

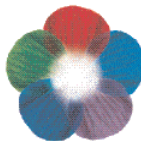


Personalising learning – 5

Mentoring & coaching, and workforce
development

David Hargreaves

November 2005



Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

Personalising learning – 5

Mentoring & coaching, and workforce development

A joint publication with The Secondary Heads Association

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iNet

iNet (international networking for educational transformation) is the international arm of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Its mission is to create powerful and innovative networks of schools that have achieved or have committed themselves to achieving systematic, significant and sustained change that ensures outstanding outcomes for all students in all settings.

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The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is the leading national body for secondary education in England, part funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to deliver the Government's Specialist Schools and Academies programme. The Government's aim is that by 2008 all schools will be specialist except those planned to be academies. The Trust seeks to give more young people access to a good secondary education by building networks, sharing practice and supporting schools. It works on the principle 'by schools for schools'. SSAT, with iNet, is at the heart of a growing international network of nearly 3,000 schools in 27 countries. We believe it represents the largest network of its kind in the world.

This publication

Audience

Teachers and leaders at all levels in education.

Aim

To show how two 'gateways' – Mentoring & coaching, and workforce development – can help both teachers and students in the journey towards personalising learning.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This pamphlet reflects the presentations and discussions of conferences held in 2005 by the Specialist Schools Trust (now Specialist Schools and Academies Trust). The conferences on 'Beyond reform to transformation of the workforce' took place during summer 2005 and the conference hosted by the Specialist Schools Trust and the Secondary Heads Association on mentoring & coaching in September 2005. Thanks are due to the keynote presenters, Philippa Cordingley (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education), Professor Peter Tymms (School of Education, University of Durham), Sir Geoff Hampton (director, Midlands Leadership Centre and University of Wolverhampton) and Ruth Winterson (headteacher, Neston High School, Cheshire) with John Jones (education consultant), to the presenters from schools for which contacts are provided at the end, to the Hanover Foundation and HSBC Holdings, and to Kai Vacher, the SSAT's head of personalising learning, and other colleagues who helped run the conferences.

Personalised learning was defined by David Miliband when he was DfES Minister for Schools: 'Personalised learning demands that every aspect of teaching and support is designed around a pupil's needs...' In this SSAT programme of conferences and publications the term personalised learning is replaced by personalising learning, as the latter implies a professional process or journey rather than simply a product to be delivered.

Teachers have always sought to meet every student's needs, though they know that they do not in practice succeed. So the injunction from ministers amounts to a plea to make any changes to current practice that will allow teachers to meet more of the needs of more students more fully than in the past.

In this series of six pamphlets, personalising learning is approached through nine gateways. The first pamphlet, *Personalising learning: next steps in working laterally* set the general context and outlined the gateways and the sequence of conferences and pamphlets, as follows:

- Student voice *and* assessment for learning (reported in the second pamphlet)
- Learning to learn *and* the new technologies (reported in the third pamphlet)
- Curriculum *and* advice & guidance (reported in the fourth pamphlet)
- Mentoring & coaching *and* workforce development (the subject of this pamphlet)
- The organisation and design of the school (the subject of the final conferences in January 2006).

The conferences are revealing complex interactions between the gateways, which are not silos to be treated independently. Indeed, the overall impact of the gateways on students can be understood as a sequence of six core themes or strands that capture what characterises the student for whom learning is being successfully personalised:

- **Engagement** of the student in learning and schooling
- **Responsibility** assumed by the student for learning and behaviour
- **Independence** in learning, with student control over learning
- **Confidence** in learning and one's own abilities, with high self-esteem and strong social skills
- **Maturity** in relationships and the development of mutual respect with staff and among peers
- **Co-construction** by students and staff of secondary education and the design of teaching and learning.

The case studies reported in this pamphlet illustrate how these six themes constantly appear as a kind of trademark of successful personalisation.

The discussion of each gateway explored in this pamphlet is divided into two parts. The first part is an introductory overview of the area, drawing on practical work and more theoretical ideas. It sets the gateway in the wider context of policy development as well as the nine gateways as a whole. There follows a second part, based on case studies presented at conference, offering various forms of ‘stepping stones’ or suggestions on ways in which the gateway might be better constructed.

Personalising learning is a journey for both teachers and students. The learning involved cannot be rushed: the pace will vary from time to time as the journey develops its natural rhythms. Progress is made as those involved gain the confidence to move forward to more ambitious activities. The general advice for each gateway is **think big – start small**. In other words, have the vision of where you might be when the stepping stones are in place, embedded in the culture and routine life of the school, but start with a small group of willing volunteers on a limited agenda of innovation from among the stepping stones. These become the foundations on which both to build more challenging developments and to draw other colleagues into the venture. The presenters of the case studies shared the sequential stages of how they progressively developed policies and new practices for the curriculum and advice & guidance over several years: these are not quick fix solutions.

It may be helpful to start work simultaneously, with different teams, on more than one gateway. Most of our case studies reveal how they developed at least two in parallel. The teams soon discover the overlap and see how each supports and strengthens the other. Such an approach demonstrates how distributed innovation requires distributed leadership.

The wealth of practical experience with the gateways cannot be captured in a short pamphlet. So details of the contributors, references, and guidance to further reading and resources are listed at the end of the pamphlet.

Chapter 2 Mentoring & coaching: the gateway

Twenty years ago the words mentor and coach rarely featured in the talk of staff and students in schools, with the notable exception of the sports/athletics domain. The concept of a learning coach, now in widespread use in classrooms, was virtually unknown. Yet at the previous conference in this series, on the advice & guidance gateway, these two words cropped up constantly. This reflects some aspects of the transition from the 19th to the 21st century imaginary (see *Personalising learning – 1*, chapter six).

19th century imaginary

- School is a place with clear and rigid boundaries
- Roles are sharply defined and segregated

21st century imaginary

- The boundaries of school are flexible and permeable
- Roles are blurred and overlapping

Mentors and coaches illustrate how it is no longer a simple matter to determine who is teaching and who is learning in any situation, for teachers also learn and learners also teach. This is what is meant when a school is described as a community of learners. But once roles become blurred and boundaries unclear, words tend to be used in very different ways, with a lack of shared meaning.

Mentoring *and* coaching – or should it be mentoring *or* coaching? Are they synonyms or alternatives? And does the

meaning of these terms change when the people involved differ in age and social position, have different goals and purposes, and meet in different contexts?

This pamphlet deals with mentoring & coaching of three kinds.

- Student to student, and especially academic peer tutoring in which students teach one another or help others to learn
- Adult to student, whether the adult is a member of the school staff or somebody (eg an employer) who assists education by working with a young person in this way
- Adult to adult, including teacher to teacher, as well as other adults working with school staff, as a form of professional development.

There is an unusual fourth kind.

- Student to adult, where the student is the expert and the adult is the novice.

Although this may be rare, it does occur, and the most obvious example is the application of the new technologies to learning, where learners may have more imaginative and useful ideas and practices than their teachers or parents. Another example occurs later in the pamphlet.

Clearly these four kinds of relationship involve different kinds of people with a variety of purposes who meet in diverse contexts. Do they have anything in common apart from the fact that one person is seeking to help another person to learn more effectively?

Traditionally there has been a distinction between a mentor and a coach.

Coaching assumes that one person has some kind of expertise – skill, knowledge or experience – that can be cultivated in or transferred to another person. The coachee has the status of a novice. The coach is in a position of authority and drives or controls the relationship with the novice.

Mentoring assumes that one person can help another, the mentee, by discussing his or her hopes and fears, plans and problems. The mentor is not in a position of authority or line

management: it is the mentee who drives the relationship and is free at any time to terminate it.

Both mentoring & coaching can be one-way, with each party operating just one of the roles; or it can be reciprocal, with each partner acting as both coach and coachee or mentor and mentee. Clearly when the relationship is reciprocal, both parties expect to get benefits. However, it is worth noting that in one-way relationships, where it is the coachee or the mentee who is expected to get the most benefit, it is often the coach or the mentor who reports making the greater gain. Helping others enriches the giver.

Take the following terms that might describe the relationship between coach and coachee or between mentor and mentee:

- makes suggestions
- is often a role model
- is non-judgmental
- creates trust
- 'big ears, small mouth'
- challenges
- asks questions
- issues many challenges
- shows empathy
- avoids dependence
- gives rapid feedback
- gives advice
- is a constructive critic
- is usually on-the-job
- is a sounding board
- invites talk

Which of these terms do you think belong to either the coach or the mentor, and which belong to both? My answer would be as follows.

Mentor	Coach
'big ears, small mouth'	gives advice
invites talk	makes suggestions
is non-judgmental	gives rapid feedback
avoids dependence	is a constructive critic
shows empathy	challenges
is a sounding board	gives rapid feedback
usually off-the-job	usually on-the-job
asks questions	asks questions
creates trust	creates trust
is often a role model	is often a role model

This is just my answer: you must frame your own. Different writers in this field make distinctive lists. In education, mentor is more widely used than coach, and mentor – especially in the term ‘learning mentor’ – often covers most of the items in both the above lists. Less commonly, coach subsumes much of what is in the above mentor list. In some cases the words are treated as virtual synonyms.

It does not, I believe, matter very much how you define and use the terms: on this, all the expert contributors to the September conference agreed. Three things do matter. First, it matters that the people involved in these relationships agree on the nature of that relationship, what each expects of the other and what is the appropriate way to behave towards each other. If, in my list above, one person is seeking to play the role of mentor but the other person is really looking for my formulation of a coach, then the relationship will run into difficulties, with frequent misunderstandings and conflicts. Secondly, it matters that the relationship on which the two people agree is one that is fit for purpose, that is, it meets the goals of both parties as they come together. Thirdly, as Jeff Jones from HSBC pointed out, not everybody is readily coach-able and for some there are better ways of ensuring their growth and development.

My lists have three elements in common: is often a role model; needs to be trusted; and asks (good) questions. Trust, noted Philippa Cordingley in her presentation, has to be won and this takes time, requiring the coach/mentor to attend to the coachee/mentee with respect. In his presentation, Sir Geoff Hampton added to trust and respect in his list of critical issues a third one, namely confidentiality, but this is more critical to mentoring than coaching, since whereas mentoring is mostly a private event between two people, coaching often takes place in a public setting where confidentiality is impossible. For Sir Geoff, the following characteristics make a successful mentor:

- knowledgeable
- reliable
- flexible
- accessible
- trustworthy
- experienced
- supportive

– and it would be difficult to argue that these are not also desirable in a coach.

Philippa Cordingley was asked by the DfES to draw up a national framework for mentoring and coaching so that the main educational agencies would use the terms in the same way. Whether this will happen, time will tell, but the framework suggests that we need three terms, rather than two:

Mentoring, a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions

Specialist coaching, a structured, sustained process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner's practice

Co-coaching, a structured, sustained process between two or more professional learners to enable them to embed new knowledge and skills from specialist sources in day-to-day practice.

This framework is, of course, concerned with teachers' professional learning, and the definitions and distinctions may be of value here. However, mentoring and coaching are now being used in schools for many other purposes and more often with students than professional staff. Moreover much of this activity is not necessarily structured or sustained: it may be informal, occasional, opportunistic. If, as part of professional development, being mentored or coached helps a teacher to become better at the job, then students will gain. At a deeper and more powerful level, if teachers develop expertise in mentoring or coaching a colleague, these skills should be transferable and so help them to become skilful in mentoring and coaching students too.

At the conference Ruth Winterson and John Jones focused on a particular form of mentoring & coaching, called critical friendship. This occurs among school leaders of different countries, who visit one another's schools and then explore reactions and reflections on the experience. This demands many of the sensitivities of mentoring, but also the pressure of coaching, since it should offer challenge and robust feedback without the threat that provokes defensiveness. Again an interesting question is whether critical friendship could be applied to relationships among students, not just school leaders, both within the same school, but more excitingly in an international student exchange, especially if this were to be linked to the further development of student voice (see *Personalising learning – 2*).

One feature common to both mentoring and coaching is the ability to ask good questions. Teachers ask far more questions of students than they do of their professional colleagues: asking questions is a fundamental and regular component of every teacher's repertoire. Good practice in mentoring and coaching can spill over into improving this ubiquitous feature of life in the classroom.

For Philippa Cordingley, asking good questions between teachers entails using 'open questions to raise awareness, explore beliefs, encourage [professional] learners to arrive at their own plans, understand consequences and develop

solutions'. It is precisely open questions of this type with these objectives that teachers find difficult to pose to students in classrooms, where closed questions demanding recall of factual knowledge flow so readily. If teachers can develop these skills with colleagues, they may well find it possible to transfer the practice to the classroom. As studies of assessment for learning have shown (again, see *Personalising learning – 2*), improving questioning techniques is crucial to personalising and deepening student learning. Moreover, asking good questions means listening very carefully to the answers that they provoke. Teachers check closed questions as to whether the answer is right or wrong, and so they do not demand much in the way of listening skill. As Philippa said, 'So often when we think someone needs a good talking to, what they really need is a good listening to.'

In their conference presentation, Ruth Winterson and John Jones offered examples of good questions.

- **Questions that provide more information or clarify it**

Tell me more about...

Can I clarify what you mean by that...

- **Questions that open up purposes, causes, aims**

Why is this important to you?

What were you aiming to do?

- **Questions that open up feelings**

What do you feel about that?

- **Questions that broaden the scope of the problem**

Are there other ways you can approach this?

- **Questions that close down the issues or open review**

So what have you learned about this?

And one particularly powerful question: 'What else can you tell me...?'

As was evident in the development of assessment for learning, good questions demand longer thinking time, but they are powerful drivers of a more personalised learning. Indeed, one of the most promising avenues for the further development of assessment for learning is to enhance the character and quality of teacher-student dialogue, as Robin Alexander's work indicates.

Several of the gateways to personalising learning imply some rethinking of our taken-for-granted and unquestioned assumptions about how classroom life is conventionally organised. The teacher-learner relationship in classrooms is often very unlike that between coach and coachee, as the following contrast between the traditional classroom and the sports coach indicates.

Teaching	Coaching
Explicit factual knowledge is told to learner to hold in the head	Tacit 'how-to' knowledge is demonstrated to a learner to embed it in action
... and is pre-structured for group learning and acquired sequentially	... and is opportunistic, tailored to individuals and learnt piecemeal
... is revised so it can be recalled for evaluation in written tests	... is rehearsed so it can be mastered and judged through performances in reality
...that occur occasionally and are often dreaded.	...that occur frequently and are often greeted with joy.

Of course many good teachers are able to insert some of these coaching practices into their classroom teaching, but it is difficult to transform classrooms by more extensive use of coaching practices unless there is a movement away from lesson structures to the structure of the project, as explored in *Personalising learning – 4* (page 14). As the Hanover Foundation, with its vast experience of providing adult coaches

for young people, reports, ‘Coaching encourages [learners] to take full responsibility for whatever actions they plan to take, helping them to develop increasing confidence in their ability to conduct their own lives.’ This captures in a sentence two of the six core themes – responsibility and confidence – at the heart of personalising learning.

The difference between conventional teaching and coaching in the way they shape learning should not be underestimated. The anthropologist Jean Lave once provocatively said that if you want to study learning, the last place to look is the school. She is, of course, right that you will observe more teaching than learning, but her work is concerned with a very different type of learning from most of what goes on in classrooms. She studied apprenticeships in a wide variety of communities and cultures – obvious ones, such as butchers, but also apprentices of a very different kind, such as alcoholics.

The learning in apprenticeship is *to do* something rather than *about* something. Learning to be an effective practitioner of a craft or profession is learning to perform in a given way, not to be able merely to talk about it. Learning is no longer seen as something that takes place only in the mind, structurally independent of the context in which it takes place. Rather, the context and situation and the mental learning inter-penetrate one another. Learning is most effectively acquired in the same setting as that where the learning is to be later exercised or applied.

Clearly this form of learning is more appropriate to learning to become a member of a football team (a community of practice) and acquiring the identity of player than, say, learning about algebra, where there is no obvious community of practice or new identity to be acquired. So at first sight, it is not easy to see the relevance of this to mainstream schooling. It becomes startlingly relevant, however, if the nature of learning is seen to be the acquisition of **competences** rather than just factual knowledge and the vehicle for so doing is the **project** rather than the conventional lesson – both of which were explored in *Personalising learning – 4*. Put simply, making what goes on in school closer to apprenticeship unleashes the power of

coaching. A reform of the curriculum is not just about curriculum content; it is just as much about pedagogy, and it is here that a deeper exploration of the potential of mentoring and coaching becomes vital.

Studies of mentoring and coaching consistently report benefits for both mentors/coaches and mentees/coachees. But as Peter Tymms reminded the conference, this does not necessarily mean that there is a real impact on learning. In many situations where mentoring or coaching are thought desirable, the target group members are insecure or uncertain, for example, when year 7 students mentor the incoming year 6 primary pupils for their transition into secondary school. The mentoring reduces the anxiety for the mentees and the mentors feel they are providing a valuable service to others. Both parties have ground for feeling good about the experience.

It is quite another matter to demonstrate a powerful and/or longer-term impact of mentoring and coaching on student learning. Peer tutoring, as Peter Tymms pointed out, is one of education's best kept secrets. Strong practitioner testimony and research evidence supports the value of both **academic peer tutoring** (where the two students are of the same age) and **academic cross-age tutoring** (where they are of different ages, usually a gap of two years). (Several short and accessible summaries of research are suggested in the resources section at the end of this pamphlet). As with many other forms of mentoring and coaching, both parties gain, but strikingly the student-tutor gains as much as, or even more than, the tutee – an important point in that an objection to tutoring is sometimes that the tutor cannot afford to 'waste' time helping another student. Moreover there are the wider benefits of creating a classroom climate of cooperation and collaboration.

Students as teachers of other students has a long history, going back to the Bell and Lancaster monitorial system at the beginning of the 19th century. Its modern forms developed in the 1970s, with the books by Vernon Allen in the USA on children as teachers and in England by Sinclair Goodlad on learning by teaching in the context of community service volunteers.

There are many different approaches to such tutoring, which is closer to coaching than to mentoring, and a choice has to be made whether this activity should be provided for all students or just a targeted subset. If all students are to be involved, then all can be tutors and tutees. If a subset is involved, the most obvious solution is to let high-achieving students tutor low-achieving students, on the grounds that the former have mastered the material and so should be more successful teachers. In fact there are possible dangers here in that the high achievers may become impatient with low achievers and resort to a putdown – and may also have less to gain from the interaction. Low achievers can have their self-esteem damaged: they may conclude that they are picked as tutees because they are no good at the subject and the tutoring reinforces rather than undermines this self image.

Where both students' achievement levels are roughly matched, such possible threats can be averted and the gains to both students might rise. It is a worthwhile lesson for all students that they do not all fall into a neat hierarchy of most to least able, but rather all have strengths and all have weaknesses and so are open to learning and teaching.

At the conference, Peter Tymms told the story of how, when he was a teacher of A-level chemistry, he told a second-year student who was in danger of dropping out that he wanted her to teach a difficult part of the syllabus to a first-year student. Finding this difficult to credit, she nevertheless studied the material hard and asked many questions about it. Her tutee proved to make the greatest gain in the class and she herself had her confidence and engagement with the course considerably boosted.

Peer and cross-age tutoring have not, over the last quarter century, flourished as much as many of us anticipated. It may be because they have sometimes been linked to pastoral rather than academic activities. It may be that students-as-teachers were seen as a threat to the teacher's traditional role, with its clear boundaries. It may also be that teachers worried about how to train students to serve as teachers, though Keith Topping has assured us that 'children usually acquire the tutoring procedures a great deal more quickly than teachers

anticipate. Characteristically, they show considerable self-discipline during the tutoring process, which may be an indication that they find it self-reinforcing. The interaction between a vast majority of pairs is usually manifestly positive, and good relationships endure beyond the tutoring situation.’ It may be, ironically, that teachers began to look for help with their work not to students but to the emergence of teaching assistants, as if the two were alternatives rather than complementary developments.

In the case of cross-age tutoring, which in the experience of many proved to be the more powerful approach, there is undoubtedly the considerable difficulty of arranging the timetable to allow the mix in its various forms:

- within the same school, which means aligning the timetable for two year-groups
- between schools, as when secondary students tutor primary pupils two years their junior – potentially one of the most powerful ways of improving basic literacy and numeracy for both parties
- between a school and a university where the university students become the tutors (see, for example, the work of Toni Beardon, reported in the Goodlad & Hirst book).

As we noted in *Personalising learning – 4*, it is so easy for the conventional timetable to become the master of curriculum and pedagogy rather than their servant. We know that peer and cross-age tutoring have beneficial effects. Consider again the six core themes of personalising learning:

- **Engagement** of the student in learning and schooling
- **Responsibility** assumed by the student for learning and for behaviour
- **Independence** in learning, with student control over learning
- **Confidence** in learning and one’s own abilities, with high self-esteem and strong social skills
- **Maturity** in relationships and the development of mutual respect with staff and among peers

- **Co-construction** by students and staff of secondary education and the design of teaching and learning.

All of these are promoted by peer and cross-age tutoring. In the new context when the student voice and assessment for learning gateways show overlap and interaction with such mentoring and coaching, is it not time for this gateway to flourish anew? Is this what our conference school presentations suggest?

Questions

How do you use the terms mentoring and coaching in your school? Do you use one term but not the other? Do you use both but treat them as synonyms? Do you use both terms with different meanings for different purposes? Does the above discussion affect what terms you should employ with what meaning?

How might mentoring and coaching contribute to assessment for learning and learning-to-learn activities?

Might mentoring and coaching be usefully linked with student voice?

Can coaching techniques and skills be deployed more fully in classrooms to support students' learning?

Should you be using more academic peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring in your school as part of personalising learning?

What are the barriers to increasing mentoring and coaching in your school and how might you overcome them?

Chapter 3 Mentoring & coaching: the stepping stones

Inspirational leadership is a wonderful concept and certainly has its place. There are times when the troops need to be rallied. The problem is that this type of leadership is no longer enough: the unnatural act of coaching is just as (if not more) important. One of the great ironies is that just about every leader talks about the importance of coaching but relatively few of them do much about it. Somehow there is a disconnect between approving of this unnatural act and actually making it part of one's leadership routine. It takes much less time to give a speech to a team than to coach each team member. Most leaders are comfortable with problems to be solved but uncomfortable with interpersonal events like coaching. Emotional intelligence and empathy are coaching attributes and many leaders find it difficult to exhibit these qualities at work.

David Dolich & Peter Cairo

1. Strengthening foundations of a culture of mentoring and coaching

In some schools where personalising learning is well established there is a culture of mentoring and coaching. This is because mentoring and coaching are seen to be essential to a learning community, and a learning community is one where, from the staff point of view, school-based and school-focused professional development is inherent to the school's philosophy and practice.

Many people have suggested, rightly in my view, that personalising learning for students entails personalising learning for the staff too. It is sensible to focus on how mentoring and coaching can help the staff, since once they experience the benefits at first hand, they are much more likely to recognise the potential benefits of these practices when they are offered to students too.

Sweyne Park School, Essex (headteacher, Kate Spiller) aims to secure pupil success through professional success for the staff. They do this in part through mentoring and coaching, which they see as at the heart of professional development.

There is a core belief that professional development means helping staff to achieve their full potential, and that entails creating the trustful relationship on which effective mentoring and coaching are based. All such activity is set within an unusually coherent structure and programme of staff development covering support staff; initial teacher training; newly qualified teachers (NQTs); middle leaders; and senior leaders. Here are two examples.

Newly qualified teachers Each NQT (14 in the current year) is provided with a specialist subject coach who offers support in developing subject knowledge, interpreting the national curriculum levels and their assessment. In addition they have a member of the senior leadership team to serve as a mentor, meeting once a term with the mentee. Why is one called a coach and the other a mentor? In this school they make a distinction between a coach as a person you turn to when you know the questions you need to answer and you have a good idea where you want to go; and a mentor, who is the person you need when you are unsure about the questions and the direction you want to take.

In addition each NQT can have lessons filmed and captured on a DVD. The focus of the film, on the students or the teacher, is determined by the NQT. Students' answers to questions put by the technician can also be captured, and the NQT determines the questions. The NQTs own the only copy of the DVD but they are free to discuss it with their mentor if they so choose.

Potentially here is a bank of resources that can be used for other developmental purposes, along with teachers' work on research lesson studies (see *Personalising learning – 1*, page 34).

Coaching days for aspiring leaders Middle managers are given the opportunity to shadow a member of the senior leadership team for a day. The observer is given some relevant pre-reading about leadership and a context sheet drawn up by the person to be observed on his or her key priorities, the key tasks of the week, current challenges and the day's planned activities and tasks. The observer thinks about his or her needs and the potential value of the observation, and then:

- writes 10 questions about leadership and management that are thought to be worth further discussion
- makes notes on the actual observation
- records reflections and key learning points.

All this provides a marvellous opportunity for the middle managers, having seen at first hand the wide range of roles, responsibilities and decision making of a senior leader, to review their own skills and reflect on which skills need to be developed and how this might be done.

Being shadowed also has benefits, because the questions asked by the observer can force some useful reflection and reconsideration about one's practices.

At the conference **Dene Magna School, Gloucestershire** (headteacher, Mark Davies) posed the question: what does a learning school look like and how can coaching help to create and sustain such a culture? This is about getting the best out of your workforce and maximising the potential for professional learning that exists within one's own school. The focus has to be learning, not meetings – where meetings do occur in this school, they are called learning times or slots.

Coaching is seen as the bedrock of developing professional reflection and improvement, so all staff (including administrative and other support staff) are trained as coaches, from novice to advanced level, with an annual top-up. This is

part of a reflective practitioner programme, the aim of which is to combine support and challenge to help everybody to become a self-directed learner. This practice is embedded within a philosophy that all staff have a professional duty to help and support one another in their learning. Professional development is not limited to in-service training and off-site courses but occurs within the regular life and work at the school.

The coaching is closely linked to peer observation. If staff are to learn from one another, an essential precondition is the ability to observe colleagues at work, in part to help self-evaluation of one's own strengths and weaknesses and in part to learn from others how one might improve. For this to occur there had to be regular opportunities for in-school learning and observation during normal working hours. The ground rules were decided by the staff, and critical here is the notion that it is the observer, not the observed, who is the learner. Each member of staff does 14 peer observations per year (four inside their department, four outside and five of their own choosing). To achieve this, innovation was essential:

- Every member of staff was given an additional non-contact period each week
- Some reorganisation of the school day was necessary: on two days of the week no teaching took place between 2.30 and 3.30 pm to provide collaboration time
- An observation room was created, sandwiched between two rooms in both of which activities can be observed and/or recorded to provide DVDs for training purposes
- The staff deliver in-service training to one another three times a term.

A distinctive feature of the Dene Magna approach to coaching is the use of a triad. Three people are involved: the coach, the coachee and an observer, with the members of the triad changing roles to embed and further develop coaching skills.

The school is now investing in training year 9 students as coaches, who will coach other students but also work with the triads to support teacher learning. The student coaches

potentially provide student voice in departmental meetings when schemes of work are being devised – an important move into co-construction in the design of teaching and learning.

At **Felpham Community College, West Sussex**

(headteacher, Peter Cook), some initial work on student voice five years ago began with staff interviewing students on what makes a good lesson. This led to extended staff-student discussions on how to improve teaching for better learning. All sides are now committed to a learning and teaching charter, which sets out what staff and students should do to ensure the best learning. Following work on peer observations among staff, student observations of staff using a schedule based on the items in the teaching and learning charter are becoming a regular feature of school life.

2. Students as mentors and coaches

Silverdale School, South Yorkshire (headteacher, Helen Storey) and neighbouring **City School** (headteacher, Julie Warne) working together and with one other school, St Egbert's, in a Leading Edge partnership in Sheffield, have sought to raise the achievement of boys particularly in key stage three. Some Y12 students were asked to volunteer to be mentors to Y9 students. The project began with residential training for 23 Y12 students, half boys and half girls, and 16 staff, both teachers and learning mentors. The experience included some challenging activities to develop the relevant skills, focusing on increasing the students' responsibility and helping them to learn how to gain the trust of their future Y9 mentees (selected for their under-achievement, and capacity to improve and become potential mentors in due course). The object was to build up the mentors' confidence that they could indeed do things they initially thought they could not. The students subsequently confirmed that their confidence was considerably boosted. The mentoring that these newly trained student mentors offered to the Y9 students was of a general kind, focusing on the mentees' broad situation and their hopes and aspirations, rather than coaching in a specific subject.

One benefit of the partnership accrued to the 11-16 school in the three-school partnership. They could not use their post-GCSE students for some cross-age mentoring as they had, of course, already left. Being able to draw on Y12 mentors from another school with a sixth form provided a powerful support to younger students that would otherwise have been denied to them.

The partnership has been exploring how students can be mentored not just in face-to-face relationships but also online as a means of mentoring across institutions. There is huge potential in tele-mentoring for personalising learning, bringing together the mentoring & coaching and new technologies gateways.

As the Y9 mentees enter Y10 they are being recruited and trained as mentors for Y7 students. They are proving very willing to give something back for the benefits they received. Interestingly, the number of students volunteering to become mentors is rising sharply, suggesting that the rewards for being a mentor are understood and the news is spreading among students.

At **The Charter School, London**, (headteacher, Chris Bowler) some staff and students were trained in academic peer tutoring by an external consultant, Jacqueline Andrews. Some Y10 students served as tutors in science to a few members of what was seen by staff as a difficult Y7 class. The purpose of the project was to raise student achievement.

Much of the tutors' training was concurrent with their tutoring. For example, initially the tutors were given a lesson plan prepared by the teacher, but over time the tutors learned how to design their own lesson plan. They were familiar with national curriculum levels as a resource to advise their tutees on how to improve their learning and get to the next level. The peer tutoring aimed to move the locus of control from the teacher to the learner, so that they would come to increase their engagement and take more responsibility for their learning.

There is a clear link here to assessment for learning. It is surprising that more schools are not combining the two gateways, which are potentially more powerful in interaction than either is alone.

At a later stage, the Y7 tutees became successful tutors for Y5 students in a local primary school, confirming the staff's conviction that the most effective peer tutoring occurs when students experience being both tutee and tutor. As in other studies, peer tutoring increased engagement, built strong friendships, both within the class and across year groups, and improved discipline and behaviour.

For many student tutors, the commitment to teach someone younger provides a new incentive for their own learning. And for the tutees, the experience offers an opportunity to ask questions without exposure to the whole class and the fear that they will look stupid.

As Jacqueline Andrews explained at the conference, 'so much of classroom life is a form of pre-scripted dialogue: both parties can predict just how the conversation goes, so we all get stuck into these familiar roles. Peer tutoring breaks that down and opens a new way to teach and learn. It works as a kind of anticoagulant, diluting the situation and removing blockages to learning.'

3. Combining mentoring and coaching among staff and students

As we have seen, many schools that begin work on mentoring and coaching, either with staff or with students, tend to move to both levels that then interact in interesting ways. Indeed, a culture of mentoring and coaching enriches the activities in which both staff and students mentor and coach one another. Another example is provided by **Hamble Community Sports College, Southampton, Hants**, (headteacher, Ian Knights) and neighbouring **Perins Sports College, Alresford, Hants**, (headteacher, Janice Bernard) which have been working at both levels in their partnership with township schools in South Africa, particularly through sports activities.

Twelve teachers attended a four-day sports leadership camp of some 200 students and their teachers in Durban. The purpose was to coach leadership and life skills (teamwork, respect, taking responsibility for learning, self-confidence) in the young people through sport. At the same time teachers would be mentored in how to do such work; this style of teaching was

new to them, not least because PE is not part of the formal curriculum in their country. One of the Durban teachers came to Perins College to explore practices that might be transferable to South Africa. A small group of Perins teachers will go to South Africa later to share ideas on further developments.

As Ian Knights emphasised, all of this could be delivered through many other curriculum areas. By the nature of their specialism, PE teachers have a particular interest and expertise in mentoring and coaching, but much effective mentoring and coaching is generic, not subject-specific.

Questions

Do you agree with the Dene Magna School view that coaching is vital in developing the capacity for professional reflection?

If you currently engage in relatively little coaching and mentoring in your school, but seek to increase it, is it best to begin with adult-adult, adult-student or student-student? Is your decision influenced by what you are doing with other gateways?

Do students on different 14-19 pathways need (i) different kinds of mentoring and coaching and (ii) different kinds of people as mentors and coaches?

How might you determine the value of being a peer tutor or a peer tutee to students with different learning needs?

How might you design a professional training day to improve the quality of questioning in school and classroom?

What training do staff and students need in mentoring and coaching? Who will provide it for you? Can schools with more experience help?

Could staff and students have a day devoted to joint training and practice in coaching and mentoring?

How can you train and support willing adults other than teachers in mentoring and coaching for your students?

How can the new technologies support mentoring and coaching within and between schools?

Can more staff meetings be turned into learning opportunities?

Chapter 4 Workforce development: the gateway

All the gateways explored so far have clear implications for the changing character of the workforce – that is, the school’s staff and others who contribute to the work of the school. In what ways is the workforce changing?

19th century imaginary

- the workforce has a simple structure
- schools and teachers are autonomous units
- leadership is limited, centralised and hierarchical
- change is a dangerous threat

21st century imaginary

- the workforce has a complex structure
- schools and teachers are embedded in networks
- leadership is unlimited and distributed
- change is a risky opportunity

The medical profession offers an instructive comparative case in the transition to the 21st century imaginary. The late 19th century workforce consisted essentially of two roles, doctors and nurses. During the 20th century it became progressively differentiated and more complex. More than 50 paramedical professions were created, some of which, such as radiographers and physiotherapists, are now regarded by the public as natural providers of medical services. There continue to be conflicts over the autonomy of these professions, about the structure of leadership and control over patients, and about the nature and

rate of change as governments press medical services towards greater personalisation.

The education professions have moved much more slowly toward complexity, with teaching assistants being given a defensive welcome by teachers at the close of the 20th century, during which teaching became an all-graduate profession. The general direction of the increasing complexity is much the same in both professions: **specialisation**. The process of personalisation increases the rate of specialisation, as this is how a profession focuses more sharply on the needs of clients and generates the expert knowledge and skill to meet particular needs better than previously.

Such a change is extremely painful for a profession. In November 2001 the then Education Secretary, Estelle Morris, gave a speech, with an accompanying pamphlet with the title *Professionalism and trust* – but its subtitle *the future of teachers and teaching* was the real message.

‘Teachers want the time and support to do what they do best – teaching pupils,’ she wrote. ‘That is why our proposals focus not just on the teacher’s role but on the complementary roles that can and should be played by others in schools – like bursars, teaching assistants, technicians and learning mentors. In effect, we need to see a remodelling of not just the teaching profession, but of schools, school staffing, school management and the use of information and communications technology (ICT).’

The proposals were not greeted with the enthusiasm that ministers and officials had expected. Instead the teachers, many of whom felt stressed and overworked by a decade or more of reforms with which they were usually unsympathetic, felt suspicious that the plan was a money-saving de-professionalisation of teachers, with unqualified assistants taking over the teachers’ job. At the same time, there was continuing uneasy negotiation over how the teachers’ workload could be reduced by relieving them of a range of administrative and minor functions that reduced their teaching time, and by ensuring protected time for planning, preparation and assessment.

And then came the bombshell. Shortly after the publication of a survey that showed fewer than half secondary school teachers believed that teaching assistants helped them reduce their workload, a 'blue skies' discussion paper, written almost exactly two years later, was leaked from the DfES. It seemed to confirm these fears, since it argued that the school of the future would employ fewer teachers to pay for a better adult:student ratio. Mixed teams would provide what at that time was the novel concept of 'personalised learning'. One possibility aired was that only the headteacher of a school need have qualified teacher status. The editor of the *Times Educational Supplement* was moved to call the ideas 'barmy' and 'satanic'.

As we have seen, there was nevertheless a rapid growth of adults other than teachers in schools, of teaching assistants who often became quite specialised in their titles and in their role, and of many forms of mentoring and coaching. Undoubtedly there was much more one-to-one teaching as teaching assistants found an accepted place in school working alongside teachers. And almost certainly the presence of a teaching assistant does more to support student learning than a small reduction in the number of students in a class.

In education as in other professional fields, the first strand of workforce development is, therefore, **specialisation**. As assistants and support staff grow in numbers, some of them will become increasingly specialised in knowledge, skill and function rather than being general-purpose aides to teachers. Some of this specialisation is shaped by personalising learning, as when assistants specialise in areas such as dyslexia, where it is impossible to provide every teacher with the specialised knowledge and skill to meet the needs of such students.

Much of the thinking about the workforce in schools is shaped by the idea of a hierarchy, with the head at the top of the pyramid, school leaders and middle managers below, then teachers, and finally various kinds of support staff at the base.

Such hierarchies presuppose that the workforce can be grouped into discrete categories with relatively stable roles and responsibilities, and simple labels that describe them. Now, as

our case studies show, a whole range of new names are being devised to describe members of the school workforce, not (in the main) as fashionable gimmicks, but because the nature of the work itself is being redesigned. Some teachers, and some who deal with teachers' pay and conditions, think you can redesign the work of schools without a concomitant redesign of the workforce. The more radical the former is, the more radical the latter must be too.

In spheres other than education, the conventional organisation chart has long been displaced. As Charles Handy put it over 10 years ago: 'Organisations are not now drawn as pyramids of boxes... Those charts now have circles and amoeba-like blobs where the boxes used to be. It isn't even clear where the organisation begins and ends, with customers, suppliers and allied organisations linked into a varying network organisation.' This captures what is happening now in many schools.

The workforce was once split into two: the academic and the pastoral. These became the twin pillars of the secondary school in the 1970s, when the ex-grammar school subject specialists became heads of department in the new comprehensives, leaving the pastoral roles to the ex-secondary modern teachers. The structure was universal; every teacher understood the nature of the posts and the related career paths. Advertising vacancies and replacing departing teachers was a transparent process. In some schools the twin pillars are being pulled down, for when student learning drives the workforce, it is impossible to disconnect student support from subject learning. So new titles are emerging that span the academic-pastoral divide. And names matter. Alwyn B Lewis, the new CEO of the merger between Kmart and Sears Roebuck, changed the titles of his district managers to district coaches – it signalled that coaching was the key task of a manager, and made the coachees feel that they were being prepared for a leadership role.

Change a name and you change the thinking of more than those who bear the new title: indeed, you help to change the culture. Again in Handy's prescient words, 'More and more we shall see organisations divide their work into project teams, task-forces, small business units, clusters and work groups...

(which) will change shape and membership as the needs of the organisation change.’ In the business world middle managers now get training in project management to fit these new, flexible roles that involve leadership in innovation. It astounds me that we do not routinely train the middle managers in schools in project management, in part because much of what they do involves short-term projects and in part because so much teaching would be better designed as projects rather than lessons (*Personalising learning – 4*, page 14).

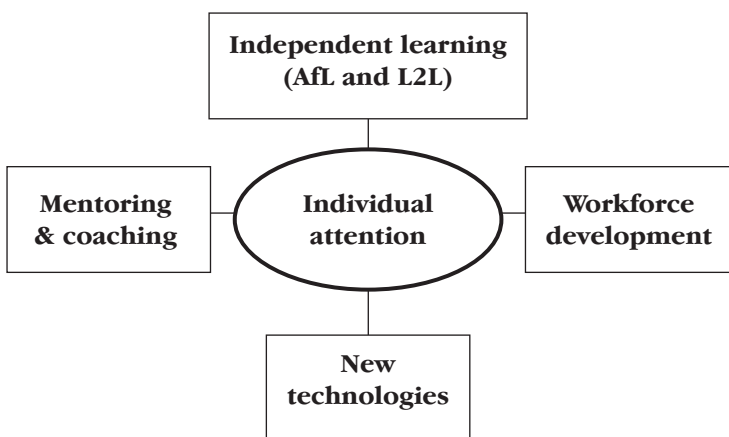
Tensions remain. Some schools are following the business world and creating flatter structures with more flexible roles that allow teachers to gain experience by lateral movement rather than the traditional upward climb. Other schools are creating a bewildering range of assistant headteachers, which may appear to strengthen a hierarchy of a senior leadership or management team. Some schools draw a sharp boundary between the official staff of the school and the contribution of external people; others, as we saw in mentoring and coaching, make the boundaries between school and the external world highly permeable to increase the contact between learners and a far wider range of adults.

This is the challenge of **distributed leadership**: can more people be given opportunities for leadership without reinforcing the old, relatively rigid hierarchies? As Alma Harris says: ‘A distributed perspective on leadership moves away from concentrating on those in formal leadership positions to consider those leadership practices that occur daily through informal interaction and collaboration. Distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice: it is the result of interaction between all those who contribute to the life of a school’ – and this includes the students, who are increasingly being given opportunities for leading.

And leadership can be developed across institutions as well as within them. Coaching & mentoring and workforce development make a massive contribution to enhancing the **deep support** for learners that is at the heart of personalising learning to enhance achievement. As discussed in *Personalising learning – 4*, deep support is easier to achieve when

institutions work together in **federations**. In education we can use this term to cover a wide range of relationships between institutions and agencies that are variously called partnerships, clusters, collaboratives, collegiates and networks. A federation of institutions can increase the specialisation of the staff to meet particular student needs, and offer a flexibility of role development that is beyond the power of the single, autonomous school.

Figure 1 The sources of individual attention



Individual attention is not the only ingredient in personalising learning, but is certainly part of it. At this point we can see how different gateways contribute to this – see figure 1. Independent learning gained by students through assessment for learning and learning to learn frees teachers from unnecessary and trivial demands for attention, leaving more room for them to respond to students who really need it. Good use of the new technologies can have the same effect.

Mentoring and coaching, including peer tutoring, and workforce reform complement this by giving additional support to learners who need it. Of particular importance here will be the use of people from the world of work to teach, mentor and coach students following vocational courses, since they have a special credibility to students who readily move to an apprentice mode of learning.

In the business world, John Hagel and John Seely Brown have argued that companies need to work with others to get better faster – something that surely applies to what so many teachers and schools are seeking to do too. But they are concerned that many firms have sought to do this through seeking greater efficiency rather than greater innovation. The story of workforce development in education over the last five years exposes the same tension. For these writers, three elements are required to get better faster:

- Dynamic specialisation, which means that companies must become more differentiated
- Connectivity, for specialisation requires effective methods of co-ordination
- Leveraged capability across institutional boundaries, which drives innovation.

Similar forces are at work in education, as is revealed in the following four case studies and one report, and as we shall explore further in the final pamphlet.

Questions

How much has your staffing structure changed in the last few years? What have been the gains and losses of any change? Have the TLR changes helped or impeded the process of workforce development to support personalisation?

How much specialisation among staff do you need to support greater personalisation for students? Which students have the greatest need in this regard?

Can workforce development be used to increase the extent of coaching and mentoring in your school?

In your school, do the members of the senior leadership team see themselves as the lead coaches too?

How successful are you at complementing your workforce with people from other walks of life who have much to offer students as teachers, mentors or coaches?

Questions (continued)

How far might collaboration with other schools increase the access of your students to a wider range of knowledge, skills and experience among available adults?

How fully have you exploited the gateways to increase the amount of individual attention that each student gets?

How are you handling the concept of distributed leadership in your school? What are the implications of distributed leadership for the way you design and provide professional development for the staff?

Chapter 5 Workforce development: stepping stones

The stepping stones to workforce development vary enormously from school to school, as the following case studies illustrate. It is clear that many schools are at the beginning of what will be a period of deep change.

A striking feature of the case studies is the move away from the autonomous teacher towards the development of teams. Personalising learning will drive this trend further, for teams are better than individuals at more fully meeting the needs of more students. Regular rewriting of job specs will give way to redesigning work for flexible teams both within the school and between agencies.

Chris Gerry, chief executive, New Line Learning, and headteacher, Cornwallis School, Maidstone

The model of secondary schooling has changed little in a century or more. Pupils are still educated in groups of 30 by one individual, who presents subject knowledge to them for regurgitation later. Despite a great deal of effort and spending, ICT remains a bolt-on in most schools, with far fewer machines than pupils. Where it is used it is often for low-level tasks such as word processing.

From this mindset comes school organisation that is essentially centred around the employees and not around students. So it is that adults own and control space within school, while pupils are consigned to the role of nomads endlessly wandering from one point to another to receive their education. The buildings where all this activity takes place are frequently dysfunctional, designed for a previous era. They represent a unique form of architecture that seems only to exist in the public sector, where attention to design and detail have been systematically ignored.

Within such contexts the sense of ‘public squalor versus private affluence’ becomes stark.

Against this backdrop it is small wonder that many pupils don’t attend school and often those that do find it a stifling experience driven by the humdrum productivity of the classroom, but little else. With a few notable exceptions, our secondary schools cannot be seen as creative environments, yet this is the skill above all else that people need in this century. We must change this, also, because young people today are profoundly different from those of former eras.

A society of individuals As never before our social and economic system has spawned a culture of active choice and varied possibilities. The decline of the meta-narrative of religion means that individuals must now make sense of their lives for themselves. The branded goods they consume often help fabricate a lifestyle and give meaning to their own lives within broader contexts. These identities are malleable and liable to change across a lifetime. Within this world of choice and opportunity individuals use the language of brands rather than that of commodities both to signpost their own location and to indicate wider meanings.

A connected society Beyond school, young people communicate using a variety of electronic media and their learning is peer-driven. Such learning does not follow the step-by-step approaches of traditional academic disciplines but rather relies on heuristic leaps, discontinuities and linkages across subject boundaries. The result is that a lot of young people know a lot about everything but very often have little in-depth knowledge of traditional disciplines.

Instant gratification The mantra of the early 21st century is one of instant gratification. If something is needed it is needed now; tomorrow is too late. Along with this attitude the shift to consumerist values over those of production suggests profound challenges for public institutions that preach deferral eg an exam system that is terminal rather than granular in terms of accreditation.

Trying to change a system comprising 3,500 stand-alone autonomous secondary schools is almost doomed to failure. To do so requires the headteacher of each school to adopt a programme and see it through effectively. Elsewhere in our lives we have overcome these difficulties by the use of chain and replication models: one successful model, be it for producing cars, or selling food, can be refined, developed and copied. Oddly for education we still cling to an outdated 18th century model that supposedly reflects 'local interests'. Allied to that we have also copied the 18th century model of how to manage such a system using influence. We should not be surprised then that we have a varied system of both costs and outputs despite our best efforts to ensure similarity and certainty.

Faced with this despairing situation I have been keen to develop my own chain approach within three Maidstone secondary schools in a hard federation with one governing body. This entity came into existence in April 2005 and since then we have focused change around a series of 100-day change plans. The aim is to ensure the same outputs on each site for the same unit of input.

We also want to modernise the process of education. Within one term we:

- spent £1.7 million on new facilities, including 1000 PCs, and 500 tablets, one for each Y7 child
- established a schools-wide email system and website
- shortened key stage 3 to two years and introduced Y9 students to GCSEs
- introduced an integrated humanities course in Y7 alongside project-based learning to teach children how to learn for themselves
- created larger teaching spaces
- negotiated a set of values with all pupils
- re-branded the curriculum, in terms of modular units; and the federation, as we became New Line Learning Schools.

The second 100 days focuses on following this up and ensuring that everyone has access to key performance indicator information about pupils on a daily basis. Working with two universities, we are installing emotional intelligence programmes for both staff and pupils.

Throughout these processes we have paid attention to cultural dynamics: that is, the way people within the schools actually behave. This is an area where, to paraphrase John Maynard Keynes, many heads get things ‘precisely wrong rather than roughly right’. Too little attention is paid to whether staff and pupils are happy and, more importantly, what makes them unhappy. It is at the micro level of social modelling by headteachers that many good ideas quickly come to nothing. Often such encounters can be so bruising for headteachers that it teaches them that it is easier to be risk-averse than radical in terms of innovation. Addressing specific problems in good time can help ensure an optimistic and positive approach to change.

Wendy Down, headteacher, Framingham Earl High School, Norfolk

Work on **essential learnings** undertaken in Australia and Tasmania (see *Personalising learning – 4*, page 12) provides a new curriculum framework. This is based on the need to equip students with the capacity to manage themselves and their relations with others, to understand the world they live in and to act effectively in it, both now and in the future. The framework enables schools to customise, focusing on the key strands of the framework:

- Thinking
- Communicating
- Creativity
- Technology
- Personal futures
- Social responsibility
- World futures.

This rationale can be used to restructure the school. The core strands (Australia has 3, Tasmania 5) become the foundation for leadership responsibility. In a team-based approach, curriculum (strand) leaders take responsibility for the delivery of all aspects of an individual strand, including quality control, while also contributing to the continuing regeneration of our school's future vision.

Use of **dual leadership** and sub-leadership may give worthwhile opportunities for career development, coaching, and the creation of more dynamic teaching and learning strategies. A broad curriculum framework encourages a planned approach to pedagogy, incorporating assessment, learning skills, mentoring and new technologies.

Such an approach frees our senior leadership team to focus on strategy. Our responsibility should be research and development, the constant regeneration of the vision for the school and the drive for excellence.

We must also cater for the operation of our school as a business. Fundraising, bid creation, publicity & marketing, the extended schools agenda, sophisticated ICT support – all demand a level of professional expertise beyond that of our teachers. The leadership team will require at least two posts, say business manager and ICT development manager, to mastermind these areas.

Crucially we now educate both globally and locally, so we need to foster **world-wide networking** and collaboration, which demands high-level leadership. Modern technology also offers choice in relation to leadership posts – fire-fighting decision making is unnecessary so the preference for deputy headships or assistant heads becomes a real choice, but may be dependent on the extent to which the headteacher operates in a chief executive role.

Replacing a **pastoral system** past its sell-by date is key to a more effective service for students, parents and all external agencies working with the school: the advent of Children's Services makes this imperative. All pastoral posts will be non-teaching support staff with a simple brief: that students are

enabled to arrive in class ready to benefit from the teaching they receive and to learn. At the heart of the new system is a student well-being co-ordinator who handles everything to do with students' welfare, and every aspect of the school's support activity. A full-time counsellor, behaviour management adviser, mentors and in-house experts will be on hand for consultation and to work with individual students and groups, teachers and parents. Peer support activities will also be integral to the approach.

ICT will be used to underpin the new arrangements. Paperless, touch-of-a-button systems will mean everyone is up to speed and working together so that no youngster gets lost in the system, making Every Child Matters a reality. Freeing teachers to pursue their core business will demand an enhanced provision for professional development in which advanced skills teachers, excellent teachers and mentors will have a significant role to play.

Another key factor for school improvement will result in a new approach to **school leadership**, changing the way we work with students into a real partnership – a team effort with students. Schools have not always appreciated the full potential of students to contribute towards the vision for the school and to assist in its delivery. Our students make a powerful input into the leadership of the school based on a rethink of the traditional relationship between teachers and students. As school leaders, students make a significant contribution to the raising of standards and to the quality of the school's provision: they deliver lessons and summer schools, run support groups, manage transition activities, organise school events and services, and engage in departmental development.

Mike Hatch, headteacher, Crosshill Special School

Crosshill Special School serves some of the neediest parts of Blackburn with Darwen. The school has 96 pupils on roll, all of whom have complex learning difficulties and some of whom have behaviour difficulties. Crosshill, which was the first special school to attain specialist technology status, has been described by the DfES as innovative and visionary.

We have a DfES-funded e-learning centre that provides communities with the ability to access technologies, learn how to use them and enjoy the opportunity to socialise with others from diverse backgrounds. The aim of the centre is to create a globally inclusive environment in which communities of learners and teachers can enjoy shared benefits.

Even though we are a small school, we have created small schools within our school. We call these small schools 'cohorts' and we have :

- a Y7 cohort, with one teacher, one unqualified teacher and three teaching assistants
- a Y8/Y9 cohort, with three teachers and five teaching assistants
- a Y10 cohort, with two teachers, one unqualified teacher and four teaching assistants
- a Y11 cohort, with three teachers and three teaching assistants
- a further seven teaching assistants who work on inclusion and individual needs.

The cohorts do not have any named manager, as they work as a team. All members of the team feel empowered and are actively involved with all decisions made in school. We have weekly cohort meetings and all cohorts have two hours per week for planning, preparation and assessment. All members of staff have their own professional development targets. Non-teaching staff are encouraged to gain further qualifications, attend courses and ultimately become teachers, if they so wish.

All members of the cohort are involved with the pupils' assessment. Much of the time we teach in very small groups or even one-to-one. Curriculum planning is led by the teacher but we have found the more experienced teaching assistants are now leading the new teachers in their planning.

All training that has taken place in the school over the last seven years has included teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are paid extra to attend after-school training opportunities and twilights.

The management structure has moved from a team of six to the headteacher and the deputy, freeing up good teachers' time to concentrate on teaching, learning and challenging our pupils academically. This new structure has created new roles for all senior staff but with simpler and clearer job descriptions that everybody understands.

Having invested heavily in the new technologies, we are working towards reducing and simplifying the administrative workload for all teaching staff. All timetabling, cover and staff development is now managed by a staff liaison officer. The teacher who has this role, valued by all the staff, has been invigorated and has a new sense of purpose in managing the delivery of high quality lessons as she now has time to plan and prepare.

This new structure has created the opportunity for us to appoint more staff as teachers, which has made the smaller teaching groups possible.

Peter Beaven, headteacher, Norton Hill School

Norton Hill School is an 11-18 community school in Midsomer Norton, a small town in the old Somerset coalfield. It is not an affluent area. We have been reforming the workforce for five years. We have extended the range of work undertaken by support staff to include cover, invigilation and teaching assistants. Over the past year we have begun to see how we can use support staff to increase the degree of personalisation. We believe curriculum support staff can contribute to personalising the learning experience, including assessment for learning and learning to learn, and to mentoring and advice & guidance.

Curriculum support staff are now largely attached to subject teams. These teaching assistants contribute to personalisation through **new support systems** by:

- Helping develop differentiated resources or create ICT-based resources. For example, all RE lessons can now start with a powerpoint; many science experiments have a powerpoint with digital photographs showing how to set up the equipment, so pupils can return to this if they are unsure. Some subjects have a variety of writing frames and other strategies to meet different needs.

Mentoring & coaching, and workforce development

- Helping with marking, so homework is checked (has the download from the internet been processed?) and simple work marked (is the map labelled correctly, using a template?). This enables the teacher to move children on in their learning at a faster pace and also leaves more time for assessment for learning. Having support staff highlight the necessary concepts and key words frees the teacher to carry out assessment more rapidly and so spend time on identifying the next steps. This is especially important in those subjects where teachers take large numbers of pupils.
- Taking individuals and small groups for targeted work. Support staff run RM's Successmaker, progress units and other support activities and give feedback to teachers.
- Organising trips and activities, and preparing pupils for the activities and follow-up in an individualised way.

As support staff help with sports teams and outdoor pursuits, we have been able to vastly increase our participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and other activities identified as of key importance in developing the personal and social skills that underpin achievement. Our next step is to target students who will benefit most (as against those who volunteer). Co-tutors are key here: they will be the persuaders.

A team of non-teaching pastoral support staff is attached to each of the school's houses to deal with behaviour, attendance and the like. This releases the heads of house to lead their team of tutors in raising standards for every pupil. Individualised support is provided in the following ways.

- All tutor groups in Y9 and Y10 have a tutor and co-tutor who provide targeted support and guidance, focused learning-to-learn activities and individual attention. Some of the co-tutors are members of the support staff.
- All Y11 tutor groups have a member of the senior leadership team as a co-tutor to mentor pupils identified by the tutor. Tutor and senior staff work together to raise the achievement of that group at GCSE.
- Y7 and Y8 have attached sixth formers, GTP trainees and PGCE students for added support.

The use of ICT underpins all of this, as follows.

- All teachers have a laptop, as do many of the support staff. Each classroom has a projector so ICT can enhance all lessons and visual learning becomes easier.
- We have moved from SIMS to CMIS; their e-portal allows staff to see all aspects of a pupil's progress. Academic records, assessment records, behaviour logs, Connexions information, attendance – all are accessible to staff so that mentoring, guidance and support are better focused and based on full, rather than partial, information. It has been a major learning curve for many and is not yet complete, but everyone recognises its power. We plan to develop evaluative tools for each aspect of school life so that pupils and staff can contribute to continuous improvement of all facets of our work.

Our next step is to rigorously explore the interface between teaching and learning. We are asking questions about the necessary roles of teachers (input and assessment) and the supplementary roles of support staff in order to re-engineer the dynamics of the classroom and the lesson.

Tom Clark, associate director, SSAT

In the summer and autumn of 2005, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, working with the National Remodelling Team, launched a two-year project at four national conferences to identify and share innovative and effective workforce practice with the private sector and with other public sector providers, such as the National Health Service. The workforce gateway to personalising learning was addressed as part of these conferences. The aim was to help describe a 21st century view for workforce reform beyond the 19th-century imaginary that has dominated school organisation for much of the last century.

The conferences confirmed that innovative practice is being embedded in specialist schools. It is recognised that workforce reform is not for its own sake: it is to support more effective learning and to raise achievement. There is no new orthodoxy in the emerging practice, but schools are thinking strategically beyond the tactical reforms of the national agreement.

Some schools have developed learning teams where other professionals, not all of whom are qualified teachers, support student learning. Some combine exceptional skills in ICT or behaviour management or mentoring or dealing with specific learning difficulties or administration: others have exceptional skills in pedagogy or in writing learning materials. They are all professionals contributing to student learning in teams, often with overlapping roles and often carrying out more than one role.

For example, at William Howard School (Brampton) and Etone School (Nuneaton) support staff undertake work for year heads on day-to-day disciplinary matters; provide short-term supply cover; liaise with outside agencies; and re-admit excluded pupils. At George Spencer School (Nottingham) information managers train and support staff in using ICT programs, websites, and internet resources. At Tudor Grange School (Solihull) and Admiral Lord Nelson School (Portsmouth) study supervisors cover for all emergency and short-term supply; and at King Edward VII School (Melton Mowbray) extended professional learning teams include assistants who generate learning and teaching materials with teachers. At Norton Hill School a member of the support staff manages work experience and is the child protection officer.

Three challenges

- Workforce remodelling is not about teachers doing less work: it is about teachers focusing more on student learning rather than on administrative and minor tasks that do not demand the skills of a qualified teacher
- Workforce remodelling is an international phenomenon beyond education and the public services. It embraces work/life balance, different conventions about the time people will spend in one career, succession planning, and coherent and continuous professional development
- Strategic development of the workforce needs to anticipate a new educational imaginary when SATs, rigid key stages, TLRs and league tables have been consigned to history.

Questions

Do the case studies suggest new approaches to the structure and development of the workforce in your school to help in personalising learning for all?

Do you think that the conventional academic-pastoral split supports or obstructs the process of personalising learning?

What do you see as the major priorities for the development of your workforce over the next few years?

Chapter 6 Next steps

We began the professional journey to personalising learning with no more than a vague sense of what were potentially the most powerful gateways. Before the conferences, we were unsure what they might look like in detail, and we had little idea about how they might interact with one another to drive personalisation. The first diagram of the gateways set them in a circle (*Personalising learning – 1*, page 7). Soon these had to be set in a sequence and the order chosen for the conference series was based on an intuition of how they might link to one another.

It is now clearer how the gateways inter-relate. The narrative is no longer represented as a circle but as a linear version of the conference series logic (see figure 2).

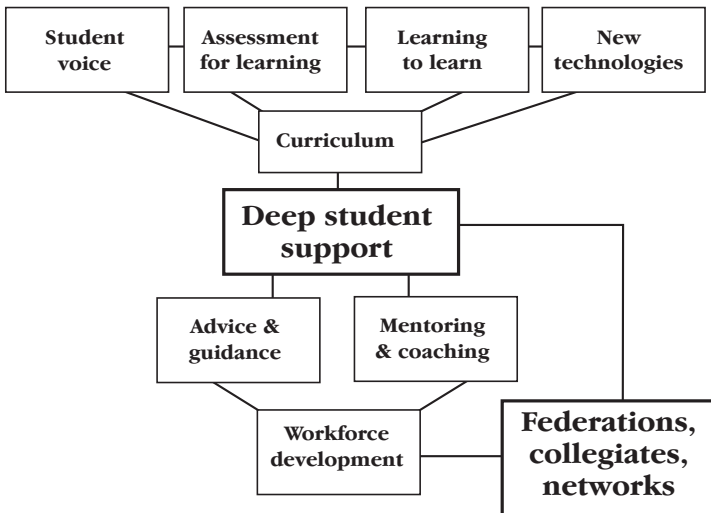
Essentially the first four gateways put the student at the centre of personalisation. As the conferences demonstrated, these four interlock in complex ways; many schools in practice were developing more than one of these gateways in powerful combinations. All four could be developed to a considerable degree without any fundamental change to the (national) curriculum and its associated structure and pedagogy. But some schools held the view that personalisation demanded a new approach to the curriculum and the way in which it is structured and taught. Such radical changes were linked to parallel developments in customisation in the business world. *Personalising learning – 4* drew on the notions of deep support and federations to make sense of these developments.

The need for deep support for learners shapes a new approach to advice and guidance; but it also supports the development of mentoring and coaching, with which advice and guidance is so

closely linked. Both then influence the character and shape of the workforce, which is also influenced by the emergence of federations of various kinds and the networks in which schools are now deeply embedded.

It will be the task of the final conference to show how the final gateway, the design and organisation of the school and educational services, is affected by the other eight gateways. But redesigning the school and the way in which it is organised will potentially unleash forces that will support further development of the other gateways. Will exploring this allow us to complete a conceptual framework for personalising learning and to create an educational imaginary for the 21st century? Can such a framework be specific to education while nevertheless setting education within the wider context of changes in society? This is the task ahead.

Figure 2 The links between the gateways



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iNet is publishing a series of pamphlets on the nine interconnected gateways that lead to personalising teaching and learning

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- School organisation and design
- New technologies
- Student voice
- Advice and guidance
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