

A PAN-LONDON APPROACH TO 14-19 LEARNING: A FIGMENT OF THE IMAGINATION OR A POTENTIAL REALITY?

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Introduction

In one sense, in terms of education and training, there is nothing real about either 14-19 or London. A 14-19 phase is still an aspiration because it goes against the grain of existing institutional, curricular and governance arrangements in England (Hayward *et al.* 2005) and London, as a living economic and social entity, does not fit neatly within clearly defined administrative boundaries. There are many differing institutional structures providing 14-19 learning, a very wide range of achievement and complex 'journey to learn' patterns across the Capital, some of which relate to institutional and geographical stratification by age, class and race. The number of agencies operating at the regional, sub regional and local levels makes developing a distinct vision for learners complex. Some aspects of curriculum provision are the result of historical legacies which are no longer necessarily valid or helpful in terms of current needs. A more unified and inclusive curriculum will require much higher degrees of institutional collaboration than is the case at present. In this chapter, we will argue that a fully comprehensive concept of 14-19 education and training is necessary from the perspectives of both social inclusion and economic competitiveness and that this is particularly the case in a city like London. Similarly, in terms of the organisation and governance of education and training, there are good reasons for seeing London as a city/region that runs across historic or administrative boundaries and comprises a number of smaller-scale dynamic localities.

14-19 learning

While we have suggested above that a 14-19 phase of education and training is not a lived reality in England currently, the concept of 14-19 learning is both meaningful and necessary. Young people at this stage in their lives are in transition and start to move between educational institutions and between education and work – the learning landscape becomes significantly bigger. In this context, the concept of a 14-19 phase has been seen as a curricular attempt to overcome the institutional break at 16+, by encouraging learners to remain in some form of education or training, to achieve more highly and to become active and productive citizens (Working Group on 14-19 Reform 2004; DfES 2005a). Furthermore, a focus on 14-19 learning suggests that schools, colleges and work-based learning providers, many of which operate either side of the 16+ divide, need to collaborate to promote learner progression rather than simply focusing on achievement within their own individual institutions.

Such a concept of an expanded 14-19 education and training system clearly has implications for the content of the curriculum and approaches to learning and assessment. In terms of government policy, it has meant the introduction of more practical and vocational education into the school curriculum with a demand for institutional partnership to promote a broader range of provision and greater learner choice (DfES 2002, 2005a). Others have argued strongly that this is too narrow; that there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to the 14-19 phase and that reform should extend to the whole curriculum and pedagogy, including general education (Hodgson and Spours 2003, Working Group on 14-19 Reform 2004, Hayward *et al.* 2005). This broader view poses a challenge, not only to the dominance of GCSEs and A Levels, but also to the organisation of secondary, further and higher education as a whole.

This rationale for a 14-19 phase thus represents a somewhat uneasy 'coalition' of motives. The Government currently sees 14-19 reform in terms of three distinct functions: providing an alternative vocational route for those disaffected with traditional GCSEs and A Levels; a way

of strengthening vocational education and preparation for employment; and as a means of increasing participation and attainment rates to reach international standards. Others in professional, research and many policy communities, view the focus on 14-19 learning as a way of breaking down long-standing academic/vocational and 16+ institutional divides, thereby, building a more equitable and comprehensive upper secondary education system for the future. It is recognised, however, that a future system of this type will require more than curricular change and a broader concept of learning and assessment. These reforms will need to be accompanied by new organisational, accountability and governance arrangements and a more regulated youth labour market (Hodgson and Spours 2004).

Learners

The 2005 Census records that there were around 600,000 Londoners aged 14-19, an annual cohort of approximately 120,000. This figure is rising slowly. The LSC estimates that there were 256,211 16-18 year olds in 2006 rising to 256,764 by 2008, and 259,283 by 2021. Half of all 16-19 year olds in London are from black, Asian and multi-ethnic groups and this is expected to rise to 80% by 2016. Just under a third of pupils in secondary schools have English as a second language and, for roughly half of this group, this causes difficulty with their education. These figures clearly indicate major changes to the population of London schools and colleges and will undoubtedly have implications for curriculum, pedagogy and the organisation of learning opportunities (see Chapter 4 for a broader discussion of ethnicity and education in London).

Providers

The education of London learners is the responsibility of a complex range of providers. The statutory requirement for provision for 14-16 year olds and the strategic lead on 14 – 19 arrangements lie with 33 boroughs, through local authorities that vary greatly in size. The smallest, the City of London, had no publicly funded pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, and the largest, Croydon, had 4,359 in 2005. Eighteen of the 33 London boroughs number among the 30% of the most deprived boroughs in England. Most local authorities are democratically

accountable bodies, but some are run by independent consultancy arrangements: in Hackney a Learning Trust, in Islington and in Southwark an education services company.

There are 421 secondary schools in London. Of these 207 are their own admissions authority (i.e. their decision on which pupils to admit is outside local authority control) and around 185 have sixth forms providing for students over the age of 16. Outside local authority control there are publicly funded independent schools: City Technology Schools and Academies. The DfES [Five-Year Strategy](#) (DfES 2004) commits to providing 60 Academies in London by 2010.

Given this range of school status, the ability of the 33 London local authorities to plan provision varies. In Southwark, for example, no school is directly within the local authority: all are Academies or Voluntary Schools. Furthermore, planning is made difficult by substantial movement of pupils across boundaries. In Hackney, 37% of pupils at Key Stage 2 had not been in a Hackney school for Key Stage 1. In Lambeth 25% of pupils move school each year. Much of this pupil movement appears unplanned. During 2001, 631 pupils in Haringey joined a school at non standard times, as did 505 in Westminster. The Association of Local Government (2005) called attention to the disruptive impact this was having on schools.

Recently, however, the influence of local authorities has been increased by two national initiatives, and a restructuring of government departments. 'Building Schools for the Future' requires local authorities to formulate strategic capital bids to replace all secondary school buildings, with implications for institutional structures and size. Responsibility for putting into place the new 14 lines of specialised Diplomas (now known as Diplomas) was also allocated to local authorities. From 2013, 14 lines of Diplomas covering all major vocational sectors will be offered at Levels 1-3 (DfES 2005b), requiring collaboration between institutions at 14-19, co-ordinated by the local authority, and leading to new partnerships and sub-regional groupings.

Post-16, an age when attendance at school or college is, at present, voluntary, the situation is yet more complex. The London Region Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has been

responsible for funding provision at 16+. However, in July 2007 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) was split into two new Departments - the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). The former will be responsible for 14 – 19 education and training, working through local authorities with the DIUS having oversight of younger learners following apprenticeships. The future role of the LSC is, for the present, uncertain.

Responsibility for guaranteeing an individual's entitlement to suitable provision 14-19, as for example with the new Diplomas, lies with local authorities. However, the majority of learners post-16 attend the 54 further education institutions in London which are not under local authority control. Of these 36 are general further education or tertiary colleges, 12 are sixth form colleges, and 6 are specialist designated institutions, mainly working with adults. Since 1993, when further education colleges became independent of local authorities, and employment of staff and ownership of assets invested in the college board of corporation, colleges have developed distinct missions and marketing strategies. Some have entered into partnership arrangements at 14-16 and 16–19, but others prefer to remain outside of such shared arrangements.

The range of further education available to students varies according to locality and this adds to the degree of movement of students around the Capital. The catchment area of a college rarely coincides with local authority boundaries (over 50% of students post-16 attend a college outside their borough). In nine boroughs on average more than 60% of further education pupils opt to enrol on a course outside their home borough. Catholic sixth form colleges frequently draw a majority of their students from boroughs other than that in which they are based, while large further education colleges will draw students from wide areas, becoming, in effect, major sub-regional hubs.

Estimates of numbers of further education students vary and are increased by around 20,000 16-19 year olds who travel into London for their education. The Association of Colleges London Colleges website estimates that 600,000 students enrol annually in London's further education institutions, with 120,000 enrolments per annum of students aged 14 – 19. Only 16% of all-age further education students are full- time, full-year students, but for many

colleges, especially sixth form colleges, full time students aged 16-19 form the majority of their activity. The Mayor's Office records further education numbers in 2004 of 700,000, of whom 123,868 (18%) were aged 16 – 20 (Mayor of London 2004).

Post-16 participation

Although plans have been announced for making continuing education compulsory up to the age of 18 (DfES 2007), at present the decision to stay on at 16 is voluntary. Most students choose to remain in education or training at 16, but a significant minority leave at this point (between 8,000 and 10,000 unsettled destinations at 16) and there is further attrition during the first year of study in post-compulsory education. Retention in London at 16 into publicly funded education in 2006 was 86% (compared to 77.6% in 2004). The LSC (2007a) records that in 2004 73% of 16 year olds in London remained in full-time education: 57% to an FE institution, 16% to school sixth forms. A further 9% go into government supported training (there are 136 work place learning providers in London), and 10% took employment. However, by the age of 17 participation drops to 81%, with only 66% in full-time education. Retention in work-based learning, at 55%, is particularly low, as is the retention of those with low GCSE grades (53% at 16, 42% at 17).

In 2007, the LSC funded 101,780 young people in further education colleges, some following more than one course. Of these 32,630 were undertaking Level 3 study, 24,850 were undertaking Level 2, and 22,380 were taking Level 1 and Entry Level courses, including 5,850 on Entry to Employment courses. Over 2,500 learners were taking Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3) with 6,180 taking apprenticeships at Level 2. In all, 36,000 learners were undertaking basic skills qualifications, including 7,330 on apprenticeships (LSC 2007a).

Attainment

Attainment at age 16 across London varies significantly. In 2005, 48.2% of all 16 year olds gained 5 A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent but this ranged from 43% to 70% between the lowest and highest performing boroughs (DfES 2005c). Girls outperform boys in every borough except Kensington and Chelsea. Those boroughs which have low GCSE attainment

levels also have lower participation in 16-18 learning. Post-16, a further 16.5% of each annual cohort are achieving a full Level 2 award, usually a vocational qualification, which takes London achievement near to the national average (70%) by the age of 19. (LSC 2006).

In 2006, one quarter of students aged 16-18 left further education during their course, with significant movement and drop-out at 17: 73% of those who stayed achieved their qualification. In June 2006, 9.6% of young people 16-18 were recorded as not being in employment or education (NEET) compared to 8.6% for England as a whole. A further 5.6% were unknown, owing to a failure in tracking, and are likely to have disengaged (LSC 2007a). This NEET group is regarded as at risk of becoming permanently economically inactive and is more likely to engage in criminal activity (Princes Trust 2007). Numbers of those in this category are falling slowly, and recent figures suggest that the London NEET figure is now less than the national average (LSC 2007a).

Readiness to progress to higher education (HE) at 18 is generally measured by UCAS points gained in A Level General (GCE) and Vocational (VCE) results. The average point score at 18 in England is 277. Only four London boroughs exceed this average score - Barnet (281), Bexley (279), Havering (285) and Sutton (323). However, this figure is achieved by low numbers of students, largely from grammar schools. Relatively few students go on to HE from the East of London. Under 26% of the cohort progress to HE from eight boroughs. The figure grows to more than 35% for 17 boroughs, generally outer boroughs and those to the West. The national average is 33%. Despite the general improvement in Level 3 achievement there was, in 2006, a fall of 17,184 (3.5%) applications to HE from London (HEFCE 2007).

It is clear that while there is a wide range of provision and significant areas of success in terms of participation, attainment and progression in some parts of London, the systems within the Capital do not yet fully support learners at all levels of 14-19 education and training. There is, therefore, a clear need for both organisational and curriculum change to meet the needs of very diverse learners and the future demands of global city like London.

A pan-London approach

Just as the concept of a 14-19 phase is not yet a reality so, as we will see, the idea of a pan-London approach to learning and skills is still in its infancy. In one sense, this is surprising because, as we discuss later, there has been a rich history of educational planning, initiatives and innovation

London has a number of distinctive assets and challenges for 14-19 education and training. It has to be able to produce high levels of skill for a metropolitan and internationally competitive labour market, while at the same time meeting the needs of a very diverse and often needy cohort of young people. London has a vibrant labour market with an enhanced demand for skills at Level 4 and above, and a large number of internationally recognised HE institutions. It also has pockets of very high unemployment and deprivation alongside some of the richest areas in the World (Dorling *et al.* 2007). The capital has a uniquely diverse and fast-changing population which combines the risk of isolation and division with the opportunity for dynamic inter-relationships.

The challenge is to develop an approach to economic and educational development which encourages mobility, breaks down barriers between geography, class, race, gender and communities and which actively builds on the opportunities that diversity brings. In economic terms, labour markets are London-wide and public transport infrastructure has to be considered on a city or region-wide basis. While post-14 education can be seen as a local access issue for many learners, the search for vocational specialist facilities or appropriate learning or institutional environments encourages others to travel significant distances and to cross borough boundaries. This can be seen as a useful preparation for a journey to work or HE to access wider economic and learning opportunities or to escape local demographic and economic constraints in order to integrate with the wider community in the Capital.

Major recent initiatives, such as London Challenge (**see Chapter x**) and the move to a regional management structure for the LSC in 2004, means that London is seen as one area

in terms of the funding and organisation of post-16 learning, rather than being split into five local LSCs. Together with the announcement in 2006 of the new Skills and Employment Board chaired by Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, these changes all make the concept of a pan-London approach more of a reality.

National 14-19 policy

Here we provide a brief overview of national policy on 14-19 education and training and the way that London has responded to it. While we will argue for a role for London as an innovator in 14-19 learning, it is also important to recognise that its actions will be encouraged or constrained by government policy. For this reason, it is necessary to have a clear perspective of national policy, its direction and contradictions within it. This provides the context for discussion of a future vision of a more cohesive and proactive pan-London 14-19 approach. It is important that such an approach builds on current innovative practices and networks, but also works with a wider range of regional and local stakeholders to develop an inclusive and comprehensive post-14 system in London that goes beyond the current divisive national policy in this area.

Until 2002, debates about a 14-19 phase were conducted almost entirely outside government and were dominated by two inter-related sets of proposals for a more inclusive and unified system combining the features of baccalaureate-type qualifications (e.g. Feingold *et al.* 1990) and unitised credit frameworks (e.g. FEU 1992). These two approaches influenced the thinking behind the proposals in the Tomlinson Final Report (Working Group on 14-19 Reform 2004) for a unified and inclusive multi-level diploma system (Hodgson *et al.* 2006).

In 2002, the first national policy document on 14-19 education and training - *14-19 Education: extending opportunities, raising standards* - was published by the DfES. It emphasised the importance of choice, flexibility and the introduction of more vocational courses and experiences for 14-16 year olds. It provided funding for the Increased Flexibility Programme and a number of 14-19 Pathfinders to pilot these proposals. This Green Paper was followed

by a consultation process which resulted in a more measured government response (DfES 2003). One of the major proposals of this document was to establish a Working Group on 14-19 Reform chaired by Mike Tomlinson, the ex-Head of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The Working Group published three reports in which it laid out principles for the phase and proposals for a multi-level diploma system covering all types of 14-19 learning and gradually subsuming all existing qualifications for this age group. The aim of this unified diploma system was to blur the academic/vocational divide while building strongly vocational education; to tackle disaffection; to prevent early specialisation; to create space for innovative learning; and to provide an inclusive climbing frame of progression opportunities for all 14-19 year olds (Working Group for 14-19 Reform 2004).

The Government rejected the idea of a unified diploma system covering both general and vocational learning and proposed instead a set of Diplomas (at that point referred to as Specialised Diplomas) focused on broad vocational education (DfES 2005a). Alongside these changes to qualifications for 14-19 year olds, the Government is also putting into place a statutory 14-19 Entitlement based on access to the 14 Diploma lines, A Levels, GCSEs and Apprenticeships and on the study of English and maths to at least Level 2 up to the age of 19 (DfES 2005b). It argues that the delivery of this entitlement will require improved levels of collaborative working between schools, colleges, community organisations and work-based learning providers. Two further drivers for collaboration are the Diploma Gateway and the development of local 14-19 prospectuses that advertise provision on an area basis. In order to offer the first five Diplomas from 2008, local groups of providers across the country, led by the local authority, had to go through the Gateway process which involved a complex set of procedures designed to select only those areas of the country where collaboration between schools, colleges and work-based learning providers is at an advanced stage (DfES 2006).

However, many education professionals, including those in London, question the direction of reform. The Government's pursuit of a partial set of reforms of vocational education at Levels 1-3 is open to the criticism of premature specialisation, ignores the needs of Entry and Foundation learners and leaves a selective and narrow academic track intact. Practitioners

and researchers argue that an unreformed academic track will compromise the status and uptake of vocational qualifications (Hodgson and Spours 2007). The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training in England and Wales has also criticised the government's policies on the organisation of 14-19 provision, concluding that policy drivers for institutional collaboration are outweighed by those encouraging institutional competition (Hayward *et al.* 2005, 2006).

Nevertheless, 14-19 innovation continues to take place on the ground in many parts of the country, including London, stimulated by the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP), which has provided funding for colleges to work with schools to offer vocational programmes to 14-16 year olds, and by the example of 14-19 Pathfinders in 39 areas of the country, whose role was to pilot aspects of the 14-19 reform agenda (Higham and Yeomans 2006, Tirrell *et al.* 2006).

14-19 developments in London - the historical legacy

Despite its size and heterogeneity, there has been a tradition of pan-London education developments and initiatives for 14-19 year olds, stretching back over at least thirty years. The main strands are described briefly below.

Bridging courses – early London solutions to tackle disaffection

These courses were focussed on 15-16 year olds (now Year 11) and were intended to improve retention and motivation for pupils identified by schools as needing some form of vocational experience or stimulation during the last year of compulsory education. The course involved one or two days a week attendance at college. Typically a college would have links with five or six schools. The courses were regulated by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), but there were no specific formal or external qualifications offered. Selection of pupils was undertaken by schools and, inevitably, there was a concentration of disruptive, underperforming and alienated young people in these courses. There were genuine attempts by the managers of this provision, and their ILEA supervisors, to use access to work-place

facilities and hands-on activities to improve motivation and reduce truancy, and they met with some success (DES 1982). However the resources made available, and regarded as motivational, were often under-used facilities within the college, areas experiencing declining recruitment, such as motor vehicle engineering, or which were associated with working-class employment. The word vocational thus carried a connotation of a lack of aspiration.

London's experience of national policy initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s

During the 1980s, within further education, there was renewed vigour nationally to resist the so-called academic/vocational divide, to promote a higher level and range of courses at 16+ and to provide greater access to career choice. There was a will to break down stereotypical attitudes, to promote inclusion, and to give greater status to vocational education (FECRDU 1982). Two major initiatives were the introduction of broad vocational or pre-vocational qualifications, such as BTEC awards and the Certificate in Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE), and the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), both of which were intended to raise the status of vocational education and to encourage schools, and later colleges, to review the ways in which they were approaching teaching for the 14-19 phase.

The potential for these initiatives to constitute a comprehensive 14-19 curriculum planning framework, however, was severely undermined by a number of divisive national policies and strategies relating to the two final terms of Conservative rule (1987-96). The break-up of ILEA was followed by the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, with its tight prescription of the content to be studied by each year group, reinforced, in the newly designated key stage 4 (ages 14-16), by an emphasis on the study of the traditional, academic single subjects. Vocational learning was largely squeezed out of compulsory secondary education. Moreover, in the early 1990s, further education colleges were responding to the implications of incorporation and complete autonomy from LEA control. As newly incorporated organisations, colleges' major focus was on recruiting sufficient learners and reducing costs, rather than on collaborating with school partners and broadening the curriculum.

The early years of the New Labour Administration did little to reverse this trend. The *Curriculum 2000* reforms of advanced level qualifications served to further reinforce divisions between both academic and vocational curricula and between 14-16 and 16-19 learning (Hodgson and Spours 2003). It was not until the beginning of its second Parliament that the New Labour Government put in place two major policies which stressed the importance of 14-19 education and a more planned institutional approach to its delivery with the 14-19 Green Paper (DfES 2002) and the establishment of the LSC in 2001.

What this brief history demonstrates is that national policy never encouraged a holistic and sustainable 14-19 approach in London. Moreover, the effects of policy volatility over the past 20 years have left a rich but stratified and fragmented variety of institutions (Fullick 2006). The succession of administrative boundaries has led to highly localised arrangements. In many ways these reflect the phenomenon of the global city, full of spaces and corridors, segmented by wealth, poverty, class and race (Lefebvre 1991). There are pockets of intense learner alienation and areas where the royal route to higher education is well entrenched. Managers in London have, over this period, experienced partnerships devised to control disaffected adolescents, to extend curriculum access, to develop new approaches to pedagogy, to develop the skills required for a changing curriculum and technology and to build loose partnerships around professional development. Partnerships have thus had to navigate their way around frequent changes of policy; varying curriculum structures; different and changing funding bodies, and variations in institutional culture. In summary, 14-19 partnership has often had to work against the grain of policy rather than with it.

Local and regional developments since 2001 - a platform for the future

Since 2001, however, a number of important building blocks have been put in place to begin the construction of a more planned, coherent and inclusive 14-19 phase in London based on a new level of partnership working, both locally and London-wide.

Local partnership working

Recent research on partnership working in London (Fullick *et al.* 2007) indicates that the institutional structure for 14-19 partnerships varies appreciably between boroughs, although there are some common features, for example in terms of core membership. Partly this reflects the initial impetus for the partnership (for example, whether it arose as a means of promoting co-operation between 16-19 providers, or as a means of broadening the curriculum pre-16). There is also a plethora of initiatives at the local level, reflecting different circumstances and priorities. Whilst there is evidence of 14-19 partnership working in all London boroughs, the research shows that this has reached very different stages in terms of promoting specific practical collaborative working.

In terms of scope, the evidence indicates that partnership working is significantly more strongly established at borough level for the 14-16 stage than in 16-19 provision. In part, this is a result of IFP funding, but it also reflects the greater direct influence local authorities have on pre-16 learning. By contrast, 16-19 collaboration is currently more common at the consortium level (typically collaboration between a group of relatively small sixth forms, sometimes also involving local colleges).

Most boroughs have some form of strategic partnership body, whose role is to ensure that 14-19 plans are in line with strategic priorities (for example, the *Every Child Matters* agenda, *Building Schools for the Future*, and the Government's plans for 14-19 education and training). This is normally led by the local authority and feeds in to the borough's reporting infrastructure. In the main, partnerships link to the local authority at official level, although one or two have also made conscious efforts to forge relationships with elected members as a means of extending their influence. Below the strategic level there is a wide variety of arrangements to give effect to partnership plans or decisions, typically involving working groups made up of practitioners (for example to draw up protocols and develop particular initiatives) or local consortia below borough level.

The 'core' membership of partnerships normally comprises the local authority, the LSC, representatives of secondary schools in the borough, the local college(s), one or more representatives of work-based training providers and the careers service and careers advice providers. However, there are variations both within and beyond this. For example, the involvement of schools other than community schools is far from uniform – foundation and grammar schools are not always engaged, nor are special schools and pupil referral units; academies and independent schools are rarely involved. Most boroughs have found it difficult to enlist direct employer representatives: some regard the local Education Business Partnership (EBP) as a proxy for employer representation, even when it is run by the local authority and its activities confined largely to arranging pre-16 work experience placements. Partnership working on Diploma Gateway applications has highlighted the difficulties in securing effective employer engagement in many boroughs. The involvement of representatives from higher education, youth services, community organisations and providers from outside the borough also varies, although there appears to be a trend towards broadening the membership of partnerships as the scope of their work expands. This, in turn, reflects the fact that in most cases the partnerships operate on the basis of consensus. Insofar as they have any powers, these derive from formal or informal agreements entered into voluntarily by the partners.

Box 1 below indicates the wide range of specific activities and initiatives taking place across London as a result of partnership working.

Box 1. Examples of borough 14-19 collaboration

- KS4 pupils travel to participate in work-related provision with college providers both within and outside the borough [Bexley]
- A successful prototype for the Diploma for 14-16 year olds, an accredited programme involving 12 providers (work based learning and FE colleges), offering new provision going beyond what schools could provide [Newham]
- A collaborative arrangement between two schools, a college and the EBP, to provide a post-16 transition programme for those not yet ready to move straight to college or into work-based training [Enfield]
- Apprenticeship in Sports Management and Leadership with some 50 places available from September 2007, mainly targeting the NEET group [Camden]
- Harmonised timetabling for one day per week and a single cross-borough offer of an alternative flexible curriculum at KS4, currently involving just over 400 pupils (c 15% of the cohort) and funded under IFP [Bromley]
- Borough-wide prospectuses for 14-16 and post-16 (with electronic versions from this year), including single prospectus for 14-16, incorporating all 'out of school' provision. [Barking and Dagenham]
- A 16-19 course directory distributed directly to Year 11 pupils and their parents (also available on-line) and a 14-16 prospectus of vocational opportunities across a range of colleges, schools and work-based training providers, with a common application/admission process [Bromley]
- Development of a Post-16 Competition submission to the LSC on behalf of all secondary schools and the local FE college to collaborate in two consortia to deliver a 14 – 19 programme [Richmond]
- A forum to manage a '14-19 guarantee', in a borough where there are no local authority schools [Southwark]
- Establishment of a Diploma Centre as a school-based company, involving four schools (including an academy) and a local employer [Ealing]
- Harmonised timetabling across 14-16 and 16+ within the borough, to allow movement of students between schools [Barking and Dagenham]
- Development of protocols covering issues such as admissions, health and safety, roles and responsibilities of different partners, funding arrangements for a new additional provision programme; and an "enabling document" to set the parameters for 14-19 partnership, within which more detailed protocols and procedures can be drawn up [Newham]
- Joint staff development between schools and colleges [Enfield, Bromley]
- Arrangements for data co-ordination and sharing, involving collaboration between different data providers (local authority/ schools; colleges; Connexions; LSC) [Barking and Dagenham, Enfield]
- Strong co-ordinated careers information, advice and guidance [across all boroughs in the South London Partnership]

Boroughs have typically appointed a 14-19 co-ordinator to take the lead in managing partnership infrastructure. Hitherto, this post has normally been funded by the LSC although in most cases filled by a local authority officer or consultant, usually with experience of working at senior level in or with schools. The amount of additional staff resource varies greatly (from limited part-time administrative and/or consultancy support to a dedicated team of half-a-dozen or more staff). In one borough (Bromley), the collaboration is intentionally independent of the local authority: this is seen as a strength because it is 'owned' by all the

local partners, although it is not the typical model. The extent of the boroughs' direct influence depends very much on the pattern of local providers, both pre- and post-16: where there are few or no providers directly within the local authority's jurisdiction, or where there is a strong tradition of school independence, the local authority has less direct influence.

London-wide developments

Alongside these developments at the local level, the establishment of the LSC in 2001 reintroduced a planning regime across the whole spectrum of post-compulsory education in England, with five local LSCs covering London. In its first years, the LSC instigated area-wide 14-19 inspections and Strategic Area Reviews which focused institutional attention on planning post-14 provision across an area, although these have now given way to reviews linked to the Government's broader *Every Child Matters* agenda, which does not focus primarily on 14-19 provision. The five London LSCs, however, sat uneasily with both borough boundaries and the concept of London-wide planning. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that this arrangement for London was short-lived, being replaced by a regional structure in 2004 and a number of Local Partnership Teams aligned with local authorities as part of the so-called 're-shaping' of the LSC under Mark Haysom (Hodgson *et al.* 2005). The London Region LSC sits alongside other London-wide bodies, such as the Government Office for London, which co-ordinates central government policies at regional level, and the Regional Development Agency, which is responsible for business and regeneration in the Capital. While this focus on the role of the region suggests that the regional tier of government has a future, there may well have to be some rationalisation in order to make it workable. The shift in responsibility for 14-19 learning (announced July 2007) to the new DCSF, working through local authorities, could be seen as weakening this move towards regional planning.

This brings us to a third and very significant related development. From 2007, Ken Livingston, the Mayor of London, has chaired the London Skills and Employment Board, which, for the present, will be serviced by the newly constituted London Region LSC. This means that for the first time since the abolition of ILEA, there is a real prospect of London-wide planning of education and skills linked to employment. However, as we have suggested earlier, the move

from the DfES to the DCSF and DIUS, with the former taking over responsibility for 14-19 education and channelling funding for it through local authorities rather than partially through the LSC, means that the future role of the LSC is now unclear. Under the Education and Inspection Act 2006, local authorities are seen as the lead partner for the development of the 14-19 phase and are now responsible to the new DCSF. While the Regional LSC, working closely with the Mayor's Office and the democratically elected London Regional Assembly, will want to integrate the work of local authorities and their 14-19 Partnerships into a broader pan-London approach, the mechanisms by which this may happen have not yet been decided.

The rationale for future collaboration will be the need to respond to the development of London as a dynamic city/region with particular transport, infrastructure and regeneration demands highlighted, in particular, by the coming Olympics and the continued development of the Thames Gateway (see <http://www.thames-gateway.org.uk/> for more details on this development). Recent research, for example, indicates very little coordinated curriculum planning for the skills required for a successful Olympic Games (Duckett *et al.* 2007). In terms of a London-wide approach to 14-19 education and training, therefore, the capital is not starting from scratch. It has inherited a disrupted but real legacy of partnership working to which has been added a number of longer-standing and more recent pan-London planning and development structures.

In this final section of the chapter, we outline a framework for a more holistic and inclusive 14-19 London-wide vision and strategy that draws on 'policy memory' as a means of harnessing valuable past experience; uses the building blocks that have appeared over the last five years; exploits the new dynamic relationship that is being forged between local, regional and national policy and governance; and adopts a more unified vision of 14-19 learning with the aim of connecting and building on innovative local practice.

A 14-19 future for London – beyond the Government’s agenda

A distinctive vision

Given the diverse nature of London both socially and organisationally, a learning system for the capital will require some form of ‘glue’ that binds the wider actors together in preparing young people for adult life and lifelong learning. One major starting point will be the forging of a shared educational vision with strong underpinning values and clearly articulated purposes for the 14-19 phase. Such a vision would have to be facilitated by the Regional Assembly, promoting a regional coherence involving a range of stakeholders and experts rather than being led by the DfES or LSC. This will need to go well beyond the current *Vision for 14-19 in London* (DfES *et al.* 2005), which is largely a restatement of Government policy. A vision that would be meaningful for the capital would have to combine themes of inclusion, innovation, challenge and an appreciation of the unique opportunities offered by London. This inevitably would take it further than the current Government agenda.

Learning, curriculum, qualifications and assessment - a unified and inclusive approach

Our view is that at the heart of any London-wide vision for the 14-19 phase lies its approach to learning, curriculum, qualifications and assessment. We would argue that the unified and comprehensive approach to curriculum, qualifications and learning, outlined earlier in the chapter, is likely to be more inclusive and effective for London 14-19 year olds because it allows them to keep options open for longer (and certainly beyond the age of 14), to have access to a broader range of pedagogy, assessment and learning experiences that go beyond narrow subject boundaries and, above all, because it privileges progression over selection. A unified approach, based broadly on the Tomlinson Final Report but going beyond it, will mean balancing features of coherence and national frameworks with local determination and personalisation. It also suggests the need for a new type of participative pedagogy and strong support for expansive learning in a variety of challenging contexts, including the workplace (Unwin and Fuller 2003). This is most likely to be facilitated by shifts in approaches to assessment away from the dominance of external examinations and

towards the development of more teacher-directed assessment with standards secured through local or regional quality assurance systems involving a range of stakeholders.

London is in a good position to innovate in this way but, as its history demonstrates, it cannot remain outside national policy. Regional development of this type will require further qualifications and assessment reform at the national level. Moreover, the vision for a unified and comprehensive approach to curriculum and learning is based on a realisation that a pan-London approach will only be fully realised when it is supported by strongly collaborative organisational and governance arrangements and a more regulated youth labour market. It is to these dimensions that we now turn.

Strongly collaborative local learning systems

While the overall vision for London may be best set at the regional level, its enactment will be local. Under the new Education and Inspection Act 2006, the provision of learning opportunities for the majority of 14-19 year olds, and certainly for all 14-16 year olds, will be organised by local authorities. It is important, however, that this does not become a return to purely local authority administration but develops into a new form of leadership of strongly collaborative local learning systems, involving employers, voluntary and community organisations and independent training providers, as well as schools and colleges, to satisfy the complex demands of 14-19 learning.

Strongly collaborative local learning systems will attempt to frame existing provision and qualifications into a comprehensive latticework of progression opportunities from Entry Level upwards and to ensure that they are understood by learners, parents, educational professionals, employers and higher education providers. This type of latticework will afford learners the possibility of crossing curricular boundaries between general and vocational learning and access to coherent and expansive learning programmes, linked to local and regional resources, of which London has a rich array. The aim of the approach is not simply to provide the necessary skills and opportunities for progression, but also to develop the learning and problem-solving capacities that London's young people will need for the future.

We have argued elsewhere that the development of strongly collaborative learning systems will involve building on the current 14-19 Partnerships but going beyond them (Hodgson and Spours 2006). Currently, as we have seen, 14-19 Partnerships are, on the whole, narrowly conceived as relationships between schools or schools and colleges. The delivery of expansive learning outlined above will need to involve a much broader range of partners reaching into the workplace and the voluntary and community sectors, driven by a stronger regional coherence. While the majority of relationships will be forged within the locality, some forms of learning, particularly those involving specialist facilities, may require a regional approach.

It may be useful to see the locality as a 'local ecology' in which the actions of one partner affect the health of others (Stanton and Fletcher 2006), implying limits to institutional autonomy. The concept of an inter-dependent local ecology also highlights the relationship between education and its wider socio-economic context, recognising that in the 14-19 phase, the labour market and the wide community play a strong role in motivating and supporting young people to remain within education and to achieve (Spours *et al.* 2007). It recognises too that 14-19 education and training needs to be seen as a stage in lifelong learning.

The development of strongly collaborative local learning systems will require changes to both accountability frameworks, such as targets, funding and performance tables, and to governance of the system, because the current arrangements promote competitive rather than collaborative behaviour and disrupt the development of local or regional planning (Hodgson and Spours 2006). Localities and regions need greater control over their actions through devolving certain policy and accountability mechanisms, which are currently situated at the national level, to the local and regional levels. Highly specified national targets, for example, which cascade down the system from the Treasury via the DfES and LSC, could be replaced by broader policy narratives indicating the direction of development, but leaving it to the local and regional levels to determine how best to meet the needs of the learners in their localities. This will involve some degree of local and regional autonomy which appears to be the direction of government policy (DCLG 2006). This would mean that the wide range of

partners at the local level could be bound by more collective targets and forms of mutual accountability, potentially offsetting some of the costs of collaboration - complexity, bureaucracy and time.

Employment, employers and the labour market - a regional approach

Earlier we have argued that to realise a 14-19 vision for London will involve a more overt focus on the role of employers and employment because the aims of 14-19 education and training include successful transitions to working life. Currently, young people receive 'mixed signals from the labour market about what is valued in terms of qualifications and skills (see Hayward *et al.* 2005). This creates difficulties for young people in making choices about whether to continue participation in education and training or what type of programme they should follow. A successful 14-19 phase for the capital will, therefore, require the closer integration of 14-19 programmes, work-based learning opportunities and employment. This is likely to involve stronger patterns of 'licence to practise' vocational training, generated nationally and regionally, which bind together the employer, the provider and the young person in a common agreement to support the process of initial qualification. The Health and Science Pathway in East London, a collaboration between a local NHS Trust, Tower Hamlets College and a number of 11-18 schools, provides an innovative example of developing skills and progression routes coherently across a range of partners. **|**

It is now widely recognised that the challenges of employment and regeneration have to be addressed at a regional level. While London houses a very large number of small and medium enterprises, some of which operate very locally, there are also many who work and recruit at a metropolitan or wider level. Those responsible for education, skills and employment in London have clearly identified the need to make more overt links between the education and training system and the needs of London employers and employment.

Currently, there are a number of regional organisations and initiatives focusing on 14-19 education and training, either as their sole focus (e.g. London 14-19 Forum and the Pan London Vision) or as part of a broader skills and employability agenda (e.g. the newly-formed London Skills and Employment Board chaired by the Mayor of London).

A brief analysis suggests three patterns of development:

Regional initiatives to implement government policy, for example, *Vision for 14-19 in London 2005-2008* (DfES *et al.* 2005), which seeks to reduce the present inequality of provision through a London-wide learner entitlement which includes the acquisition of functional skills, an increase in apprenticeship places and access to the new Diplomas through both physical and virtual learning arrangements.

Co-ordinating a 14-19 London landscape through regional collaboration - several regional agencies are working together in the 14-19 London Forum to develop an e-prospectus of learning opportunities across the Capital, to map specialist training providers including FE colleges and COVES, to maximise employer engagement and to disseminate good practice to support both regional and national needs.

A democratically determined and distinctive London approach to skills and employment - the London Skills and Employment Board, chaired by Ken Livingstone was announced in July 2006 giving the Mayor responsibility for adult skills in the Capital. This statement from a recent speech by Ken Livingstone (2006) indicates that he will prioritise London needs rather than simply following national government policy:

"I do not have the slightest doubt that we can make a big impact by crafting that skills strategy to London's needs rather than the present situation where we are part of a national strategy. London's economy is so different that we need to have, quite specifically, a skills strategy that answers our needs"

While this view represents a step change in regional governance in England, because it includes the majority of publicly funded adult education and training, it does not yet extend to 14-19 education.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have argued that a pan-London 14-19 education and training system needs to become more than a figment of the imagination. We have described how current national 14-19 policy, which focuses primarily on a narrow set of reforms designed to raise the profile of vocational education, holds only half the solution and how regional planning, while still in its infancy, could become a powerful force for change in London. If London is able to develop a more holistic and inclusive approach to 14-19 learning to meet the needs of its diverse population and dynamic economy and is able to organise learning and skills in a more cost-effective and democratic way, then the Capital could set the example for the country at large as to how the concept of a city/region might become more than a new form of rhetoric. We have concluded by proposing that four dimensions need to be brought together - a distinctive vision linking learning, inclusion, innovation and future employment; a unified curriculum and qualifications system forged out of current developments; the creation of strongly collaborative local learning systems as dynamic entities within a regional framework; and, finally, a democratically accountable approach to regional employment and employer engagement linked back to the 14-19 education and training system.

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