations, improving their achievements in school and developing valuable skills for education and employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-enterprise</li> <li>• Self-employment</li> <li>• Changing nature and future of work</li> <li>• New jobs (also CCT)</li> <li>• Business simulations</li> <li>• Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Cooperatives</li> <li>• Problem-based work simulations</li> <li>• Employability</li> </ul>

<p><b>Technology and the media (TM)</b> play a significant role in shaping and defining our culture, and the way we work and learn. Engaging with technology and the media can help young people to become discerning and critically literate in relation to the media and the internet. It can also equip them with practical skills to use technology confidently, productively and safely, and offers unprecedented access to events, experiences and opinions and sources of knowledge, encouraging communication and collaboration on a global scale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online career exploration</li> <li>• Managing your identity online (also ICD)</li> <li>• Career investigations/projects through social learning networking, wikis, webquests, podcasting, etc.</li> <li>• Media representations of careers and work</li> </ul>
<p>The <b>creativity and critical thinking</b> dimension (CCT) enables young people to engage with the world around them in critical and creative ways and to take part in imaginative and purposeful activity across the entire curriculum. Creativity and critical thinking can unlock young people's potential, leading to personal fulfilment, as well as contributing to the artistic, scientific or technological achievements that help shape and influence wider society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs of the future</li> <li>• Changing job design</li> <li>• Creative and media sector</li> <li>• Inspirational role models</li> </ul>
<p>Learning about the <b>global dimension and sustainable development</b> (GDSD) can help young people to understand the needs and rights of present and future generations, and to consider the best ways to tackle interrelated global challenges such as climate change, inequality and poverty. It can also motivate learners to want to change things for the better – equipping them with the knowledge, skills and values that are crucial to envisaging and creating a sustainable future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green and sustainable careers</li> <li>• Future of work scenarios (also EE and CCT)</li> <li>• Working in Europe (also ICD)</li> <li>• Working abroad (also ICD)</li> <li>• Working for a multi-national corporation (also EE)</li> </ul>

## Planning cross-curriculum learning

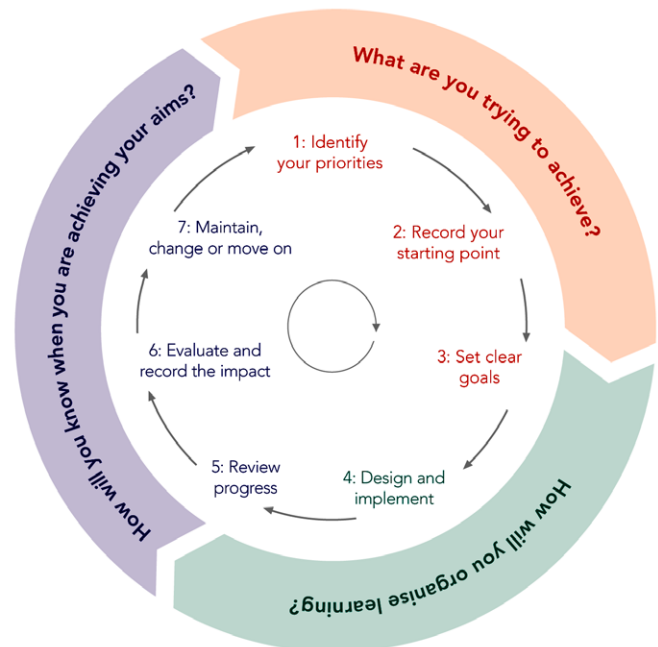
In 2008, QCA (now QCDA) devised a seven-step model for disciplined curriculum innovation (see Fig. 1).

### **Step one** is about identifying your priorities.

The starting points or triggers for curriculum innovation in careers education can come from at least three different directions:

- Young people's career learning and development needs, e.g. assessing whether the priorities are to improve self-efficacy and self-esteem, raise aspirations, challenge stereotypes or broaden horizons. Schools will be aware of specific needs relating to the abilities and cultural and socio-economic circumstances of their pupils.
- National, local and school priorities, e.g. raising attainment, responding to national economic needs (such as improving the take-up of science, technology, engineering and maths ('STEM') subjects and careers, promoting enterprising and increasing the take-up of modern foreign languages). Specialist schools will also be aware of specific needs relating to their particular specialisms.
- Current opportunities, e.g. responding to topical, relevant and authentic developments that will engage and motivate learners such as events, news stories, issues affecting the local labour market, the lives of famous people.

Fig 1: Disciplined curriculum innovation (QCA, 2008)



### **Step two:** Record your starting point.

Schools record what learners are like now.

### **Step three:** Set clear goals.

These will set out what learners will be like when the school has achieved its priorities.

### **Step four:** Design and implement.

This step is about preparing and providing the curriculum changes to help the school achieve its goals. A useful tool for long-term curriculum planning is the dartboard. The example shows six half-termly themes which can be broken down into topics of study for each year group. This is a visual way of checking that the careers education programme has breadth and balance. The links to the cross-curriculum dimensions can be mapped onto the dartboard (see Fig 2).

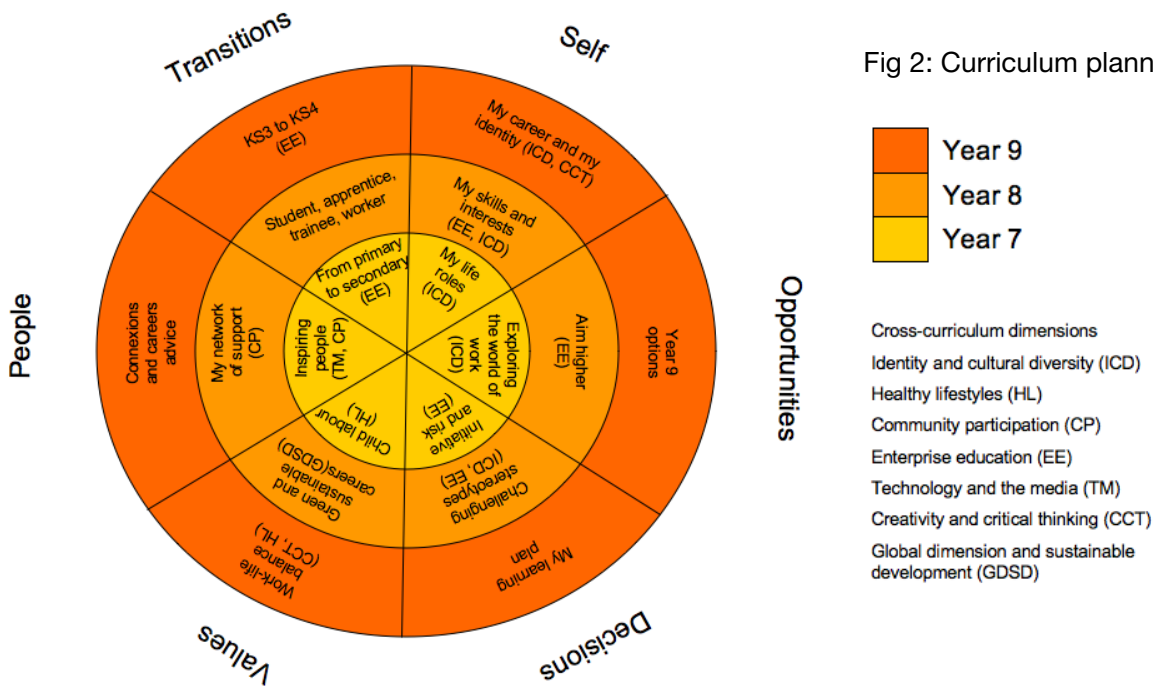


Fig 2: Curriculum planning example

Box 2 shows an example of short-term planning of a compelling learning experience in career education.

**Box 2 - Cross-curriculum dimensions: Career-related thematic learning example**

**Thematic learning example**

Child labour

**Cross-curriculum dimension**

Healthy lifestyles

**Potential lines of enquiry (careers education)**

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of a career as a child labourer?
- What can be done to eradicate the exploitation of children?
- What are the rules in this country about school-age labour?
- What recent abuses have been reported in the press?

**Opportunities for subjects to be involved**

RE, citizenship, PSHEe, ICT, English, history, geography

**Compelling learning experience**

Investigate the human cost of Western consumer products made by child labour.

**Step five: Review progress.**

Progress reviews will help schools know when they are achieving their aims.

**Step six: Evaluate and record the impact.**

This step involves assessing the difference between where learners are now and where they were at step two.

**Step seven: Maintain, change or move on.**

This step is about deciding in the light of the evaluation at step six whether to maintain the approach, change the approach or move on to the next priority.

## Strengthening careers education in the new secondary curriculum

The advantages of linking careers education with the cross-curriculum dimensions are:

- It's a fresh approach which gives curriculum leaders for careers the chance to be creative and innovative
- It enables learners to focus on careers knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that they do not usually consider in traditional activities, especially topical, relevant and significant issues
- It lends itself to creating concentrated blocks of learning time
- It encourages collaboration with other subject areas and the sharing of each other's methods, perspectives, explanations and forms of presentation.

This briefing has focused on the cross-curriculum dimensions. Further opportunities exist to strengthen careers education through the key concepts, the personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and through career-related subject learning<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> The Training and Development Agency has commissioned subject associations to develop career-related subject resources for key stages 3 and 4. The resources linking careers education with English, modern foreign languages and history are available at <http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/iag/subjectresources.aspx>. Resources for geography, citizenship and art and design will be available later this year.