



Personalising learning – 6

The final gateway: school design and organisation

David Hargreaves

March 2006



Specialist Schools
and Academies Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

Personalising learning – 6

The final gateway: school design and organisation

*A joint publication with the Association of School and College Leaders
(formerly Secondary Heads Association)*

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Editor

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Mission

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust works to give practical support to the transformation of secondary education in England by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community.

This publication

Audience

Teachers and leaders at all levels in education.

Aim

To show how the final gateway to personalising learning – school design and organisation – brings together the other eight gateways; and to set out an approach to the challenges for school transformation.

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Preface

In the first pamphlet in this series, **Personalising Learning – next steps in working laterally** (October 2004), David Hargreaves argued that

- personalising learning is realised through nine interconnected gateways
- personalisation needs to be treated as a pathway to educational transformation
- a radically different system of innovation and development and research for education is needed.

Since then, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) – formerly Secondary Heads Association – have together organised a series of conferences focusing on the gateways. The events have given schools the opportunity to discuss their journey of personalising learning for all students of all abilities. We have been able to share these case studies through the series of pamphlets that David Hargreaves has written. We now have the last pamphlet in the series, **School design and organisation**, in which the author describes the remarkable work that headteachers and schools are doing in transforming their schools.

The pamphlet examines our new conception of the learner and the six core themes that emerge from the schools' presentations. David Hargreaves identifies the sequence of steps needed to enable students to be co-constructors in their education. It is evident that many teachers and school leaders will find this new view of the learner challenging. It is equally clear that if secondary education is to be transformed students must have a responsible voice and be equal partners in their learning journey.

During our journey, the power of each gateway and the interconnections became clearer. At the last conference, David put the gateways into four groups:

Deep learning – this can be realised by focussing on assessment for learning, learning to learn and student voice. It engages and gives responsibility to students for their learning.

Deep experience – crucial to engagement with learning is the curriculum, and the new technologies enable students to explore and enhance their learning experience. Students are moving to greater independence and confidence in learning.

Deep support – needed to enable students to move towards co-construction and greater engagement. Advice & guidance and mentoring & coaching are key components of deep support.

Deep leadership – to achieve a personalised learning experience for all children, we require leaders who are prepared to look radically at the nature of schooling and to abandon old structures. No school has achieved personalisation; a number of schools are advanced in a number of gateways.

All of the gateways require leadership, but school design and organisation is the preserve of the school leader. The final conference was centred on the ideas of experienced, innovative headteachers from a range of schools and contexts. Their reflections were insightful, realistic and challenging.

The pamphlet concludes with David Hargreaves explaining the 21st century educational imaginary that has evolved from exploring the nine gateways. Undoubtedly, there will be much debate about his analysis. It should be remembered that his interpretation is based on the work of practitioners in schools today. The emphasis is moving away from teaching to learning, recognising that the world of the 21st century is radically different.

The profession has embraced personalising learning with a passion and conviction seldom seen. Our emerging ambition is the 21st century educational imaginary; the vehicle is personalising learning; and the route is the nine gateways. The strategy is:

The final gateway: school design and organisation

- lateral transfer of good practice
- next practice through development and research networks
- teacher-led, school-based
- no top down, quick-fix solutions.

I have no doubt that it is in our grasp to transform secondary education. The next steps in our journey should help make this ambition a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Williamson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Williamson, Director of Leadership and Affiliation,
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
January, 2006

Chapter 1 Introduction

This pamphlet reflects the presentations and discussions at the conferences in January 2006 by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Association of School and College Leaders on the final gateway of personalising learning: the design and organisation of the school. Thanks are due to the school leaders who contributed to the film (available as a DVD) that formed the stimulus for the day's activities, and from whose contributions many of the quotations in later chapters are taken:

- Alison Banks, principal, Westminster Academy
- Jackie Beere, headteacher, Champion School and Language College
- Mark Davies, headteacher, Dene Magna Community School
- Tony Downing, headteacher, Caroline Chisholm School
- Cheryl Heron, headteacher, Bridgemark Community School
- John King, headteacher, Gable Hall School
- Paul Mortimer, CEO, governing body, Hollingworth High School
- Alex Reed, deputy headteacher, Greenford High School
- Paul Roberts, headteacher, Eaton Bank School
- Jan Robertson, associate professor, University of Waikato, New Zealand
- Andy Schofield, headteacher, Varndean School
- David Triggs, headteacher, Greensward College
- Derek Wise, headteacher, Cramlington Community High School

Thanks are also due to Kai Vacher, the head of personalising learning, Emma Sims, development and research co-ordinator, and other colleagues who helped in the conduct of the conferences. I am especially grateful to Sue Williamson, director of affiliation and leadership, for her support and advice throughout the series of five conferences and the preparation of the six pamphlets.

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 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 do this, though they know that they do not in practice succeed in meeting every need of every student. 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 ever before.

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 (reported in the fifth pamphlet).

The subject of this final pamphlet is the last gateway, the design and organisation of the school. It brings together all the previous eight gateways and sets four questions:

- How do the gateways interact and interlock so that a school can claim that it has personalised learning for students in a way that is consistent and coherent?
- How does the design of the school (and not just the bricks and mortar aspects) need to change to accomplish this, and what new forms of organisation are emerging?
- What kinds of leadership do these tasks demand?
- How much clearer are we now about the nature of the gateways and their relationship to the transformation that was envisaged in the first pamphlet, **Personalising learning: next steps in working laterally** (October 2004)?

Chapter 2 A diversity of schools

Every school is unique, since every school contains a unique collection of people in a unique set of conditions. At the same time, schools are remarkably similar, not just within a country, but across the world. Indeed, it is their similarity rather than their difference that is striking: one instantly knows one is in a school wherever it might be located, and whoever might be the staff and the students.

Sociologists have been fascinated by this phenomenon, that many institutions – such as business organisations, hospitals or schools – tend over time to become more alike rather than more varied or diverse. Since the work of DiMaggio and Powell over 20 years ago, the homogeneity of institutions is usually called **isomorphism**, which they argue can be explained by three principal mechanisms.

The first mechanism is **coercion**. Like other institutions, schools are constrained by many laws, regulations and rules created by governments, both national and local. This applies to the buildings themselves, to opening hours, to the qualifications and remuneration of staff, to categories of learners that may attend, as well as to the content of what is learned through the curriculum, and so on. Inspection of schools ensures compliance with regulations.

Mimesis, or the tendency of institutions to imitate one another, is the second mechanism. This is very common in the business world, where fashions started by influential business gurus with their recipes for success spread very rapidly by imitation. In the education field, some schools become more successful or popular than others, and so those that are less successful or popular are under pressure, both from clients and

from governments (which have persuasive incentives and sanctions at their disposal), to adopt the same policies and practices. Indeed, government policy in England on partnerships between more and less successful schools (usually determined on the basis of test results and 'league tables') is designed to stimulate mimesis in the interest of raising standards. Schools in 'special measures' after a critical inspection are under threat of closure or takeover, and this uncertainty, combined with the need to meet inspectorial models of the effective school, feeds imitation. The least successful schools are indeed taken over by leaders who have run successful schools, and who are thus likely to insist on policies and practices that have worked for them before.

The third source of pressure is **normative**, the belief that it is morally right and proper for an institution to be like the most popular or successful institutions in the same field. School leaders are trained, through qualifications and courses provided for them, to behave in what are currently approved ways of designing and organising schools; and when they become headteachers, they are provided with mentors to guide them further in steering the school in the appropriate way. And the mentors may well have achieved recognition and received rewards, making them natural models for neophyte leaders.

Like all institutions affected by isomorphism, schools do not become a diverse assortment of alternative realisations of different aims and outcomes, different ends and means. Rather, in DiMaggio and Powell's telling phrase, they become 'loosely coupled arrays of standardised elements'.

Competition between schools for the students who are most likely to help the school to meet the criteria leading to designation as a successful or popular school – that is, those who will be the high achievers in externally set tests and examinations – is a powerful driver toward isomorphism. Yet ironically, in England, the government's official policy is to increase the diversity of schools – specialist schools, faith schools, academies, etc – so that parents may choose a school that accords with their preferences. In practice, in England, isomorphism has triumphed over diversification for one simple

reason: the league tables by which schools are judged as successful on a single and universally applied dimension – students’ scores in performance tests. As a result, parents feel constrained to choose a school for their children that does well on this dimension. The school that becomes popular with parents, especially middle-class parents, is thus one that does well by the government’s criteria of success; this can lead the school to achieve even higher test scores. So the less successful schools are under pressure to change, but to do so by becoming more like successful schools rather than diversifying from them. As DiMaggio and Powell point out, ‘strategies that are rational for individual organisations may not be rational if adopted by large numbers. Yet the very fact that they are normatively sanctioned increases the likelihood of their adoption... [so] the aggregate effect of individual change is to lessen the extent of diversity within the field.’

It is also evident that the schools recognised as the most successful and popular are in severe danger of becoming complacent over their achievements and ways of working. It is precisely such schools that ought to be thinking about ways in which they could become even better – more effective and more efficient in terms of current assumptions, as well as more ambitious and imaginative in their conception of educational goals and outcomes. But there is little incentive in England for popular schools to do so. Unlike in the business world, there is no significant danger that an innovative entrepreneur, apparently at the margin, can take the field by storm: there is no educational equivalent to the iPod.

If personalising learning means meeting more of the needs of more pupils more fully than in the past, the government’s policy of diversification makes sense. Since students, their families, their circumstances – and so also their needs and aspirations – vary so sharply, it is difficult for one standardised school to meet such needs. Schools may inevitably and quite naturally diversify in order better to meet such variety of needs. The government seems to recognise this, but is so trapped by its earlier policies to drive up standards that it cannot acknowledge that they produce a degree of isomorphism that hinders the very diversification that personalisation demands.

Indeed, the more people conceive of the effective school, rather than recognising a range of models of effectiveness, the more rapidly isomorphism will accelerate. It is assumed that the dominant criterion of school effectiveness – test performance – is the only and the right measure of effectiveness. In fact many school leaders and teachers would challenge this, arguing that the demands of education in the 21st century means that we must rethink what constitutes the effective and efficient school, which means rethinking the aims and outcomes of schooling – questioning, in short, the taken-for-granted assumptions that drive isomorphism. Isomorphism leads to a widespread conviction that some fundamental features of schools must remain unquestioned and unquestionable. These become commonsense thinking about schools, for teachers, for students, for parents, for policymakers: a shared language about what makes sensible practices in the non-negotiable structures we call school.

A creative response by school leaders to the educational challenges of knowledge economies may be hampered by such isomorphic forces, from which only exceptional people can free themselves.

There are, of course, many different views about the nature and extent of diversification between and within schools. Some of these differences are highly charged, for example whether children with special educational needs should be in mainstream or special schools; whether some schools should be selective by student ability or aptitude; or whether within a school there should be streaming by ability. But that personalisation requires diversification of some kind is not, I believe, in doubt. Indeed, several of the headteachers in the film emphasise that personalisation requires schools to adapt to learners rather than the other way round.

What we've been doing for so long is trying to meet the needs of learners around the structure, trying to get them to fit into the structure that we've tried and tested. Instead we now need to do the reverse, where we fit the structure around the needs of an individual learner.

Cheryl Heron

Virtually all the structures of a secondary school need to be questioned: the way we group students into years; the way we herd children into classes of around 30; the way we ring bells and expect children to line up; the way we structure the curriculum into blocks or options; the way most schools are structured between pastoral and academic.

Alison Banks

Schools have designed themselves around the needs of the school, the needs of teachers and probably the needs of the school plan. In terms of personalising learning, the school of the future will have to design itself around the needs of learners – not as a cohort, but as individual learners. It means that students will have to have ownership of learning and see themselves as being in control.

Andy Schofield

Diversification of this kind, as we shall discuss, can arise only if schools and those who lead and govern them are free to engage in innovation. Isomorphism stifles innovation, which flourishes only when pressures to isomorphism are reduced.

One hypothesis of DiMaggio and Powell states: ‘the greater the extent to which the organisations in a field transact with agencies of the state, the greater the extent of isomorphism’. This clearly applies to schools. But then the government in England is currently offering to reduce the dependence of schools on the state, which would reduce isomorphism and stimulate the diversification that personalisation requires. That these proposals have met with a very mixed reception, and is now caught up in ideological differences within and between political parties, demonstrates the ambivalence with which many educators regard state control and their suspicion that reduced control will unleash an unwanted diversity, for example in the power of schools to become selective.

The policy and practice of personalising learning exposes the tension between isomorphism and diversification. This tension is experienced, though in different ways, by both policymakers

and practitioners. To understand it, we must go to the heart of the professional journey taken during the series of conferences and the associated pamphlets, and examine the implications of taking learners seriously and developing a new view of them.

Questions

How would you handle the tension between isomorphism and diversification?

In which direction do you think policy on diversification has moved during the last decade? Does the defence of 'the bog standard comprehensive school' inevitably involve and increase pressures to isomorphism? Does a rejection of the 'bog standard comprehensive' inevitably drive undesirable diversification? What do you think are the benefits and costs of increased diversification of schools?

How in your view does the tension between isomorphism and diversification affect how a school might interpret and implement a programme to personalise learning?

What assumptions about the structures in your own school do you think now need to be questioned?

Which one of these structures do you think most urgently needs to be questioned in your school in order to meet this new view of the learner?

- The year group or age-cohort
- The division of schooling into separate primary, middle and secondary schools
- The control of learning is largely in the hands of the teachers
- The school day of timetabled lessons for classes of 25+ students
- The division between pastoral and academic aspects
- The national curriculum.

Note: When this question was put to the participants at one of the conferences on the final gateway, the responses were as follows.

The year group or age-cohort	8 %
The division of schooling into separate phases	2 %
The control of learning is largely in the hands of the teachers	25 %
The school day of timetabled lessons for classes of students	26 %
The division between pastoral and academic aspects	12 %
The national curriculum	27 %

How will you set about the process of questioning of assumptions and existing structures by (i) yourself (ii) senior colleagues (iii) the whole staff (iv) the governing body (v) parents (vi) students?

Chapter 3 A new view of the learner

I think through personalising learning we are starting to understand the amazing potential of young people. If we can get students to become emotionally intelligent, self-managing and optimistic, and understand the way they think, there's endless, limitless potential for learners in our schools today.

Jackie Beere

We have to start to think about the process of learning rather than the content of learning.

Mark Davies

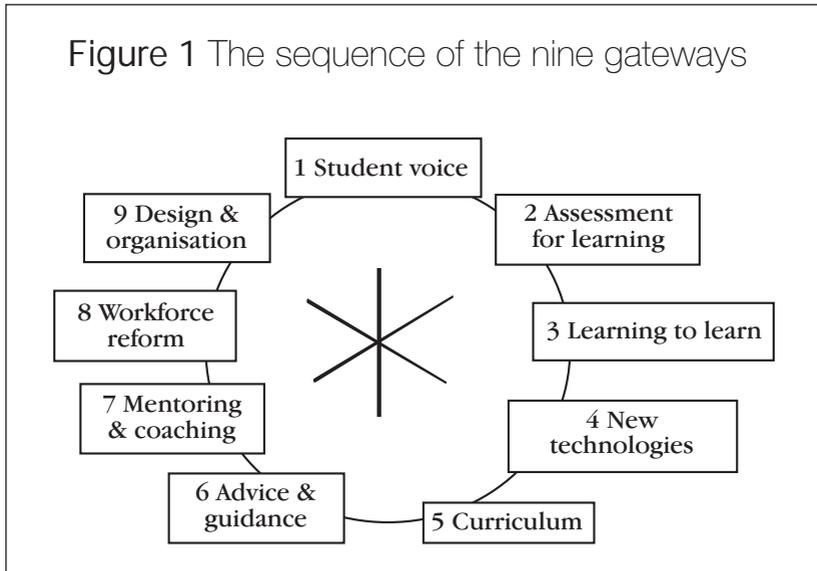
Learning isn't something done to you by teachers, it is done with you. We're talking about all learning together.

Derek Wise

In my school, no longer can we simply assume that students are passive participants in the education process. They are actively engaged in it. They are far more independent. They are far more responsible for their own learning.

John King

During the summer of 2004, a series of four workshops with over 200 headteachers and school leaders considered the meaning and nature of personalising learning. They led to the creation of the nine gateways, which were set out in the first pamphlet of the series, **Personalising learning: next steps in working laterally** (October 2004). As the conferences to



explore these over an 18-month period were established, the gateways had to be set in a sequence (figure 1). There was no obvious sequence for the gateways, but it was decided that those which explicitly put the student at the centre of things should be given priority. This proved to be a prudent decision, as we shall see.

Quite soon in the conferences it became clear that a new view of the learner was central to personalisation, namely that instead of expecting students to adapt to the pre-ordained structures, practices and routines of the school, these could all be questioned and if necessary adapted better to meet the needs of learners. Instead of students being expected to fit into the school, the school was being changed to fit the learning demands of students. Isomorphism was under challenge from innovative school leaders and teachers determined to give students a better deal.

It is one thing to identify the needs of learners, but it is another to meet them. At the heart of successful learning is the learner's **engagement**. When this engagement becomes active rather than passive, the learner is not simply receiving instruction from the teacher, but is constructing or producing or even designing the learning with the teacher. And in the more radical

aspects of work on student voice, much of what students do in school is **co-constructed** with the staff.

Six core themes emerged from the schools' presentations of their work on personalising learning. There are indications of a sequence of steps involved for the student:

Engagement with learning and life in school begins

Responsibility for learning and behaviour is then assumed

Independence in, and control over, learning is thus achieved

Confidence in oneself as a learner is consolidated

Maturity in relationships with staff and fellow students grows

Co-construction in the design, delivery and assessment of learning and teaching characterises the teacher-student relationship.

No school set out the sequence in this form, and any one school tends to emphasise some of the themes rather than others. But when the experience of several schools is amalgamated, this is what they appear to have in common.

Engagement, however limited, is an essential first step: it is difficult to imbue responsibility or independence in learners before there is some engagement. At the same time, it may need a commitment of the staff to the notion of co-construction, a sense that teaching and learning are a partnership, which the student appreciates as the impetus to becoming engaged. The reciprocal relationship between student engagement and the teacher's increasing commitment to co-construction appears to be at the core of personalising learning (figure 2). It is possible that by focusing on the relationship between these two themes that the six core themes grow as a whole in the form of a virtuous circle. According to Prahalad & Ramaswamy businesses rapidly adapting to new economic environments devise 'compelling experiences in co-creation' with clients, spawning consumer communities as parallels to student voice.

The relationship between the nine gateways and the six core themes is complex. So far, it seems that some gateways are

Figure 2 The six core themes of personalising learning

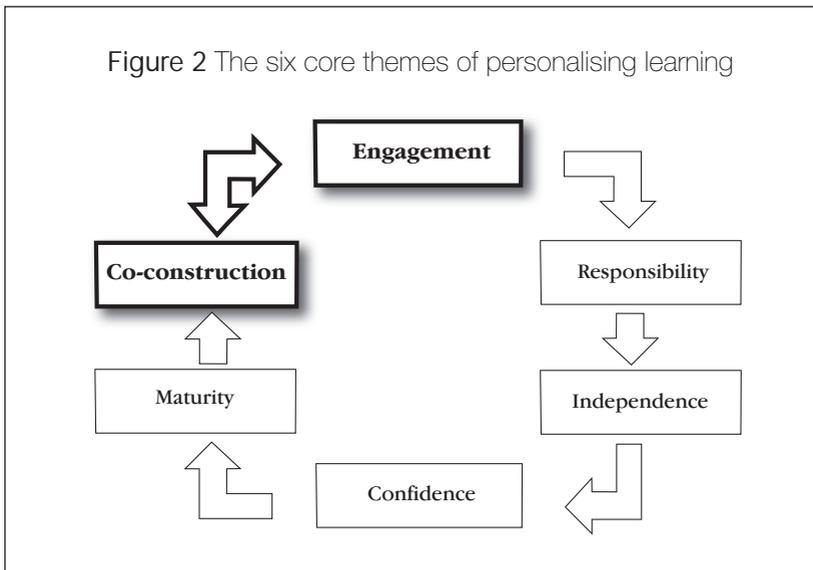


Figure 3 The power of the gateways in support of core themes

	SV	AfL	L2L	NT	Cur	A&G	M&C	WR
Engagement	High	M	M	High	High	M	M	M
Responsibility	M	High	High	M	M	M	M	Low
Independence	M	M	High	High	Low	M	Low	High
Confidence	High	M	M	Low	Low	M	High	Low
Maturity	M	M	M	Low	M	High	High	High
Co-construction	High	High	Low	M	High	Low	Low	M

more powerful in stimulating and reinforcing some of the six themes rather than others. My reading of the evidence to hand, limited and opaque at this stage, is as follows. Every gateway can be cross-tabulated with every core theme. In figure 3, the eight specific gateways (excluding design & organisation, which embraces all of them) are listed horizontally along the top, and

the core themes vertically on the left. Where the gateway provides powerful support for the core theme, the cell is labelled high; and where the support is relatively low, it is so labelled. The cells that fall between the two and are of medium power, are marked with an m. If this tabulation is broadly accurate, then if a school develops a particular gateway it can expect to strengthen the core themes accordingly. Alternatively the table may be read horizontally, so that if a school seeks to develop a particular core theme, it may prefer to open the gateway that offers the greatest potential support.

The two most powerful gateways are, on this view, student voice and assessment for learning. Student voice is of particular interest, as it is the only gateway that scores highly on three themes and, with curriculum, does so on both engagement and co-construction. It is no coincidence that schools are reporting rich effects from the development of student voice, especially in the more radical versions that elicit student voice to improve the character and quality of the teaching and learning that take place.

At the larger of the final conferences, participants were invited to assess a selection of the gateways for their relative power for personalising learning and the extent of development in their school. The answers are as follows.

Percentage rated the most powerful gateway

- Student voice 36 %
- Assessment for learning 15 %
- Learning to learn 18 %
- New technologies 9 %
- Mentoring & coaching 4 %
- Curriculum 18 %

Percentage rated the most developed in their school

- Student voice 11 %
- Assessment for learning 41 %

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- Learning to learn 9 %
- New technologies 8 %
- Mentoring & coaching 6 %
- Curriculum 24 %

Percentage rated the least developed in their school

- Student voice 16 %
- Assessment for learning 3 %
- Learning to learn 37 %
- New technologies 14 %
- Mentoring & coaching 18 %
- Curriculum 12 %

Participants found it easiest to judge which was the least developed gateway in their school and hardest to judge the most developed. Student voice was rated as the most powerful, but only 11% as their most developed. Assessment for learning was rated the most developed by 40% of the participants, reflecting the fact that it has been sponsored by government, following a long period of subterranean implementation by some schools based on the work of Black & Wiliam. Learning to learn was rated the least developed gateway, even though it was rated relatively highly in terms of its power.

Questions

Is the view of the learner changing in your school? If so, **from** what to what? Why do you think it is changing?

If the view of the learner is not changing in your school, do you think it ought to change? If so, **from** what to what? What action needs to be taken to create this change?

Which do you think is the powerful gateway for personalising learning in your school?

Which are the most and least developed gateways in your school?

Examine the grid below. It provides a way of judging the state of your school in relation to each gateway. Rate the stage you are at in each gateway according to the following scheme and then tick the appropriate box.

	SV	AfL	L2L	NT	Cur	A&G	M&C	WR
Begin								
Develop								
Embed								
Lead								

Beginning = in our school there is little or relatively modest use of this gateway for personalising learning.

Developing = we are using this gateway to help with personalisation but it is still only partially developed and unevenly spread across staff and classrooms.

Embedding = the potential of the gateway is well understood and is now being embedded across the school.

Leading = we are particularly proud of our achievements in using this gateway to personalise learning, and consider ourselves to have something to offer other schools who might want advice on how to develop this gateway.

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Which of the six core themes most needs support in your school? You may find it helpful to use the following grid.

Weak = the theme is little developed among our students

Strong = the theme is well developed among our students

Medium = the theme is developed only in some of our students.

	Weak	Medium	Strong
Engagement			
Responsibility			
Independence			
Confidence			
Maturity			
Co-construction			

What are the action implications for you in your answers to all the questions above?

Chapter 4 Deep support through collaboration between schools

Students will need deeper support, much deeper support, if school is going to be reconfigured around individuals' learning. Students don't necessarily always make the right choices and so [they need] a really significant level of guidance and help in relation to finding the pathways through their learning opportunities.

Andy Schofield

Children need deep support from people and from systems. So deep support in my school comes from one-to-one personal tutoring – half an hour a week for every child. That's a minimum entitlement, I would say. But along with that you have to have the systems. Students need total access to the data about them. You have to have a managed learning environment (MLE) or something like that, something that is student-centred. Not a management information system (MIS), which is school-centred or staff-centred.

Alison Banks

The only person who can keep track of their learning needs has got to be the child.

Paul Mortimer

Mentoring and coaching is to me the absolute key.

John King

I think deep support comes from the teaching staff rather than the pastoral staff. The support has to come through the learning interaction between the student and whoever is helping him or her to learn. That's where the coaching comes in – and the mentoring could come from other sources.

Derek Wise

We need a wide range of support that brings in external services, and we work in conjunction with them. We must look to other professionals outside the teaching profession in order to provide that support. I've completely re-thought the position of head of school and head of year.

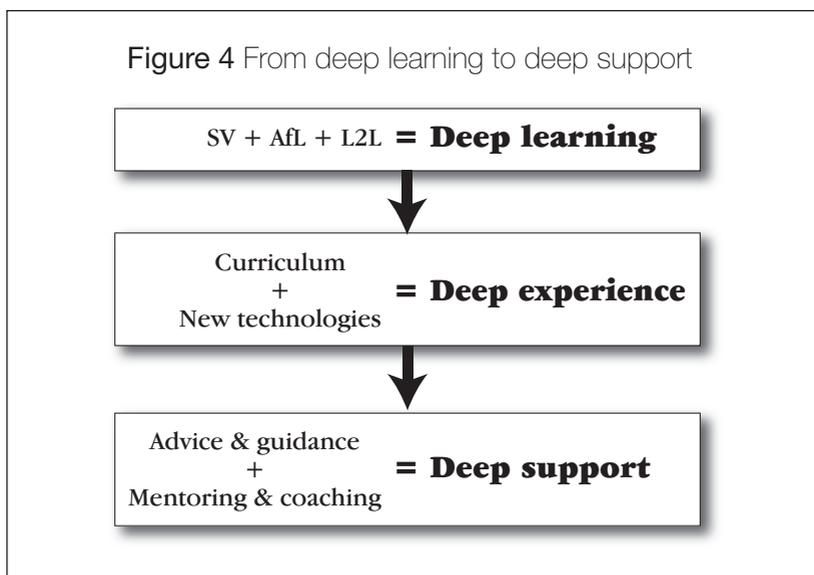
Mark Davies

The three gateways that are most frequently named as crucial contributors to a powerful approach to learning, to a new view of the learner and to a more effective style of teaching are student voice, assessment for learning, and learning to learn. These three gateways overlap, interlock and mutually reinforce: in practice, one of the three is implemented with one or both of the others. The teachers who have adopted these gateways as the route to personalisation often believe that our curriculum and formal assessment systems are excessively concerned with superficial learning, with memorisation of factual material and its regurgitation in tests. This leads to neglect of the acquisition of competences, control over learning, and the capacity to learn new skills and content. We can summarise the combined impact of these three gateways on students as **deep learning** (though this will consist of more than the gateways). This will be the subject of further exploration and a new pamphlet.

In the conference series, these three gateways were followed by the curriculum and new technologies gateways. Their contribution of personalisation is not so much to deepen learning, as to enrich the experience of learning, by enhancing engagement through more attractive content and increasing student control over it. The more radical approaches to

curriculum content, such as **Opening Minds** in England or **Essential Learnings** in Australia, structure the work into projects rather than conventional lessons (**Personalising learning** – 4, pp.14–17). Deep learning is then embedded in a **deep experience** of learning. This too will be the subject of a further pamphlet, reporting what is being done in this respect in radical approaches to the key stage 3 curriculum in England.

As figure 4 indicates, there is some advantage in grouping the gateways under concepts of deep learning and deep experience, since these demand **deep support**, which combines the advice & guidance and the mentoring & coaching gateways.



In their influential book **The support economy** (2002) Soshana Zuboff and James Maxmin speculate on how they believe business organisations will have to change to meet the growing demands for personalisation from their customers. Two key concepts are the deep support they believe that firms will have to offer clients; and to this end companies will have to work together in what they call federations, since on its own no one company has the capacity or resources to meet the needs and expectations of its increasingly demanding customers.

Both concepts can be adapted for educational institutions and applied to schools. The gateways of advice & guidance and mentoring & coaching have been shown to contribute to personalising learning. It was argued in **Personalising learning – 4** that advice & guidance systems are due for rethinking and restructuring in secondary schools. In **Personalising learning – 5** it was shown that in recent years there has been a remarkable increase in various forms of mentoring & coaching in schools. Deep support is leading to rapid changes in who does what in schools as part of workforce reform. As the quotations at the head of this chapter indicate, schools are using outsiders or teaching assistants in mentoring roles, whereas support for learning is integrated into everyday teaching. This is leading some schools to dismantle what was the almost ubiquitous structure of secondary schools: separate academic and pastoral systems (subject departments/faculties and years/houses).

The use of outsiders by schools and the involvement of various kinds of adults other than teachers in schooling suggests that the idea of federations in the Zuboff and Maxmin sense applies now to schools. They use the term federations in a loose sense to cover a wide range of partnerships and alliances between companies. In England, federation is the term given to groups of schools moving into a close association, with so-called ‘hard federations’ covering two or more schools that merge themselves into a common governance. In this analysis I use the term federations to embrace a wide variety of partnerships not only between schools – say a group of secondary schools, perhaps with a college of further education, or one secondary school with a family of local primary and special schools – but also between a school and a range of external agencies, as will be necessary to implement the changes proposed in **Every child matters** (see page 55).

In figure 5 the deep support arising from the combination of deep learning with deep experience drives both the trend towards federations and the associated workforce reform.

Federations and workforce reform combine to drive changes to school organisation and where this is possible, school design also. School leaders may differ in how they define and value

I think federations are absolutely essential if a school is going to develop. The isolationist approach is no longer effective. Working together, collaborating on a whole range of issues, seems to me the way forward – utilising not only other schools but other institutions, outside agencies, bringing together people to deliver the services that have to support pupils with. The most emphatic way of bringing all that together, of driving deep support forward, is having a whole host of different providers.

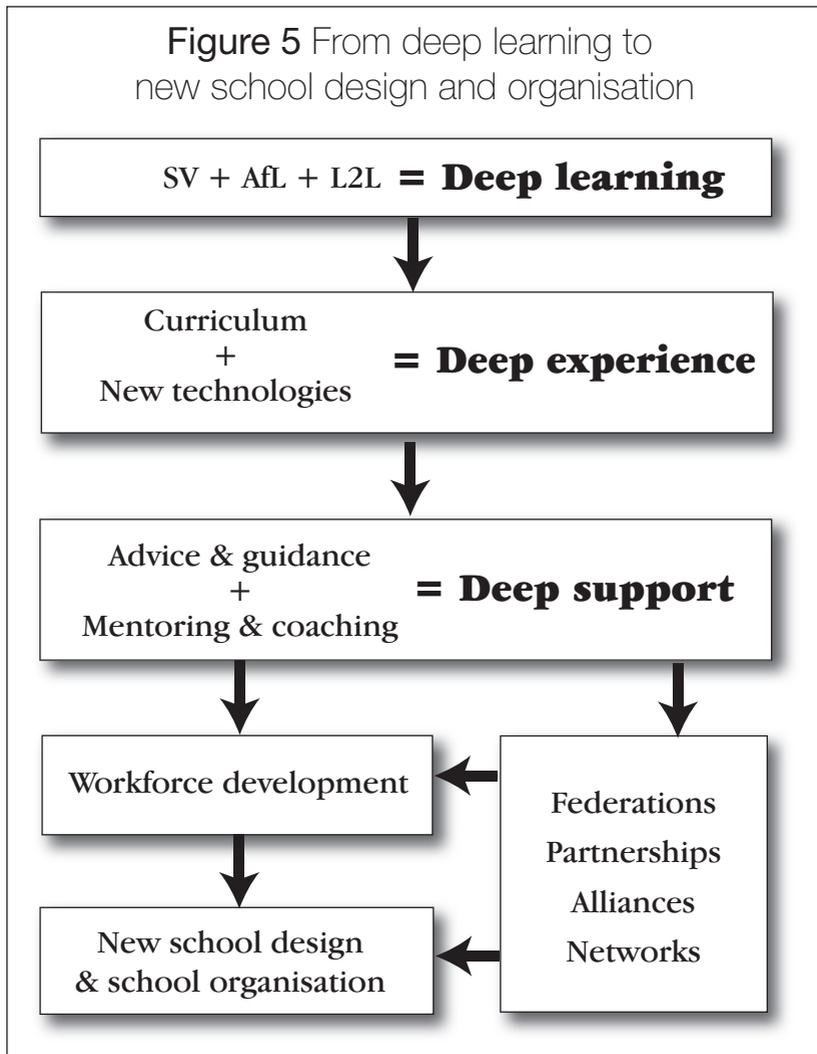
John King

I'm more sceptical about federations. I'm much more interested in the concept of franchising out certain activities, perhaps to peripatetic professionals who will service a number of schools. If you have a failing maths department, for example, rather than put up with that, you might as well say it isn't working, so we will franchise out mathematics teaching in the school to these high quality professionals who come to the school at certain times to do the maths teaching.

Derek Wise

federations, but there is no difference between the two headteachers in the quotations above about the need to turn to outside partners and so to face the consequent implications for adjustments to the school's own workforce. School leaders such as these will generate new ideas of the nature of the external partnerships. The idea of franchising or out-sourcing key activities, even the work of a whole department, is new but rich in potential. Already in some schools one (senior) member of staff works full-time on establishing and sustaining external partnerships. This is a key brokering role to exploit the intellectual and social capital available from people in the external environment, who are usually ignored simply because no member of the school staff has the time, skill or experience to make the investment.

But it is not just people structures that change in response to the demand for deep support. Students themselves take more responsibility for identifying and then meeting their learning



needs, and this necessarily entails giving them more ready access to more of the data about their learning. As Alison Banks noted, most secondary schools have invested in management information systems for bureaucratic and staff purposes, whereas what is needed are virtual learning environments and managed learning environments designed for regular use by students and their parents, as well as school staff.

In his treatment of the implication of Zuboff & Maxmin's work on the idea of federations, Brian Caldwell adduces the following propositions:

- The student is the most important unit of organisation.
- Schools cannot achieve expectations for transformation by acting alone. The success of a school depends on its capacity to join networks.
- Leadership is distributed across schools in networks.
- Networks involve a range of individuals, agencies, institutions and organisations across public and private sectors.
- New approaches to resource allocation are required.
- Intellectual capital and social capital are as important as other forms of capital.

Do you think deep support, which Caldwell does not discuss, necessarily entails acceptance of such propositions?

Questions

In your school, how deep is the support given to students for their learning?

Who is giving the support? How many external people are involved and in what ways? Are you exploiting this resource to the full?

Who brokers, or should broker, these partnerships – initiate them, manage them, sustain them, evaluate them, etc?

What is the implication of enhancing external support, eg as mentors and coaches, for the internal structure of the school workforce?

Is there more to deep support than combining and enhancing your advice & guidance and mentoring & coaching gateways?

The final gateway: school design and organisation

How satisfied are you in your school with the conventional division between the academic and pastoral systems? What alternatives do you see? What are the pros and cons of (i) assigning pastoral work to persons without qualified teacher status (ii) ensuring that teachers accept responsibility for all learning support?

To what extent does deep support for deep student learning through deep experience necessarily entail some rethinking and redesigning of your pastoral system?

Chapter 5 Reconfiguring secondary education

The final gateway of the design and organisation of the school differs from the other eight gateways in two important ways. First, in a sense all the other gateways are embraced by it. Only when the school is organised and designed in a particular way do the gateways cease to be separate initiatives or developments, and start to interact in the mutually reinforcing ways that create the consistent and coherent approach to personalising learning. Secondly, it is the school's leaders who are responsible for its design and organisation. So while all the gateways require leadership, it is leadership of the school's organisation that determines the ways in which, and the extent to which, personalising learning is coherent.

Consider the grid below. A school might complete the grid by ticking the boxes appropriate to the development of the gateways in line with the following definitions.

Figure 6 Assessing the state of gateway development

	SV	AfL	L2L	NT	Cur	A&G	M&C	WR
Simple add-on								
Expand								
Radical								

Simple add-on = development of this gateway tends to be separate, and does not challenge the design and organisation of our school.

Radical = the radical aspects of several gateways are under development in our school, and they are calling into question the conventional organisation and design of our school.

Expand = the gateway is developing and expanding beyond the simple add-on, but has not assumed the radical version.

Throughout the earlier pamphlets there are examples of how a gateway may be defined in relatively simple terms along a continuum to much more radical versions of it. Here are some examples.

Student voice

Simple: the school has a student council

Radical: students regularly evaluate the quality of teaching and offer feedback to staff on how to improve their teaching; and they play a role in the appointment of new staff.

Assessment for learning

Simple: students have targets and individual learning plans, and receive formative feedback from teachers to help in achieving them

Radical: students develop their own assessment criteria and mark schemes, and teachers reform their questioning techniques.

Learning to learn

Simple: students get help with thinking skills or learning styles in some subjects

Radical: all students follow a course in learning to learn as an essential part of their education.

New technologies

Simple: the new technologies are used by most staff to support learning in lessons

Radical: VLEs or their equivalents give all students access to all data relevant to their learning, in order to enhance their control over learning and ways to improve it.

Curriculum

Simple: some subjects are being developed to make the curriculum content more attractive to students

Radical: fundamental revision of the curriculum is taking place, such as the **Opening minds** or **Essential learnings** projects.

Deep support (advice & guidance and mentoring & coaching)

Simple: the use of mentors and coaches in school has grown in recent years

Radical: a substantial number of adults from outside the school now work with students as mentors and coaches, and many students experience peer mentoring and peer tutoring.

Workforce

Simple: we have implemented the changes required by government

Radical: we have been rethinking the titles, roles and responsibilities of many staff.

Most schools can tick the cells along the top row and rightly claim that they have engaged in change for personalising learning. Perhaps the school believes that is all it needs to do, that this is the natural limit to personalisation, and that to do more would risk damaging the school's existing practices in which it has confidence. This is, of course, a tenable position. My point is that these changes can be implemented without disturbing the school's design and organisation to any serious extent. In short, it is an approach to personalising learning that does not require the school to go through the final gateway at all.

I know of no school that can tick the radical cell for all gateways. There are schools that can tick the radical cell for several gateways. There are other schools whose leaders think that the version of personalising learning that is right for them

would entail their making changes of the kind that would later enable them to tick most, even all, the cells on the radical line. The point is that such schools have no choice but to go through the final gateway, since their reforms inexorably entail fundamental change to the school's design and organisation.

It is leaders of such schools who are quoted in this pamphlet and appear in the DVD. They all recognise that their preferred version of full personalisation cannot be achieved with the conventional design and organisation of schools. They do not believe that their schools have engineered a school design and organisation that reflects their vision of full personalisation – or at least, not yet. This means that they cannot offer what many school leaders – including some of those reading this pamphlet – really want: one or more models of what such a school or system of secondary education would look like, with advice on how to implement it. Rather, they point to assumptions that will have to be questioned and suggest directions that school design and organisation will probably have to take to achieve this end. You will find many hints of the future of personalisation within secondary education in what they say, but no neat blueprint. They continue to make their professional journey to personalising learning, with a sense of what lies ahead, both challenges and opportunities, but without a clear picture of the ultimate destination.

At present in schools, it's on the hamster wheel, the treadmill, the factory model, the industrial model. The last 20 years have seen significant developments in education, yet many schools still look the same. In 5 or 10 years time, I'd like to think that we won't be doing to students what we're doing to them at the moment – herding them through a curriculum that's imposed on them, learning experiences and a pedagogy that's imposed on them. So to me the bottom line is if we want schools and learning centres to survive, they have got to adapt and change quite radically and quickly. Otherwise they'll become superfluous – as they already are to a large number of students and parents.

Andy Schofield

We have to go back and ask again: what is education? what is learning? If we were establishing learning spaces today, would we really establish them as we do now? We must talk about things in different ways, because otherwise we are going to get what we've always got. We need to change our mental models and some of that language about education. Asking the questions, and thinking about what are the right questions to ask, are going to be paramount to any sort of education transformation.

Jan Robinson

I think we seriously have to question the whole Building Schools for the Future programme, because what we're seeing at the present moment is Building Schools of the Past, which are neater, cleaner, warmer, with a few more windows. I think we have to challenge the whole concept of the factory model. The idea is making it into a consumer model, not a producer-led model. We need to look very much at the buildings: how flexible are they? How adaptable are they? One term can we have small learning areas? Next term can we have large areas for vocational subjects? Or may we have large lecture theatres?

David Triggs

My idea is really very simple. Regular fixed learning slots called a week and a term are good enough for the majority of students – but not for a minority. The law requires that schools be open for 390 sessions. It does imply 190 days, but it doesn't have to be the same 190 for every student and every teacher. We already have different half terms around the country. It could be quite simple to use the whole of the year for education much more effectively, not by making teachers teach all year except Christmas Day, but by keeping the school open 24/7 and 364 days for use by different people at different times in different combinations. Should we try it if it gets every student in? My answer is yes.

Paul Mortimer

My vision is that we're a 24/7 school on 364 days a year because we're now beginning to appreciate not only that the child needs an individual learning programme for achievement. We also need to look at when the best time is for a child to work.

Cheryl Heron

Because school buildings in England have been neglected for decades, we shall see vast sums spent on the building and refurbishing of schools in the near future, to fulfil the government's promise to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school over the next 15 years, with a first-phase spend of over £2 billion. This is good news for all those who live and work in schools. Yet there is a danger that this opportunity to design schools for the future will not be exploited to the full, for it is too easy, as David Triggs says, to build for the past – or, in Alan November's telling phrase, to build new old schools, white elephants that will inhibit the development of new ways of working in schools.

The Times Education Supplement described present provision in this way: 'A standardised, institutionalised environment, lacking character. Add-on technology squeezed into classrooms. Uncomfortable, inflexible furniture. No control over light and ventilation. Regimented desks. Cluttered social spaces. Noisy and overcrowded. Sounds familiar? ... A MORI poll found that 95 % of teachers recognised that the environment had a strong influence on the way children learn and behave. Despite this, most staff also believed that design is unchangeable and beyond their control; something to work around...'

It needs to change, yet many headteachers who have been involved with the building of new schools complain that too many decisions are being made by the wrong people with the wrong ideas. Nor is it just a matter of bringing in top architects to design new schools. Tim Brighouse has complained that some new schools, designed by some of Britain's best-known architects, are strong on style but weak on substance, and can still feel like a modern prison rather than intimate a fresh approach to learning.

The difficulty is a real one. How can one accurately predict what schools – or more inclusive terms such as educational buildings or learning spaces – should look like 10 or 20 years ahead? Certain principles, however, are guiding the thinking of school leaders.

- Buildings, learning spaces and furniture will need to be flexible, so that they can be adapted quickly to a wide variety of uses. Conventional classrooms, which take up most of the space in the conventional school, will not do.
- Buildings and spaces will be in use for much longer than the conventional school day, term and year. When they are in use, both for school-age students and other kinds of learner, 24/7 and virtually every day of the year, this has implications for workforce reform as well as building design.
- If ‘stage not age’ develops, with the growth of individual learning plans, then we can envisage the end of the conventional age cohort and year group, which will also require considerable flexibility in the design of space and the use of staff.
- It can be assumed that many secondary age students will spend far less time in school buildings than in the past. Vocational courses and work-based learning, the development of projects rather than short lessons (see **Personalising – 4**, pp.14–17), and the restructuring of key stage 3 (**Personalising – 4**, pp.18–19) will mean the death of the conventional school timetable.
- The new technologies will play a powerful role in future education, so buildings must be designed to allow full advantage to be taken of them.
- Designs of buildings, spaces and furniture will need to take account of the growth of federations and partnerships of various kinds, including those arising out of **Every child matters**.
- Many teachers and students have conservative views about school design: there is the natural tension about moving from designs that are familiar to those that provoke feelings

of insecurity. New designs demand imagination; sensitivity to people is equally important.

- Before settling on new designs, it is essential to rethink fundamentals and ask about the purposes of education and the kinds of outcomes that are envisaged, and then to demonstrate to stakeholders that new designs will support the realisation of better aims and outcomes.

In the past, schools were designed on the factory model, perhaps not unreasonably since one of the main functions of the school was to prepare people for life in the factory. Today, then, if one of the functions of school is to prepare people for life in the modern workplace, clues to school design lie in flexitime, part-time working, home working, team work, hot desking and so on. Schools could profitably become more like the best workplaces, and teachers might offer students apprenticeships in post-industrial qualities and skills.

If students are co-constructors of their education with the school staff, then the design of a school will reflect this change in relations between teachers and taught. As Jane McGregor has put it: 'Rather than being an arena **within** which social relations take place, space is made **through** the social – it is enacted and so continually created and recreated. It is therefore critically important to examine how this occurs.' Personalising learning changes relationships, the spaces through which they are made, and so also the design of those spaces.

If the Department for Education and Skills in England wishes to end the isomorphism that undoubtedly constrains the current design of schools, it may well have to rethink all the building rules and regulations that impede innovative design. Part of the problem is that we have to break free from the notion that schools of the future will, like schools of the past, be relatively small variations around a common core of invariable features that comprise what makes a school a school. Hitherto school design, with its associated coercive rules, has powerfully shaped the isomorphism of educational spaces and thereby of what people do with their lives in those spaces. Under the combined influence of personalising learning and the increasing

independence of schools from central and local government control, isomorphism will decrease. We can legitimately speak of **the** school of the past where there was a dominant design model, but we cannot speak sensibly of **the** school of the future, when there will no longer be a master design for schools. We are at the beginning of these developments, but headteachers understand the implications for the design and operation of schools.

In my own school, we've got to this position now, where students serve on the governing body and they serve on the curriculum committee, whereby they co-produce, co-deliver and co-evaluate the curriculum model. So instead of being passive recipients of the educational process, they're actually designing it themselves. And they respond so much more positively to something they have co-created. I put our improvement in results directly to their input. Ten years from now schools will be unrecognisable to how they are at present. Schools will operate in totally different ways.

John King

Leadership is at all levels. Leadership isn't the headteacher, it is distributed leadership throughout the organisation, and opportunities for everybody to get involved in sharing that leadership. So student leadership and participation are very important. There is huge potential in the idea of co-construction. And I don't think teachers have really begun to think about it yet. For students who are disengaged there has to be a radical approach. In a school such as my own, lots of other means have been tried, all the standard ways anybody could think of. The traditional ways of school improvement have been tried and haven't worked. So in that situation there is more drive for radical approaches.

Alison Banks

We think about the goals of 16–19, the long-term benefits of education, our idealistic goals. But we actually focus on the immediate goals, the ones that come at GCSE and at Advanced level, whereas there's a repositioning of the school in which we look to learners' long-term learning needs and potential – and actually get a lifelong love of learning within it.

Mark Davies

In the short term, I suspect that the pressures for redesign will arise in key stages 3 and 4 rather than 16–19. As Alex Reed says, 'There is a sense in key stage 3 that you're just hanging around, waiting for key stage 4 to happen; so we need to look hard for frameworks that will give key stage 3 much more meaning, because I think the children are capable of a lot more than we achieve at the moment.' The potential variety of patterns for lower secondary education, as reported in **Personalising learning – 4**, is considerable. When, as is happening, such new structures lead to enhanced student achievement, schools will inevitably start to diverge in their organisational arrangements. Schools are actively experimenting with organisational structures that were once unquestioned, and they are doing so in order to achieve better outcomes rather than innovating for its own sake.

I think we have to stop talking about the timetable, and start talking about world-class educational outcomes. What will our young people look like when they walk out of school into the workforce, into university, into citizenship? [Their successful progress] will only come about if we stop getting hung up about 'league tables', about five A*–C grades at GCSE, and start talking about world-class outcomes, not some pretty low-level outputs.

David Triggs

One timetable doesn't fit any more. You've got to fit timetables within timetables. At present we have six different timetables running, and we change them throughout the year according to what the needs of the students are. We believe in stage not age, letting people work together at a level and a pace that's right for them. This way we're getting motivation, students seeing a purpose for why they're in school. Every child has an individual learning programme that we plan with them, and they have a say in it.

Cheryl Heron

It is far from clear at present where these different and diverging paths adopted by schools will lead. Driven by the combination of increased independence from government and by personalising learning that motivates staff to strive for deep learning, deep experience and deep support from federations of agencies, school leaders will accept a radical agenda of transformation.

If schools are configured around what learners need, and what the individual student needs, then that will create a completely different form of organisation. Even the most innovative schools are still only scratching the surface in terms of customising and personalising the learning opportunities and the social opportunities that we offer students. I think it's transformation that's required, not reform. We need to fundamentally reconfigure the way schools are. And I think the scary thing is we don't really know what the future is going to be. Everything we know tells us that we have to change and therefore do development and research work in relation to these changes and continue to push the frontiers forward.

Andy Schofield

The journey for leaders is indeed a scary one, but it need not be as lonely as it might seem. In England we have never had so many outstanding school leaders with the vision and confidence to engage in radical innovation. As they are doing it in different

ways – no one school in the country is engaged in a radical version of every one of the personalising learning gateways – there is massive room for collaboration between innovative schools to share their complementary developments.

Isomorphism was always the enemy of innovation and the retreat of isomorphism should unleash innovation, especially when it can arise through the new federations or partnerships that are now flourishing among schools. The old isomorphism induced conformity within competition; the new diversification inspires experimentation within networks.

I think we need to be very radical, but the answers are out there, just scattered around in different institutions. We need to bring them together in a coherent way. At the moment, they're isolated and they are not feeding off each other and reinforcing each other. There is tremendous innovation and goodwill in many schools, albeit in isolated pockets. Bring that together and we're talking about a transformative, world-class education system. And this isn't a quick fix: this is a slow burn, but it will lead to transformative effects.

Derek Wise

Perhaps an easy way to look at the challenge for leadership is to think what sustains me in starting to be bolder than I've been in my career to date. A future scenario for education is around the network of people who are like-minded, who share ideas, letting each other know how things are going and giving moral support to the imperative of moving the agenda on. One of the key challenges is to lead transformation and to be innovative in the best interest of students, but to take calculated risks in the short term without jeopardising students' genuine success in the present. In 10 years' time I really hope we'll have made the transformational leap and gone through the risk-taking period without throwing the baby out with the bathwater. This is where leadership needs to be very strong.

Paul Roberts

I believe the conferences, as well as the future plans of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust for the follow-up work on personalising learning, and especially the development and research (D&R) networks around the gateways, indicate that the leadership is indeed strong and will soon make its mark not merely on improving schools but on reconfiguring educational services.

Questions

Do you think the factory model of schooling has had its day? What do you think should replace it? In what ways and at what pace would you (i) wish to move from the one to the other and (ii) feel able to move from one to the other? How might you close the gap between what you want and what you feel able to accomplish?

Do you think we need to redesign new buildings (the kinds of space and how they are used) and make them open more frequently (24/7, all year) to a wider range of people? What are the implications if you move your school further in this direction? What obstacles and opposition might you encounter and how would you overcome them?

What principles guide you when you come to refurbish or redesign your school?

How might the idea of co-construction of education between staff and students affect the way you set about rethinking the design and/or organisation of the school?

In what ways will implementing **Every child matters** affect the design and organisation of your school?

How far can you go in reducing the constraints of the timetable on school organisation?

Do you agree with the school leaders who think it is transformation rather than reform that is now needed? How would you define the difference?

The final gateway: school design and organisation

To what degree are you breaking free from competitive isomorphism and moving into collaborative diversification? What is moving you in this direction and what is holding you back? Do you want to go in this direction or would you prefer to stay where you are?

To achieve transformation, do you think you can take the calculated risks in the short term without jeopardising students' genuine success in the present?

Chapter 6 The 21st century educational imaginary

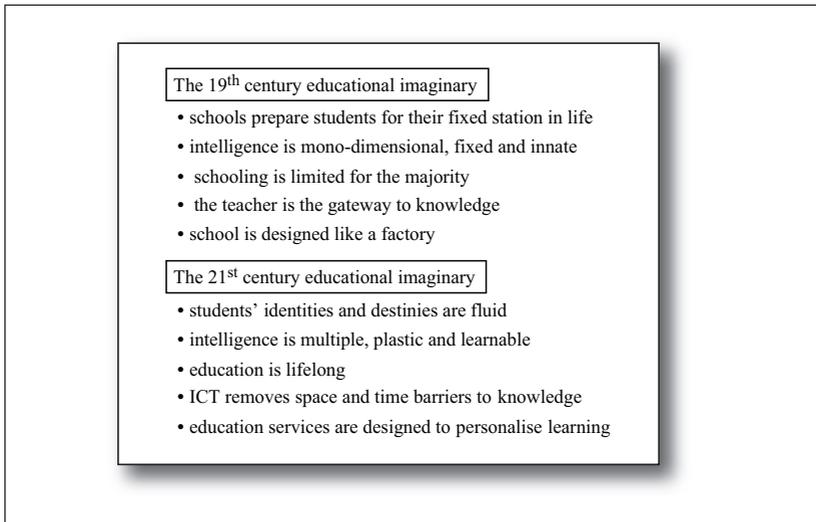
The idea of an educational imaginary was first offered in **Personalising learning – 1**. It is an adaptation of Charles Taylor's concept of the social imaginary, which refers to the phenomenon that in every age people adopt a commonsense understanding of the way the world is, and therefore should be, always taken for granted and so treated as unquestionable. In any age and culture part of the dominant social imaginary is its educational imaginary, a conception of schools and schooling that everybody treats as the normal and natural way of understanding how we should educate the young.

Social imaginaries change over time, but usually rather slowly. Currently educational imaginaries are changing rapidly, and in **Personalising learning – 1** I contrasted the 19th-century education imaginary with that which seems to be emerging for the 21st century. My argument is that this is now developing so fast that school leaders are living through, and indeed are having to manage, the transition from one educational imaginary to another; and that personalising learning with its associated agenda is one of the strongest drivers towards the new educational imaginary, which will constitute an educational transformation.

It has been assumed that the professional journey involved in the series of conferences about personalising learning over the last 18 months would entail an elaboration of the original 10 contrasting elements that comprise the two imaginaries. And so it has proved. Here is the educational imaginary that has evolved from the explorations into the gateways of personalising learning. It is another way, as a complement to the last chapter, of trying to capture where personalising learning is taking us.

The final gateway: school design and organisation

In our thinking about schools and schooling the foreground is taken up with what goes on inside the school and the wider, socioeconomic backcloth of society is simply the background. To understand the power of educational and social imaginaries, and to understand the nature of the transition, we have to reverse this.



This first group of elements thus sets the educational imaginary within the wider society. The origins of mass schooling lay in the need to design schools for the social engineering of a class-based industrial society. The assumption was that most of the population were of limited ability and should not be given too much education lest they rebel against their station in life. There was tight control over access to knowledge since the teacher was, for most learners, the crucial gateway. New theories of human abilities, the advent of new technologies and the allied creation of a more open society are causing a seismic shift in educational structures and functions since the establishment of compulsory education in England in 1870. Though many teachers are now uneasy with the 19th century imaginary, they find it difficult to move fully into the new imaginary.

The 19th century educational imaginary

- schools are culturally homogeneous
- schools are similar and interchangeable
- schools diversify vertically
- public/private provision are sharply distinguished
- the school of the future can be predicted and designed

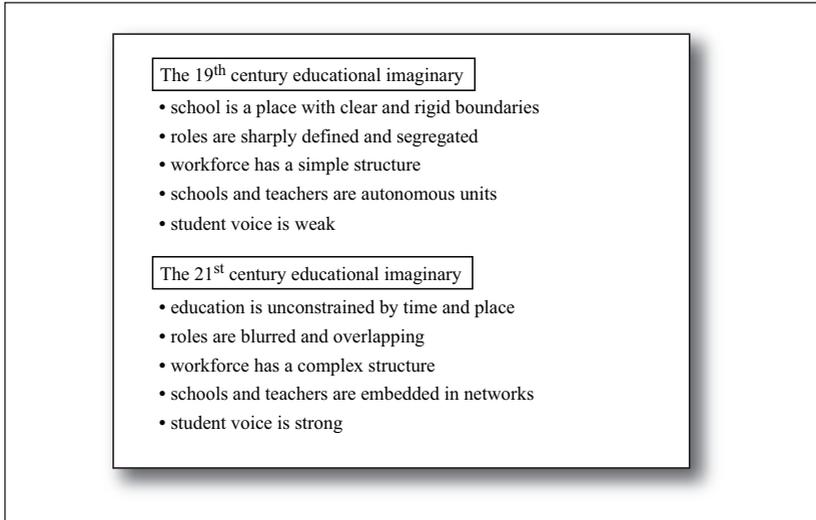
The 21st century educational imaginary

- schools are culturally heterogeneous
- schools are dissimilar with a distinctive ethos
- schools diversify horizontally
- public/private distinction is blurred
- the schools of the future evolve haphazardly

To maintain the social structure, people of the same background – social class, religion, age, gender, ethnicity – went to the same type of school; one that was deemed appropriate for them. The so-called ‘public’ schools were for the elites at the top, and elementary schools for the masses at the base. Schools of each type were much the same: it did not matter much whether you went to Rugby, Eton or Charterhouse if you were upper-class, nor which elementary school you attended if you were working-class.

Various attempts were made to restructure along 19th-century lines, for example the introduction of the tripartite system in the mid-20th century. By the fourth quarter of the 20th century, the comprehensive secondary school had emerged, amid considerable and continuing controversy, to alter the picture. Current policy, as we have noted, is to leave some of the vertical diversity intact but to diversify horizontally – specialist schools, faith schools, academies and so on, with an attempt to blur the public/private distinction. But some of the engineering of the school system is being left to local entrepreneurs in place of strict control from the centre.

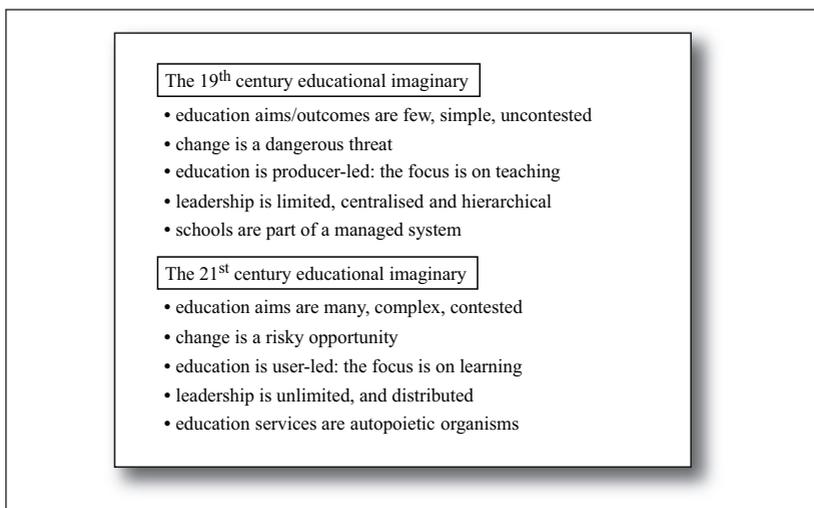
When one turns to the internal arrangements of the school, these inevitably mirror, and are consonant with, the external structures. For most of its history the school has been relatively



insulated: even as late as the 1960s it was possible for a primary school to paint a line at the gates with the notice 'no parents beyond this line' – not much rhetoric about parent power in that era. The roles between teacher and taught were tightly drawn. When I became a teacher in a 1960s grammar school I was expected to wear an academic gown daily. The school staff consisted almost entirely of teachers, with a very small secretarial and caretaking staff – a distant cry from today's secondary school where some 50% of the adults in school may not be qualified teachers. Teachers taught mainly alone in the privacy of their classroom; and this professional autonomy was matched by an institutional autonomy so that there was very little contact between schools. Students were expected to do as staff dictated. Only in the second half of the 20th century, in the light of the more general decline in deference in Western society, did school students slowly begin to develop their voice, which is now a central feature of personalisation.

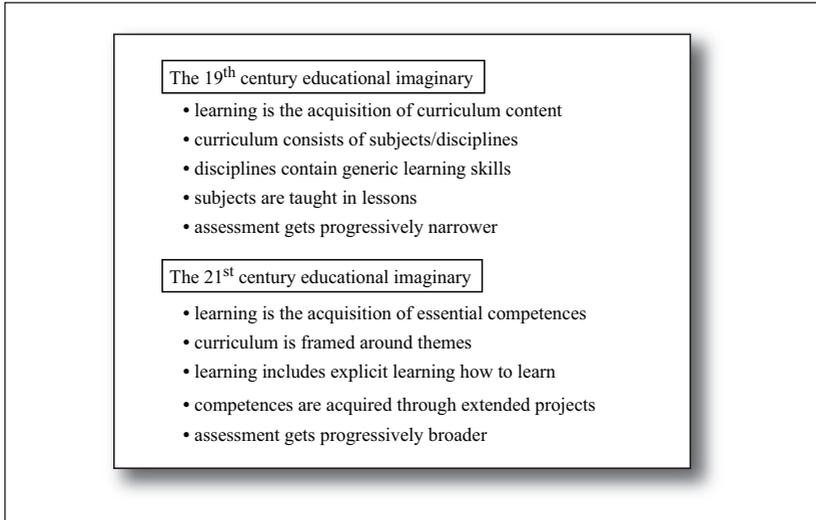
The 19th-century reforms of education were mainly a reluctant concession to the demands of a changing society in competition with European neighbours. But a central objective was to maintain social stability, and there was substantial agreement about the purposes of education for different social classes. Today, by contrast, the aims of education have come to be seen

as multiple and complex, and are frequently contested. Different visions of education within the system drive change, which many professionals, especially leaders, see as exciting as well as essential. Governments tend to have narrower and more conservative aims, though with a similar passion for reform. There is increasing agreement that schooling should be consumer-led rather than producer-led. There remains, though, a deep tension over whether the consumer is the parent or the learner – or for some the employer or higher education – and the role of central government in shaping this change.



Whatever the stance taken on this matter, there is a huge shift from the focus on teaching to learning. Many school leaders are moving toward conceiving the system as essentially autopoietic – a term used in biology to describe self-developing, self-sustaining and self-renewing web-like systems and networks. This biological field called emergence provides a better analogy for education services of the future than the bureaucratic models of the past. Such systems cannot develop and prosper if governments insist on command-and-control direction from the centre.

Finally we come to what, from a professional perspective, is the central core of any educational imaginary. The broad change between the 19th and 21st centuries in this last cluster of five



elements is profound and many educators are ambivalent, feeling caught between the two. The old, it is felt, contains much of value: knowledge, discipline, certainty, security. Yet most of us have doubts, and the old educational imaginary increasingly proves to be inadequate to the needs of young people who will be fully mature in a very different world of the mid-21st century. Commitment to their future pushes many school leaders to strive for the new educational imaginary, which sometimes alarms policymakers with an eye on a more cautious public opinion that often romanticises the schools of yesteryear. How to get the best of the old within the potential of the new remains a challenge, perhaps the most important one for personalising learning.

One thing seems very likely, however, that there will not be **the** school of tomorrow but many different schools of tomorrow. They will reflect a range of visions created to meet the needs and aspirations of a wide variety of people in many contrasting contexts. Diversification will be resisted in many quarters, for it raises issues about equity and justice on which past isomorphic systems set such store, but never fully realised. Perhaps at some future stage we shall reach a new consensus about the education of the young that will produce a new convergence on public provision. I believe that can only arise, not by seeking to

restore the past, but by investing further in the active experimentation out of which better ways of personalising learning are already being designed and tested.

This means engaging in much more systematic and sustained development and research in education than we have ever seen. Hitherto, the R&D approach in education has been far more R than D, and the research has usually focused on the agenda of the academic rather than the practitioner communities. The conferences and pamphlets on personalising learning have brought to light much good practice that is worthy of wider dissemination. But the most outstanding schools are working to devise and test next practice, the ways of working that will be even better than what they now do. Indeed, they are revealing an important truth: that to focus exclusively on the dominant criteria of effective schooling, test and examination results in league tables, works only in the short term. It is by consistently working towards better practice, even when this involves a degree of risk taking, that standards can truly be raised. It is a kind of irony that when schools focus on the six core themes underpinning personalisation, improved test and examination performances largely take care of themselves as a natural consequence.

So many schools are already actively engaged in innovative work, but if, in the field of the nine gateways to personalisation, this activity is to transform practice across all schools it must be:

- **decentralised**, not determined and directed from the centre
- **distributed**, or shared between different schools and groups of teachers rather than depending on the ideas and initiative of individuals
- **disciplined**, or working to an agreed agenda of priorities rather than letting a thousand flowers bloom in creative anarchy.

As I have argued elsewhere, it is the ‘open source’ culture in the world of the new technologies that provides the model of how teachers might work together to engage in effective radical innovation.

The D&R networks being established for each of the gateways are the logical next step. In each of the 11 regions of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, there will be one hub school with three core functions:

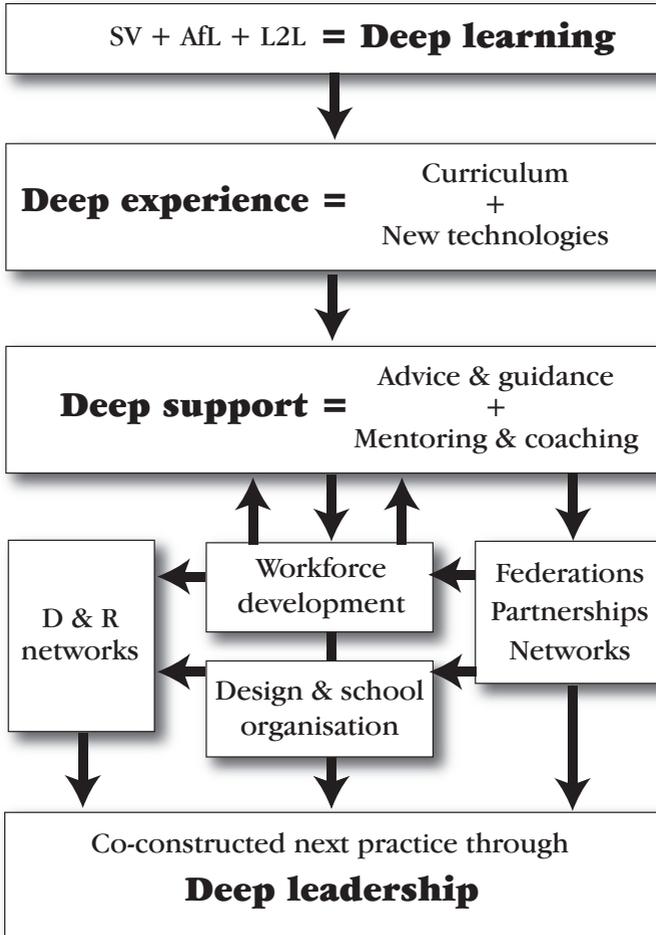
- To deploy its own workforce in innovating to advance the work of the gateway and apply the consequences to the design & organisation of the school
- To lead a local network of schools for local innovation and knowledge transfer in the field of the gateway
- To be a member of a national network of 11 local hubs to shape and coordinate the programme of work.

Since it is clear that no school is advanced in every gateway, every school enters the network as a learner, with something to give to, but also something to take from, the networks. This will require leadership of the highest quality, at both national and local levels, for the innovation will be **co-constructed** between schools, between staff, and between staff and students – just as this series of six pamphlets are themselves co-constructions. It is leadership that will necessarily be deep, involving people at every level and drawing on as yet untapped and under-developed resources for collaboration and coordination. This **deep leadership** will be the subject of a later pamphlet.

The professional journey we have undertaken since **Personalising learning – 1** can readily be summarised (figure 7). The journey began on the basis of a few ideas and nine gateways, with limited understanding of the order in which they might be explored and the complex relationships between them. Eighteen months later, it is clearer that the movement from the 19th-century educational imaginary to that of the 21st century mirrors changes reported in the economy and wider society. This is also embedded in a trajectory from mass production, through mass customisation, to the experience economy and the co-created economy. Now we can re-conceptualise the nine gateways as forming four clusters – deep learning, deep experience, deep support and deep leadership. These ideas will help to guide the next steps in the journey of personalising learning, and especially the creation of models of

the design and organisation of schools that most fully personalise learning. It is these schools that will take the lead on the path to educational transformation.

Figure 7 The nine gateways reconfigured



Questions

Where do you stand in relation to the 19th and 21st century educational imaginaries? Are you firmly in one or caught between the two? How much of the old do you wish to retain and how much of the new do you wish to embrace?

How much agreement is there in your school on the above question?

What are the action implications for you to the answers to the above two questions?

Do you find the reconfiguration of the nine gateways in figure 7 helpful?

What role do you intend to play in the D&R networks that are now being formed?

References, sources and suggestions

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This is the last in the series of iNet pamphlets on the nine interconnected gateways that lead to personalising teaching and learning

- Curriculum
- Learning to learn
- Workforce development
- Assessment for learning
- School organisation & design
- New technologies
- Student voice
- Advice & guidance
- Mentoring & coaching

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