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Evaluation of LSC (West of England) Work Related Learning Project

**Evaluation of the Learning and Skills Council
(West of England)
Work Related Learning Project**

**Final report for the Learning and Skills Council
April 2010**

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Executive Summary

This is the final report of the evaluation of the Work Related Learning Project. The project was funded by the Learning and Skills Council (West of England) and sought to contribute to raising the levels of 14-16 year olds' participation, achievement and progression through high quality work-related learning. It commenced in September 2007 and was initially focused on three Local Area Partnerships in Bristol. The project extended in a second phase from September 2008 to support activity in South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset. Evaluation fieldwork concluded in November 2009, by which time most project-funded activity had taken place.

The project was successful in meeting its goals, and it produces some clear pointers for further development and innovation. The evaluation shows that the Project succeeded in generating excitement in learning, in harnessing the enthusiasm of teachers, in providing new opportunities to learners bringing them into close engagement with workplaces and work related tasks, and in contributing to learners' scope to build evidence of their learning. Whilst the design of the Project and the evaluation would not permit the measurement and demonstration of direct causality, it is also likely that the Project made a contribution to a rise in recorded achievement in the Bristol area.

This report provides a description of the Project and how it was evaluated. It notes some important contextual factors and also unintended consequences that must be taken into account when weighing up what the Project teaches us about effective curricular and pedagogic intervention. The report concludes with a number of recommendations.

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1 This document is the Final Evaluation Report following an evaluation of the Learning and Skills Council (West of England) Work Related Learning Project (hereafter WRLP). The evaluation was carried out by a team drawn from the Bristol Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and Education (BRILLE) at the University of the West of England, Bristol¹. The purposes of the WRLP may be summarised as ‘...to contribute to raising the levels of 14-16 year olds’ participation, achievement and progression through high quality work-related learning’.² This final evaluation report is based on data gathered across a sample of project activity, and it has both summative and formative purposes. It is summative in that it provides an independent view of the quality and qualities of what was done in the name of the project. It is formative in that it continues an established feature of the conception and conduct of the evaluation, namely the attempt to provide critical friendship to aid the Steering Group and project management and coordination in their reflection and decision-making for the future.

1.2 The WRLP began in September 2007 and was initially focused on Bristol. However, during the latter part of the 2007-08 academic year, as more funding became available, it was extended to include activity in the three neighbouring Local Authorities of North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset. This activity commenced in September 2008. This report pertains to WRLP activity across all four Local Authority (LA) areas, up to the end of November 2009.

2. Brief description of the WRLP³

2.1 The purpose of the WRLP was to contribute to raising the levels of 14-16 year olds’ participation, achievement and progression through high quality work-related learning (WRL). Its original intentions included to:

- a) assist in developing holistic and personalised learning programmes for young people in which WRL is not simply an add-on;
- b) assist in creating programmes for young people into which they are selected as a sign of success and not failure;
- c) assist in raising the achievement of young people in the functional skills of oral communication, literacy and numeracy as well as developing specifically work related skills;
- d) assist in developing a cadre of champions within the teaching workforce for WRL.

2.2 For the purpose of this initiative WRL was originally conceived as including:

- vocational and applied courses;
- enrichment of core subjects and particularly English and Maths;

¹ The evaluation team comprised Prof. David James, Prof. Ann-Marie Bathmaker and Dr Richard Waller.

² LSC Invitation to Tender for Evaluation, p. 5

³ This brief description is adapted from what appeared in the Schedule B Specification document originally supplied by the LSC West of England.

- freestanding work related experience, e.g., work experience certificate logbooks, visits to and from businesses etc.

2.3 However, it is important to note that these original intentions and definitions were to some extent modified as the WRLP grew, and that the WRLP embraced a number of legitimate variations of emphasis. Across all four LA areas, WRL was interpreted as contributing to contextualised applied learning for young people at all levels. In Bristol, following the Interim Evaluation Report, the WRLP intentions were also influenced by the QCA definition of WRL as being *for* work, *about* work or *through* work.⁴

2.4 A distinctive feature of the WRLP was the process of inviting proposals and plans from the key bodies or individuals. In the first 'Bristol' phase, proposals were invited from the three 14-19 Local Area Partnerships in Bristol and there was negotiation of detail as these were refined to become the basis for an agreement and the release of funds. In the second phase a similar negotiated process was adopted, though North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset were presented with a further specific requirement that proposals should:

- show how WRL for 14-16 year olds would be central to school improvement;
- strengthen/develop WRL in vocational/applied courses and in core subjects particularly English and Maths;
- build on success, make more of existing provision and develop new approaches;
- be collaborative;
- contribute to the preparation for Diplomas.

3. Approach, design and methods of the evaluation

3.1. As well as being a direct response to the specification, the approach, design and methods of the evaluation followed an established way of working and a successful track record of conducting research, evaluation, consultancy and knowledge exchange projects with a wide range of large and small clients. The work of BRILLE and the School of Education at the University of the West of England, Bristol is informed by values of social justice and by high ethical standards of research conduct. A constant feature is the promotion of democracy, so there is usually an emphasis on the 'personalised' and practical dimensions of programmes and initiatives. We seek knowledge of effects and changed practices and perceptions at all levels, but *particularly* at the level of the citizen or recipient of a service. In the case of the evaluation of the WRLP this meant that the experiences and perspectives of learners were just as important as those of sponsors, managers or teachers. A copy of the *Information Sheet for Participants* developed for this evaluation is attached as Appendix 1.

⁴ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority – See for example [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/13518/The%20work-related%20learning%20guide%20second%20edition%20\(final%20pdf\).pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/13518/The%20work-related%20learning%20guide%20second%20edition%20(final%20pdf).pdf)

3.2. The main tool for data-gathering in the evaluation took the form of case studies of developments and activities carried out in name of the WRLP where there was a traceable connection to the human and financial resources of the initiative⁵. Cases are shown in the table below and were chosen in negotiation with the Project Lead Coordinators in each local authority. Collectively, they can be taken as a legitimate sample of WRLP activity and as representative of its core purposes. The evaluation has had to contend with both the *variety* of these developments and activities, and the fact that they are always *situated amongst multiple initiatives* (generated at teacher, school, authority and national levels). This makes it very difficult to demonstrate causal links which would, in a classical sense, 'prove' the impact of the WRLP. Nevertheless, it is possible to illustrate probable attributable effects of new activities and developments through the careful use of case studies that include an element of triangulation – for example, comparing accounts of an event from several sources such as (a) teachers, (b) learners, (c) observations and (d) documents. It is also possible to compare intentions with consequences over time, or to compare two or more case studies that show different kinds of response to the same sorts of problem or issue and to make reasonably confident claims about more and less successful responses.

3.3 A total of 15 cases were studied in detail, as shown in the table below. The data and analysis based on these detailed case studies is set in the context of Authority-level data on attainments at Levels 1 and 2. The evaluation team members shared data in summary notes pertaining to each case, then discussed comparisons and analysis.

⁵ We are confident that all the activities we studied were linked to the WRLP, but would note that sometimes the nature and extent of this linkage was unclear, even to the people directly involved.

The 15 case studies in the evaluation

Location	Cases
Bath & N.E. Som	(1) 'Career academy' initiative
	(2) Media OCR
Bristol ⁶	WRL in English – South (3) & East Central (4) WRL in Maths – North (5) & East Central (6) Literacy and numeracy workshops – South (7) & North (8) (9). Vocational conferences in Sport, Health and Social Care, Performing Arts etc. ⁷ (10). BTEC Science staff development
North Somerset	(11) WRL in Maths
	(12) Diploma preparations, employer engagement
South Glos	(13) WRL in English
	(14) WRL in Maths
	(15) WRL in Science

3.4 The evaluation team gathered its data by:

- i. Data-gathering meetings with the four LA WRLP Leads and Project Manager to discuss plans and progress, and to negotiate access to specific reports from Authority databases;
- ii. Carrying out one-to-one data-gathering interviews with 33 key staff, including three Local Area Partnership Heads (in Bristol), three independent consultants and 27 teachers and local authority-based Advisers;
- iii. 25 data-gathering individual and group interviews with learners, usually combined with perusal of their work;
- iv. 15 lesson (or part-lesson) observations;
- v. Examining key documents in all four LAs, especially the proposals listing objectives and activities planned
- vi. Attending six events for learners such as BTEC workshops and other inter-school local authority events including real-world problem solving, 'Dragon's Den' activities, etc;
- vii. Attending two Diploma development events for staff;

⁶ The larger number of cases drawn from activity in Bristol reflects the longer timescale of WRLP activity in that Local Authority and the gearing of evaluation resources to proportionately reflect Project activity

⁷ This case comprises a number of Vocational Conferences. Though based in Bristol, some of these included learners from other authority areas.

- viii. Attending two staff exploratory visits to workplaces;
- ix. Examining examples of WRL materials in use and also some examples of student work;
- x. Examining documents and evaluative material pertaining to events such as workshops for WRL in English and Maths, cross-school vocational conferences;
- xi. Attending almost all meetings of the Steering Group between December 2007 and January 2010.

4. Key features of Project operation

- 4.1 The WRLP had an overall Manager at the LSC and made flexible use of the expertise drawn from within and beyond LSC structures. The Manager presented frequent reports to a Steering Group, the membership of which covered key stakeholders. Within this overall structure, WRLP activities in the three local authorities of South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset were overseen by people already in closely-related posts, such as the 14-19 Adviser or Partnership Manager. WRLP activities in Bristol were overseen by a Co-ordinator. For the purposes of this report, the four Local Authority based individuals with these responsibilities are termed 'WRLP Leads'.
- 4.2 Our data suggests that the leadership, management, coordination and accountability mechanisms of the WRLP have worked successfully, and many teacher respondents have been particularly keen to praise the support they have had from the four people in Lead roles in the four Local Authorities, and from individuals engaged by the LSC to provide further specific support.
- 4.3 The Bristol WRLP began earlier than in the other three Local Authorities, and as noted in the Interim Evaluation Report (January 2009), the project made use of a 'negotiated commissioning' process to establish plans for focus and activity. The rapidity of this process resulted in some lack of clarity of goals at first, but regular contact between the leaders of each Partnership and the WRLP Lead soon overcame this difficulty. Given a high level of agreement about ends and means, there was some mild irritation at first on the part of Partnership heads that a process of bidding, commissioning and close monitoring would need to accompany any release of funding. Over a longer timescale, there was some reluctance on the part of Partnerships to record expenditure against the project in the ways envisaged, and the WRLP Lead found it necessary to expend considerable effort to make this happen. Our analysis suggests that this may be taken as evidence of (a) the difficulty of operating in a context that is already complex and is characterised by multiple expectations, initiatives and funding streams, and (b) the breadth of definitions of WRL backed by the project – a breadth that had both costs and benefits (see 'themes' section of this report).
- 4.4 The process of negotiating WRLP focus and activity in Bath and North-East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset was more straightforward than that in Bristol, for three principal reasons. Firstly key personnel had by that time gained experience of operating in the terms of

the WRLP; secondly, the process involved identifying some activities that were already underway but which could benefit from extra attention, support and resources, so here the WRLP was able to 'hit the ground running'; thirdly, responsibility could lay unambiguously with individuals who were located in the LA structures and whose concerns and remit were quite different to those of the three Local Area Partnership Heads in Bristol. Whilst focused and sustained WRLP activity was established successfully in all four LAs, our data suggests that this was more difficult to achieve in Bristol than it was in North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset. In part, we attribute this to the breadth of remit and goals of the Local Area Partnerships in Bristol. It also reflects that outside Bristol, the WRLP operated through more conventional LA roles and relationships with schools.

- 4.5 There was also a further difference which may have been significant. Whereas in the case of the Bristol Local Area Partnerships, negotiations with the LSC were completed prior to the commissioning of the evaluation, in the three other Authorities, a representative of the evaluation attended the early scoping meetings in the role of critical friend. This may have helped to establish more rapid agreement about the WRLP purposes. We also have a strong impression that the presence of an evaluator helped to 'kick start' WRLP activity in one LA.
- 4.6 In some cases, a difference between the timescale of the WRLP and other cycles of planning and resourcing created some difficulties. For example, in one LA, the Project funding was used to support successfully a WRLP Lead and then specific sub-agreements with Advisers for Maths, English and Science. However, for much of the Project period WRLP activity was formally additional to the existing fully-committed workloads of the LA Core Curriculum Advisers, and whilst they did manage some personal re-prioritisation, their WRLP-related activity was felt to be an extra (rather than integral) aspect of workload. It is worth noting that for the 2009-10 academic year, WRL was written into the planned priorities for Core Curriculum Advisers in at least two of the four LAs involved in the WRLP.

5. The wider context

- 5.1 The WRLP operated in a period characterised by a great deal of change. The Government's extensive 14-19 reforms are a principal driver here⁸. In essence, the reforms are built around decision points and pathways or routes to be available to all young people by 2013. From ages 14 to 16, there are three pathways (GCSE; Foundation of Higher Diploma; Foundation Learning Tier). From 16 onwards there will be five progression routes available, namely: GCSEs and A levels; the Diploma; Apprenticeships; the Foundation Learning Tier; Work with Accredited Learning. From 2013, all young people will continue in education or training until they are 17, and until they are 18 from 2015. Key skills are to be replaced by functional skills (in Maths, English and ICT) and a set of Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) divided into six areas (independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self-managers and effective participators). These will apply to all routes between the ages of 14 and 16.
- 5.2 The 14-19 reforms bring work-related learning to the forefront of educational policy and practice. Most notably, the new Diplomas 'combine theoretical study with practical experience based around a work-related curriculum' (DCSF 2009b) and relatively generous national resourcing during development and establishment has led to considerable creativity in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. However, a general election in May 2010 makes the future of Diplomas less certain (Lane, 2010).
- 5.3 The Department for Children, Schools and Families produce a *Work Related Learning Guide* (DCSF, 2009a) which sets out a rationale for WRL and includes a reminder that it is a statutory part of the curriculum at KS4 as well as a vital part of new Diplomas. The second edition of this Guide also includes a statement from the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Schools and Learners, stating that in times of economic recession, '...it is even more important to ensure that all young people gain the skills, qualifications and experience they need to meet the demands of the future workforce' (DCSF, 2009a, p. 5). The *Guide* defines work-related learning as:
- 'Planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, learning about work and working practices, and learning the skills for work' (p. 6).
- 5.4 The *Guide* also lists a series of 'underlying aims', a large number of examples of different ways in which WRL can be nurtured, and suggestions for what young people, parents and carers, teachers, schools, colleges, employers, Education Business Partnership Organisations and Local Authorities can do to encourage WRL.
- 5.5 As set out in the Interim Evaluation Report (January 2009), there are also a number of longer standing policy-driven practices that would come

⁸ See <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/>

under the general umbrella of WRL as a vocationally-orientated means to broaden the secondary curriculum, prepare young people for working life, or as a route to maximising or raising school achievement. These include (a) the 'vocational GCSEs' introduced in 2002, (all of them 'double GCSEs', available in: applied art and design; applied business; applied ICT; applied science; engineering; health and social care; leisure and tourism; manufacturing), and (b) the *Increased Flexibility Programme at Key Stage 4* (IFP). This programme:

'...supports partnerships of schools, further education (FE) colleges, and providers of work-based learning in efforts to improve opportunities for vocational learning for 14–16 year olds, and to extend participation in education and training post-16. Partnerships now involve half the secondary schools and three quarters of the FE colleges in England' (Ofsted, 2005, p. 1)

5.6 At the end of its first two years of operation, Ofsted's verdict on the IFP was positive:

'The courses offered through these partnerships have proved so popular that the numbers of students taking IFPs have exceeded expectations. Courses are, on the whole, proving to be successful. Students have responded well to the broader opportunities IFPs provide and their attitudes to learning and behaviour have improved. Four out of five students are gaining vocational qualifications as a result of their participation in IFPs, and more students are staying on after 16'. (Ofsted, 2005, p. 1)

5.7 As well as vocational GCSEs and IFPs, many secondary schools now offer a selection of general and specific vocational courses (BTEC, NVQ and others). This is what the Edge Foundation said on 'VQ day', which was 23rd July 2008:

'The popularity of vocational courses has prompted many schools to offer a broader curriculum. The number of vocational qualifications achieved in schools has nearly doubled, although colleges, private training companies and employers remain the largest providers of practical courses' (Edge Foundation, 2008)

5.8 To these well-known elements of the context must be added others that, whilst less obvious, are equally important. These include:

- The wider policy focus on 'economic wellbeing', and the QCDA framework for economic wellbeing, which when translated into curricular terms is highly work-related;
- The considerable cultural shift required as the strong market-orientated educational policy emphasising choice and competition, bedded down during the 1980s and 1990s is augmented by requirements and exhortations towards co-operation between schools (e.g. Tomlinson, 2005).

6. The Local Authority context in terms of attainments

6.1 Given the rising importance of generic-vocational, and vocationally-specific programmes and qualifications as forms of work-related learning,

the Interim Evaluation Report set out data (adapted from records kept by Bristol City Council) on how different kinds of qualifications contributed to overall attainments at Levels 1 and 2 in 2007-8. This involved comparing qualifications at school level using equivalent points gained, and counting the number of students gaining some of their 'threshold' through vocational qualifications. The tables from the Interim Evaluation Report are attached as Appendix 2. We have carried out a similar exercise in respect of the academic year 2008-9, and tables for this are attached as Appendix 3. To maintain a valid comparison between the two years, we have omitted two new Academies (Cathedral and Colston's) in Bristol from some of these tables and calculations. Appendices 4, 5 and 6 show similar data for North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset for the academic year 2008-9.

- 6.2 It is worth repeating here that in Bristol in the 2007-8 academic year:
- academic GCSEs represented 80% of Level 1 and 74% of Level 2 attainment across the city;
 - vocational GCSEs and vocational qualifications together represented 16% of Level 1 and just over 17% of Level 2 attainment;
 - of all those students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, 23.3% did so in a combination of GCSE and vocational qualifications (see Appendix 2).
- 6.3 From the data for Bristol in the 2008-9 academic year, we can see that:
- academic GCSEs represented 80% of Level 1 and 67% of Level 2 attainment across the city;
 - vocational GCSEs and vocational qualifications together represented 14.5% of Level 1 and 22.5% of Level 2 attainments.
 - Of all those students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, 25.4% did so in a combination of GCSE and vocational qualifications (See Appendix 3).
- 6.4 Comparing the two academic years in **Bristol**, the important points seem to be:
- At Level 1, the proportion of points gained from academic GCSEs has remained constant, at 80%, whilst those gained from vocational qualifications has decreased slightly from 16% to 14.5%.
 - At Level 2, there was a fall (74% to 67%) in the proportion of points gained through academic GCSEs. Points gained from vocational qualifications have increased from 17% to 22.5%.
 - For students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A* to C at GCSE or equivalent, the proportion doing so with vocational qualifications 'in the mix' has risen very slightly – from 23.3% to 25.4%, i.e. just over two percentage points.
- 6.5 Equivalent data from **North Somerset** for 2008-9 shows that
- academic GCSEs represented 85% of Level 1 and 83% of Level 2 attainment across the LA:
 - vocational GCSEs and vocational qualifications together represented 8% of Level 1 and 9% of Level 2 attainments.
 - of all those students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, 12% did so in a combination of GCSE and vocational qualifications (See Appendix 4).

- 6.6 Equivalent data from **South Gloucestershire** for 2008-9 shows that:
- academic GCSEs represented 85% of Level 1 and 77% of Level 2 attainment across the LA;
 - vocational GCSEs and vocational qualifications together represented 9% of Level 1 and 17% of Level 2 attainments.
 - of all those students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, 21% did so in a combination of GCSE and vocational qualifications (See Appendix 5).
- 6.7 Equivalent data from **Bath and North East Somerset** for 2008-9 shows that
- academic GCSEs represented 82% of Level 1 and 79% of Level 2 attainment across the LA;
 - vocational GCSEs and vocational qualifications together represented 13% of Level 1 and 19.5% of Level 2 attainments.
 - of all those students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, 20.5% did so in a combination of GCSE and vocational qualifications (See Appendix 6).
- 6.8 Taking all four **West of England** Local Authority areas in the year 2008-9, we can say that:
- 83% of Level 1 points were gained via academic GCSEs;
 - 76.5% of Level 2 points were gained via academic GCSEs;
 - 11% of Level 1 points were gained via vocational qualifications and vocational GCSEs;
 - 17% of Level 2 points were gained via vocational qualifications and vocational GCSEs;
 - of all those students gaining the so-called 'threshold' of 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, 19.7% did so in a combination of GCSE and vocational qualifications.

7. Findings from analysis and comparison of cases

7.1 This section sets out the main themes from our analysis of case study data. The themes refer to processes and outcomes, more or less attributable to the WRLP, that appear to the evaluation to be significant. There are several different types of significance implied. Short versions of a selection of case studies are given in Appendix 7.

7.2 Theme A: WRL generating excitement in learning and harnessing the enthusiasm of some teachers

The cases studied contain many examples of past and present innovations that are work-related and which both enthuse teachers and appear to generate learning opportunities that excite and energise learners. Examples of this include:

- a Drama teacher who said that the WRL element of new Diplomas, and in particular the need to develop a new curriculum and approaches to teaching, had given her a 'new lease of life'. A new sense of professional responsibility and autonomy meant she felt that she had 're-discovered after some 20 years why I came into teaching in the first place'. This view was widely shared by other members of the Diploma development group;
- a school with a fully-functioning community radio station on site, where selected learners are given real responsibilities (up to and including being a radio presenter);
- a school where young people, as part of an OCN in Media programme, work in a teacher-led team to carry out genuinely-commissioned project to make a film with a local history focus for a local community organisation;
- a school where young people following a Creative and Media Diploma route have (a) painted new murals outside the school buildings, (b) started a website with a blog and 'to camera' student commentary on their course and links with industry, and (c) established an agreement with the National Trust through which a group of students was making a documentary film (during a refurbishment and restoration process) that will be seen by future visitors to the property;
- an English teacher using communication in workplaces as a driver for organising part of the curriculum. For example, student visits to a range of settings are used as the basis for in-class activities which classify and differentiate use of language. Particular attention is given to the scope for inefficiencies and dangers that could arise from inadequate communication;
- a Maths teacher who felt supported in his pursuit of innovative pedagogic development despite being in a context in which this was not encouraged. He visited businesses as well as using materials on dedicated websites to construct new, differentiated teaching plans and materials to locate the subject in the context of a garage, a pub and a hairdressing salon. Some of these plans and materials were used successfully and were much appreciated by learners. We have some evidence that learners were making progress that they would not have made otherwise;

- a group of science teachers from several different schools, led by a Local Authority adviser, sharing experience and information about the relatively recent introduction of BTEC Science. Their main focus was how to maximise the success and utility of visits to a range of types of workplaces, including integration with the requirements of BTEC Science assessment.

7.3 Theme B: The success of vocational conferences, events and related activities

7.3.1 The evaluation has sampled from the many events, resourced and facilitated by the WRLP and designed to bring together teachers and groups of students from different schools who were following BTEC programmes in a number of general vocational areas. The conferences included events with a focus on Health and Social Care, on Media, on Performing Arts and on Sport. It is helpful to note that the BTEC 'brand', a regular feature of FE provision for over two decades, is something of a survivor in the education system and it is currently enjoying further expansion in secondary schools. This may in part be attributed to the saturation of GCSEs as a valid measure of compulsory secondary attainment in a climate of immense pressure to show rising attainments. This point was made by several of our interviewees. Here the WRLP has been able to work within a particular definition and understanding of WRL to provide opportunities of great value to learners. Most have taken the form of events to which teachers bring groups of students, organised to provide learners with: (a) experience of a field of work in public service or private industry or the arts; (b) exposure to a range of occupations and the work they do; (c) opportunities to do activities that generate evidence that 'counts' in BTEC assessment processes; (d) enjoyment in a range of related activities, including 'speed networking'. In addition, the events have provided teachers with opportunities to share ideas, materials and practices, and have helped to set up new links between teachers in different schools. Like the WRLP event evaluations (themselves rigorous), our data shows these events to have been highly successful and to have made a real contribution to the authenticity of BTEC programmes. In many cases these programmes would otherwise have very limited connection with workplaces. It is also worth noting that the vocational conferences have had a deliberate purpose of exploring what Diploma practitioners might do in future, and there has been a conscious effort to involve them.

7.3.2 This aspect of the WRLP was also highly appreciated for more direct support for some BTEC teachers and programmes with their work-facing contacts. In one setting, young people from across a partnership, some of whom had experienced difficulty engaging with mainstream schooling, attended for one day per week over two years for a BTEC programme equivalent to four GCSEs. The WRLP had provided valuable support in enabling links with employers and community groups, in a real sense adding value to what was already distinctive about the provision in this site. The identity of this provision was much more 'work-facing' than 'school-facing', a fact noticed and valued by learners. The young people here felt proud about being on a BTEC programme and proud of their achievements, such as around their improving levels of communication. They would happily sit down

and do an hour of literacy or numeracy within a WRL-focused task; working is seen as 'cooler than studying', so presenting learning as 'work' helps overcome this perception. We judged the young people to be generally more self-motivated, more engaged and more independent than they would otherwise have been, and teachers confirmed that their attainments were on a higher trajectory than if they had remained within a more narrowly academic pathway.

7.4 Theme C: The benefits and costs of a broad definition of work-related learning

7.4.1. We first noted this issue in the Bristol Interim Evaluation Report, arguing that the deliberate breadth of definition adopted was helpful for its capacity to open up possibilities to enhance many different kinds of activity, and mentioning the likelihood that it would help to generate 'ownership' at the level of schools and teachers. We also noted the costs or risks, including the possible appearance of a lack of focus. Following the Bristol Interim Evaluation Report, the Bristol WRL project consciously adopted the QCA (now QCDA) definitions of WRL, which maintained breadth whilst giving it slightly sharper focus. Subsequently, in the other three Local Authority areas, the project found a close affinity with widely shared definitions of 'contextualised applied learning'. Our data suggests that on balance, sticking with a broad definition did assist in the effective use of resources to support activity. This pragmatic style of operation maximised the varied opportunities for the Project to have an impact on learners and their attainments: Project resources were used to generate facilities to supply a clear need (e.g. the many BTEC Conferences) or to 'back' initiatives already in train or which built on teacher enthusiasm and local authority facilitation (such as the expansion of BTEC Science to more learners across a number of schools).

7.4.2. Yet whilst it has had a positive impact on many individuals and groups, the opportunity cost of the project's broad definition was that it could not generate a new authority-wide or sub-regional conception of - or identity for - WRL. Furthermore whilst the WRLP did a great deal to encourage innovative teaching and learning, it did not set out with a curricular vision that would act as a rallying-call for those educators seeing WRL as a 'different way of teaching' for all schools, all subjects and for all learners at all levels. In fairness, this was not stated as one of the original aims of the Project, but it was implied by the use of terms like 'high quality WRL' and the idea that the WRLP should change the practices and identity of WRL so that young people would join programmes 'as a sign of success and not failure'. There are similar goals for the new Diplomas, but even on that scale of investment, such goals look ambitious.

7.5. Theme D: The harnessing of appropriate expertise and experience in WRL developments

This theme comes through several case studies, but most clearly in respect of (a) workforce development on the embedding of literacy and numeracy, and (b) workforce development activity in the development of (and preparations to teach) Diplomas. WRLP resources were used to commission a college of further education to provide workshops for school and similar staff across

partnerships. The purpose of these was to help staff to embed the development of literacy and numeracy skills in programmes which often did not mention such skills in course specifications or similar documents. The college team felt that many of the school staff they met appeared to have a 'literal' reading of such documents and were not used to adapting them to serve new goals. Our data shows these workshops were valued and valuable, but the case also highlights how differences in traditional cultures and purposes give rise to different perceptions of what WRL should include. A related point is that college staff often have a great deal of experience in providing programmes that include specialist work-related facilities, yet were not approached by schools setting up such facilities for the first time. In one Local Authority, an encouraging feature is that schools with high GCSE 'threshold' scores and thriving sixth forms are working closely with people from a college of further education to share BTEC materials and approaches and to develop Diplomas (supported by the Local Authority and indirectly by the WRLP). This is leading to strong perceptions of a distinctive approach to teaching and learning that is new to both the school and college staff within the LA. However, it is an unusual arrangement, and much more could be done in most areas to bring together school and college staff – particularly so that the former can learn from the latter as schools increasingly discover a role for more applied learning and vocationally-orientated programmes. It is also worth noting under this theme that the WRLP has been particularly successful in its use of specialist consultants, commissioned to work with small groups of teachers to develop curricular and pedagogic aspects of practice.

7.6 Theme E: The denial of WRL to higher ability Maths sets

7.6.1 This theme indicates a significant finding in respect of unintended consequences. A feature present in all case studies involving WRL in Maths was the denial of work-related learning to higher sets – that is, to learners predicted to achieve grades A* to C in GCSE examinations. This held true even in those cases where new, differentiated WRL materials had been deliberately developed across the ability range. Our evidence suggests a gap between intentions and consequences here. Teachers, Advanced Skills Teachers and consultants developing such innovations under the WRL umbrella were clearly motivated by inclusive and pedagogic goals, and they paid close attention to differentiation and the capacity to engage and excite a range of learners. However, the resulting practices were over-determined by (a) the immense pressure on all secondary schools to increase or maintain particular categories of GCSE outcomes, and (b) elements of conservatism in teaching methods and by particular conceptions of the essence of the subject. The learning culture (i.e. collective assumptions and managed perceptions of the task in hand) dissuaded teachers from 'taking risks' with learners in higher sets: these were, as one respondent put it, 'not to be interfered with'. There are two deep ironies in this. The first is that WRL materials and practices that may help some of those higher-set learners move up a grade (from a B to an A, for example) are being denied to them. The second is that the achievement of higher grades at GCSE is often assumed to mean that education is doing more to serve the economy – whether at the level of the individual life chances or at the level of whole nations (see Leitch, 2006). The higher-

achieving students in our Maths case study sites were kept separate from work-related problems and applications.

7.6.2 It would be pointless to try to apportion blame for this problem, since 'threshold' attainment is now so widely expected to function as *the* fundamental indicator of schooling quality. The measure has become central in three senses. Firstly, in the realm of *policy*, in the expectations placed upon and emanating from Local Authorities, and from Government departments, including 'National Challenge'. This is visible too in the factors widely held to contribute to higher categories of Ofsted judgements. Secondly, in a *popular* sense, via the assumptions of media reporting and of many parents (though by no means all – see James and Beedell, 2009). Popular uses also include the comparison of schools in league tables, with potential effects on their funding, intake, inspection, reputation and so forth. Thirdly, threshold thinking has increasing *professional* resonance, in terms of the work of teachers and senior management teams, in which GCSE and equivalents can figure prominently in performance management, professional reputations and career prospects of individual teachers.

7.6.3 Examination results have always formed an important part of the information about schooling quality, but threshold thinking (and the technologies that facilitate it, including fine-grained information and predictive formulae such as that from the Fisher Family Trust) has taken this to new levels. Given the history of GCE O levels, CSEs and GCSEs, there is a serious problem of logic in using GCSE A*-C as an indicator of the quality of what schools offer 100% of their learners. This in turn makes it more difficult to measure and express the many positive outcomes of initiatives like the WRLP (see for example Edge Foundation, 2009; Torrance, 2010).

7.7 *Theme F: Variation in the authenticity of WRL*

7.7.1 Our data, and especially that from learners, alerted us to a considerable variation in *authenticity* across the many examples of WRL. Clearly, in the case of a period of work experience, a learner might be placed in a 'real job' or might find themselves remaining peripheral, and the first of these (whatever its other qualities) is more authentic than the second. In the case of subject-based examples, authenticity refers to both the *plausibility* (or '*believability*') of the tasks in relation to the subject discipline, and their *integration* of a genuine work-world with the learning processes held to be central to the subject discipline. An example of lower authenticity would be where Maths students were asked to 'build a garage', an entirely virtual task with sub-tasks such as estimating costs of bricks and calculating area and volume. For all its subject appropriateness and apparent relevance, the exercise was undermined by its lack of both plausibility and integration. An example of higher authenticity would be developments in a Science GCSE in which an Authority-wide scheme for 'STEM Ambassadors' assisted and promoted industry-school liaison, and within this an MOD-based engineer worked with a school to develop two science lessons that fit KS4 specifications. The core ideas were 'crumple zones' and 'protective materials' and real, contemporary examples in product design were combined with a learner activity which involved the problem of dropping a raw egg on to a hard surface without breakage. Of

course, there could also be examples of Maths WRL that are highly authentic and Science WRL that lack authenticity. Our evidence suggests that authenticity is an important factor in successful and sustainable WRL.

7.7.2 This theme is also a reminder that good WRL is as much about teacher thinking and practices as it is about materials or plans. Some of the WRL we witnessed (both directly and indirectly) lacked authenticity because too much faith was invested in *materials* as carriers of practices. Rather like group work in the hands of a teacher who only really believes in lectures (or *vice versa*), such things can fall flat. However, the degree of authenticity depends on many contextual factors. One is whether specifications of the curriculum are undergoing changes in a favourable direction, such as a contemporary drive to make all Science more 'applied'. Another would be whether the leadership and structures of a school foster the sort of team work that brings subject-focused and PLTS-focused staff together in constructive engagements.

7.8 Theme G: Unrecognised WRL and 'initiative fatigue'

This theme regularly occurred across a large number of cases. It links to the earlier point about the extent to which WRL can be meaningfully encapsulated in *materials*. One teacher, with considerable management responsibilities, told us that whilst she thought WRL was a good thing, and should be encouraged, there simply wasn't time to engage with it in mainstream subjects. She felt that engagement with and development of WRL ought to be explicitly mentioned in teachers' job descriptions to assist attempts to prioritise it. It was too stressful to ask a junior colleague to take on and then have to provide support: done properly it would require attention to schemes of work, work with subject teams, and helping colleagues develop and share ideas for teaching materials. Yet interestingly (and not untypically) this teacher cited many examples of teaching and learning activities with a work-related focus that were already built in to mainstream programmes but which were unlikely to be labelled as WRL. For example, learners in English would interview a police officer or a journalist to find out more about the nature and role of written communication, or write an account of an event or incident from the perspective of different participants. Many staff we interviewed complained of a lack of time to develop a more work-related approach, whilst also noting how desirable that might be. There did not appear to be a widespread knowledge of the Statutory nature of WRL at KS4, and its appearance to some teachers as 'just another initiative' is perhaps a worrying perception.

7.9 Theme H: Some do not see WRL as central to the educational process

The design of the evaluation meant that the team tended to come into immediate contact with enthusiasts for various forms of WRL. However, from these individuals' experiences, and to some extent more directly, we also encountered some widely-held scepticism about WRL. As one participant put it:

'most English teachers regard work-related learning probably at best as an "optional extra", and at worst something inimical to what they're trying to achieve'

This person went on to suggest that whilst widely held, such a view indicated a 'narrow definition of what work is', linked to strong subject-discipline

identities and the fact that many teachers had little direct experience of workplaces other than schools. This finding, together with the discussion about threshold thinking, suggests that really making a difference to the development of WRL requires more than the generation of good practice, persuasive examples and the collection of evidence of impact on achievement. In addition, it would require cultural shifts which fundamentally challenge a curriculum and pedagogy that is often constructed with no reference to the world of work. Recent independent research (the Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training) has concluded that the education system now lacks a broad consensus about its purposes and direction (see Pring et al, 2009). In the past, a variety of thinkers have suggested that *work* is the defining characteristic for human beings, the source of all economic value-generation, and core to most conceptions of identity, yet this would appear to remain outside the frame of reference for many teachers. Our recommendations reflect this theme of the evaluation.

7.10 Theme I: WRL activities tend to portray work in an entirely positive light

Looking across the case studies, and in particular at what learners showed us and told us, we would suggest that an almost wholly positive view of work and workplaces is generated. An example of this would be the absence of consideration of companies or organisations that could be said to have operated unethically or engaged in excessive exploitation, or the avoidance of topics such as low pay, gender inequality, or social responsibility. Portraying the world of work positively may be helpful in general terms, but it can also make WRL appear *inauthentic* (see *Theme F*) and it may, additionally, give the impression that WRL is only really about learner deficits (that is, the senses in which young people are unready for a world of work that is not to be regarded critically). We would argue that the WRLP has operated in keeping with recent materials from QCDA which, whilst they provide excellent ideas for making the curriculum more work-related, do also present the world of work as unproblematic⁹. In contrast, we would also suggest that greater realism in this regard may itself be motivating for many students. The recommendations section of this report contains some suggestions, generated directly from reflection on this evaluation, towards the achievement of a more balanced view of work, and the world of work, in WRL.

7.11 Theme J: The difficulties of working collaboratively

The WRLP depended a great deal on successful collaborative working at a number of different levels. In Bristol the Local Area Partnerships were the principal vehicles for initiating and monitoring much of the activity. In North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire, various forms of collaboration were key. It is worth noting however that to some extent, the collaborative working required by an initiative like this one represents a departure from the policy-driven trends in the 1980s and 1990s which, linked to market principles, demanded competition between schools as the way to drive up standards (see Tomlinson, 2005). There are now plenty of incentives and encouragements to schools towards greater cooperation and collaboration, but these are not yet sufficient to wipe away a deeply

⁹ See <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/5294.aspx>

entrenched culture. We came across several examples where a perception of another institution as competitor could have hindered effective collaboration. In practical terms some schools went to considerable lengths to offer a BTEC first diploma to learners from other schools with whom they were in partnership. Whilst this was successful in some instances, in others uptake was very low in such arrangements, and the same or similar programmes remained available in several different neighbouring locations.

8. Overall evaluative comment

8.1 The original goal of the WRLP was to contribute to raising the levels of 14-16 year olds' participation, achievement and progression through high quality work-related learning (WRL). Whilst it would have been impossible to isolate variables sufficiently to expose an unambiguous causal effect to the WRLP, our data and analysis gives a strong indication that this goal was achieved. In particular, it became clear from the independent testimony of staff and students within the cases studied that there were plenty of examples of curricular and pedagogic innovation, under the WRL umbrella and triggered by the project, that had led to greater learner and teacher engagement and interest. As we have indicated in section 7 of this report, alongside intended effects there were also a number of unintended consequences that were thrown up or revealed whilst WRLP-inspired activity was in train: some of these have important practical implications for further effective intervention.

8.2 The original intentions of the project also set out a wish to:

- a) assist in developing holistic and personalised learning programmes for young people in which WRL is not simply an add on;
- b) assist in creating programmes for young people which they are selected into as a sign of success and not failure;
- c) assist in raising the achievement of young people in the functional skills of oral communication, literacy and numeracy as well as developing specifically work related skills;
- d) assist in developing a cadre of champions within the teaching workforce for WRL.

Furthermore, the negotiated plans generated with the three LAs other than Bristol also sought explicit acknowledgement of how WRL would be central to school improvement, would strengthen WRL in English and Maths, and would contribute to preparations for Diplomas. All of these second-order intentions have also been achieved in different parts of project-generated activity.

8.3 The successes of the WRLP are impressive given that it has worked in a difficult 'space', characterised by radical reforms to 14-19 education, changes to the composition and status of several schools in the region, fundamental change in the remit of the Learning and Skills Council and Local Authorities, and the existence of a large number of initiatives, agencies and funding streams whose objectives overlapped with those of the Project.

8.4 The data and analysis within the evaluation of the WRLP shows that the Project has generated many new opportunities for young people to learn and to generate evidence of their learning in ways that 'count'. It has also supported a range of activities that some of the more creative teachers may

have developed anyway, but which our data suggests were more widespread and effective and better communicated as a result of Project support, expectation and encouragement.

8.5 The WRLP has had a positive impact in terms of supporting teachers in a range of WRL developments. There is some indirect evidence, from teacher and learner testimony and from some teacher records seen by the evaluation team, that learner attainments have been enhanced as a result.

8.6 The balance of probabilities is that the WRLP contributed to the rise in the proportion of Level 2 attainment gained through vocational qualifications in Bristol between 2007-8 and 2008-9 (17% to 22.5%). Whilst we do not have comparable data over time for North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset or South Gloucestershire, the data that we do have for these areas (for 2008-9) shows that for the West of England as a whole, vocational and applied learning accounted for a significant portion of overall attainment at Level 2, namely 17%. It also, in a significant number of cases, contributes directly to the mix of qualifications held by those attaining the so-called 'threshold' of five or more A* to C at GCSE (or equivalent): nearly 20% of young people gaining this have vocational qualifications and vocational GCSEs as part of their 'mix'. However, it is important to note that (a) not all WRL is connected to vocationally-orientated programmes, and applied learning can be present in any kind of programme, and (b) that most of the learners we met who were engaged in WRLP-sponsored activities had not yet finished their programmes, so a longer term gains could not be measured by the evaluation. Based on current teacher testimony, we may reasonably expect learners currently doing Diplomas and newly engaged in BTEC programmes to represent raised attainment levels over and above what would have been achieved by them in former arrangements.

8.7 In adopting a broad definition of WRL, and a pragmatic approach to harnessing and backing existing or emergent developments, the WRLP has maximised its impact on a large number of teachers and learners, though has not been in a position to do much to change perceptions of the 'place' of WRL in relation to the rest of educational activity.

9. Recommendations

Our recommendations consist of items we consider to be practicable and realistic in terms of likely resources.

9.1 We recommend continuation of the newsletter or a similar publication, currently produced by the project manager and coordinators. This gives teachers and others an easily-digestible account of the range of activities that may inspire them to 'do likewise' or seek further contact or information.

9.2 We recommend consideration is given to a further free-standing publication aimed at teachers, containing a variety of examples of WRL that may inspire others.

9.3 We suggest that there is a need to find more ways of getting subject teachers involved with workplaces. We do recognise that there are already local and national schemes and agencies seeking to promote this. A small but well-publicised scheme to part-fund such engagements, perhaps together with an annual prize for a teacher who has demonstrably changed elements of practice as a result, may incentivise such a development.

9.4 We recommend that a means is found to remind teachers and senior leaders in schools of their Statutory responsibilities with regard to work related learning.

9.5 We recommend that more opportunities are found or created that bring together school and FE college-based staff to engage in joint curricular and pedagogic development.

9.6 We recommend that future curriculum and workforce development activities include a more sociological element that raises awareness of how the world of work can function as a source of examples for a more outward-looking and critical curriculum. This should help teachers to maximise the authenticity (and hence, effectiveness) of work-related learning in ways that connect the known and familiar practicalities of life around young people with major global issues. Below are some examples generated by the evaluation team that would be in keeping with this sort of approach:

- in Maths or elsewhere, using national data on pay differentials between men and women (e.g. Office for National Statistics, 2009) or tasks and problems that revolve around this (e.g. My Learning, 2009)
- using recent UK research that shows racial discrimination by employers during recruitment processes (e.g. DWP, 2009) or tasks and problems that revolve around this;
- using materials endorsed by the Personal Finance Education Group (pfeg) (2009), developed by ASDAN and others, to develop the skills of young people in the area of personal finance;
- using materials produced by the Co-operative movement which provide alternatives to standard capitalist structures and assumptions, and which promote ethical business practices;
- using the example of the Bristol Primark opening and associated public protest in student projects or teaching that explores: the place and costs of production; transport; wages in Bangladesh; costs of policing; why protesters were filmed by police; where cameras were made, etc. (see e.g. Bristol Indymedia, 2009);
- linked to the above, using the international movement of labour and capital which produces very different experiences, risks and rewards for workers in different places;
- using materials produced by trades unions;
- using information of all kinds on the effects of recession, but especially projects on the effects of a *lack* of work on individuals, families and communities, and what skills and capacities appear to help individuals to cope;

- using selected examples of cases from employment tribunals – for their use of language, for evidence of good and bad practice;
- using case studies that bring to life the problems associated with gambling and debt, and making comparisons with the role of gambling in international banking crises;
- using accounts of work and workplaces in literature as the backbone of (say) a year of study in English.

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Appendix 1

Information Sheet for Participants (original has UWE logo at the top) Evaluation of Learning and Skills Council West of England Work Related Learning Project

The Project

The LSC West of England Work Related Learning Project is a special initiative intended to contribute to raising the levels of 14-16 year olds' participation, achievement and progression through high quality work-related learning, of several different kinds. A range of activities are planned to take place in 2008 and 2009 via three Local Area Partnerships in Bristol (namely 'East Central', 'North' and 'South') and in three neighbouring Local Authority areas, namely Bath and Northeast Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Thank you for agreeing to contribute to the evaluation of this project. The evaluation is being carried out by BRILLE, a research centre at the University of the West of England, Bristol. BRILLE stands for *Bristol centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and Education*.

The Evaluation

In a nutshell, the purpose of the evaluation is to weigh up how successful the work-related learning project turns out to be, and to learn from it – to improve it whilst it is going on, and to judge how successful it has been once it is completed. There are many different people and groups involved in the project (young learners, teachers, Head teachers, the Learning and Skills Council, the Local Authorities, Connexions, Local Area Partnerships, Schools, Colleges, parents, employers etc. etc.) and they all have slightly different interests, perspectives and experiences. It is important to us that all these different 'stakeholders' have a proper chance to voice their views.

With that in mind, the evaluation is designed to be an independent, 'critical friend' to the Project. It has been designed within a particular approach to evaluation, usually called 'democratic evaluation'. Our main methods will be interviewing people, observing some activities, reading documents, interpreting statistics and comparing different examples both within and beyond the Project. We inform the Project Steering Group which meets regularly, and will be writing two substantial reports for them. With their permission, we may also use some of the information in an academic conference paper.

Clearly, the evaluation will be heavily dependent on what you and the various other people involved tell us or show to us. We want you to feel able to speak freely. We will make sure that, as far as humanly possible, we protect the identities of all those involved. For example, we will not name individuals or schools in any form of publication. Also, we fully accept that people have a right to withdraw from the evaluation with no questions asked, though if you are a head teacher this is a more complicated matter than it would be if you are a young learner!

The design of the evaluation has been considered by the School of Education Ethics committee at the University, and approved by them. All the researchers are members of the relevant professional body (the British Educational Research Association) and sign up to its Ethical Guidelines. They all hold 'enhanced disclosure' clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau.

Please feel free to contact either a member of the team if you have a query about any aspect of the research (details below). In the unlikely event that you have a concern about the conduct of the evaluation, you can contact the Chair of the relevant Ethics committee instead – i.e. Professor Saville Kushner, School of Education, University of the West of England, Frenchay Campus, BRISTOL BS16 1QY. (Email – Saville.Kushner@uwe.ac.uk)

Thank you once more for taking part – your contribution is much appreciated and highly valued.

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Appendix 2
Bristol Local Authority area attainments in 2007-8.

Table A: Bristol 2007-8 Points gained at Level 2

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Ashton Park	31149	0	6864	6049
Bedminster Down	28458	40	1374	5543
Brislington	29208	1608	10020	5911
Bristol Metropolitan	24462	0	3690	4723.25
Brunel Academy	31193	824	16428	4922
City Academy	26291	200	18446	1216
Cotham	61144	906	184	4531
Fairfield	40643	160	918	575
Hartcliffe	15990	40	19864	2691
Henbury	22428	160	2140	2369
Hengrove	13654	0	10400	1955
Monks Park	13763	40	2695	3277.5
Portway	19063	40	5200	5382
St Bede's	65158	486	1840	5194
St Bernadette	36797	160	4366	1081
St Mary Redcliffe	79872	80	810	2461
Withywood	11614	0	19713	7532.5
TOTALS	550887	4744	124952	65413
Percentage	74%	.06%	17%	9%
		17.06%		

Table B: Bristol 2007-8 Points gained at Level 1

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Ashton Park	20427	0	4168	1262.5
Bedminster Down	18828	156	1686.25	1675
Brislington	17735	5252	2302	2031.25
Bristol Metropolitan	15821	0	643.75	925
Brunel Academy	17456	1234	0	2328.6
City Academy	20601	3300	3319.25	0
Cotham	8834	1896	1016	443.75
Fairfield	17352	1366	811	75
Hartcliffe	15346	1002	261	1106.25
Henbury	18129	3742	918	887.5
Hengrove	10183	690	231	887.5
Monks Park	16870	1076	1822	193.75
Portway	16474	2664	1766	412.5
St Bede's	9773	436	263.5	25
St Bernadette	13826	774	3101	68.75
St Mary Redcliffe	11332	118	476	0
Withywood	12935	0	6292	900
TOTALS	261922	23706	29077	13222
Percentage	80%	7%	9%	4%
		16%		

KEY TO TABLES A and B

9.1.1	Includes GCSEs, short course GCSEs, and some GCSE AS
9.1.2	The only 'single' vocational GCSE is in Additional Applied Science. This column also includes double Award vocational GCSEs in Applied Art and Design, Applied Business, Applied Engineering, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism.
9.1.3	Includes BTEC First and National Certificates and Diplomas and a range of EdExcel, OCR and City and Guilds national awards, certificates and diplomas. In table A this column also includes a tiny minority of vocational awards that are smaller in size than a GCSE.
9.1.4	Comprises ASDAN general, rather than specific vocational areas. These include problem-solving, working with others, preparation for employment, career planning, literacy and numeracy qualifications etc.

Table C: Bristol 2007-8 Number of students gaining Level 2 'Threshold' (ie 5+ A*-C GCSE or equivalent) with and without vocational qualifications

School	No. gaining 'threshold' without vocational	Further no. gaining 'threshold' that includes vocational	
Ashton Park	67	26	
Bedminster Down	64	17	
Brislington	75	39	
Bristol Metropolitan	50	21	
Brunel Academy	78	34	
City Academy	64	44	
Cotham	138	3	
Fairfield	92	5	
Hartcliffe	43	33	
Henbury	56	5	
Hengrove	32	40	
Monks Park	32	10	
Portway	45	11	
St Bede's	158	6	
St Bernadette	84	14	
St Mary Redcliffe	167	4	
Withywood	24	73	
Totals	1269	385	1654
Percentage	76.7%	23.3%	100

Appendix 3

Bristol Local Authority area attainments in 2008-9

(Omitting two new Academies – Cathedral and Colstons).

Table A: Bristol 2008-9 Points gained at Level 2

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Ashton Park	37496	0	14768	7349
Bedminster Down	28293	40	276	6854
Brislington Enterprise College	35945	1430	9706	6647
Bristol Metropolitan College	24261	0	6101	5994
Bristol Brunel Academy	22548	1450	20829	3680
City Academy Bristol	27940	1092	29572	0
Cotham	61783	1662	2071	5497
Fairfield	39736	1172	1000	3358
Bridge Learning Campus (formerly Hartcliffe)	23272	0	20614	3818
Henbury	24870	1004	8177	10454
Oasis Academy Bristol (formerly Hengrove)	16024	0	20292	1369
Orchard Bristol School (formerly. Monks Park)	23699	756	7904	8786
Oasis Academy Brightstowe (formerly. Portway)	14848	2122	7800	5313
St Bede's	57785	538	2120	8280
St Bernadette	39101	0	4492	1104
St Mary Redcliffe	82396	774	1170	2729
Merchants Academy (formerly. Withywood)	9022	0	22651	1242
TOTALS	569019	12040	179543	82474
Percentage (rounded)	67%	1.5%	21%	10%
		22.5%		

Table B: Bristol 2008-9 Points gained at Level 1

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Ashton Park	18332	0	5243	206
Bedminster Down	17251	520	2163	1388
Brislington Enterprise College	16255	3026	3186	1271
Bristol Metropolitan College	18889	0	2060	927
Bristol Brunel Academy	13875	278	761	2050
City Academy Bristol	15520	1400	700	2207
Cotham	9606	592	1333	169
Fairfield	15603	980	1190	130
Bridge Learning Campus (formerly Hartcliffe)	14033	0	892	1369
Henbury	20000	358	2553	231
Oasis Academy Bristol (formerly Hengrove)	12622	0	143	419
Orchard Bristol School (formerly. Monks Park)	15062	596	1487	177
Oasis Academy Brightstowe (formerly. Portway)	10228	1292	2799	700
St Bede's	9776	444	596	2431
St Bernadette	12026	162	1704	664
St Mary Redcliffe	11069	568	1029	50
Merchants Academy (formerly. Withywood)	10710	0	4947	1238
TOTALS	240857	10216	32786	15627
Percentage (rounded)	80%	3.5%	11%	5%
		14.5%		

KEY TO TABLES A and B

- a) Includes GCSEs, short course GCSEs, and some GCSE AS
- b) The only 'single' vocational GCSE is in Additional Applied Science. This column also includes double Award vocational GCSEs in Applied Art and Design, Applied Business, Applied Engineering, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism.
- c) Includes BTEC First and National Certificates and Diplomas and a range of EdExcel, OCR and City and Guilds national awards, certificates and diplomas. In table A this column also includes a tiny minority of vocational awards that are smaller in size than a GCSE.
- d) Comprises ASDAN general, rather than specific vocational areas. These include problem-solving, working with others, preparation for employment, career planning, literacy and numeracy qualifications etc.

Table C: Bristol 2008-9 Number of students gaining Level 2 ‘Threshold’ (ie 5+ A*-C GCSE or equivalent) with and without vocational qualifications

School	No. gaining ‘threshold’ without vocational	Further no. gaining ‘threshold’ that includes vocational
Ashton Park	90	40
Bedminster Down	52	32
Brislington Enterprise College	94	25
Bristol Metropolitan College	59	13
Bristol Brunel Academy	54	56
City Academy Bristol	63	62
Cotham	147	2
Fairfield	94	3
Bridge Learning Campus (formerly Hartcliffe)	59	37
Henbury	58	20
Oasis Academy Bristol (formerly Hengrove)	34	64
Orchard Bristol School (formerly. Monks Park)	52	28
Oasis Academy Brightstowe (formerly. Portway)	46	29
St Bede's	139	10
St Bernadette	96	8
St Mary Redcliffe	184	5
Merchants Academy (formerly. Withywood)	22	55
Cathedral	48	1
Colston's	48	0
Totals	1439	490
Percentage	74.6%	25.4%

Appendix 4

North Somerset Local Authority area attainments in 2008-9

**Table A: North Somerset
2008-09 Points gained at
Level 2**

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Backwell	37710		200	290
Broadoak	13640	0	0	7270
Churchill	30130	1580	0	9200
Clevedon	25810	1960	0	3980
Gordano	43370	1620	0	150
Nailsea	30130	260	4320	1210
Priory	25270		3300	1989.9
St Katherine's	15860	460	7350	430
Worle	30890		3420	2640
Wyvern	11410		2920	1180
TOTALS	264220	5880	21510	28339.9
Percentage (rounded)	83%	2%	7%	9%
			9%	

**Table B: North Somerset
2008-09 Points gained at
Level 1**

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Backwell	50010		560	1110
Broadoak	26180	660	10	8230
Churchill	42520	2720	345	10190
Clevedon	37480	3200	325	4390
Gordano	58100	2120	200	440
Nailsea	41710	680	5575	1380
Priory	37390		3980	2964.9
St Katherine's	25920	800	7520	470
Worle	46460		4370	3005
Wyvern	26700		3120	1940
TOTALS	392470	10180	26005	34119.9
Percentage (rounded)	85%	2%	6%	7%
			8%	

Table C: North Somerset 2008-09 Number of students gaining Level 2 'Threshold' (ie 5+ A*-C GCSE or equivalent) with and without vocational qualifications

School	No. gaining 'threshold' without vocational	Further no. gaining 'threshold' that includes vocational	
Backwell	193	3	
Broadoak	70	15	
Churchill	167	26	
Clevedon	145	19	
Gordano	206	3	
Nailsea	162	12	
Priory	134	23	
St Katherine's	76	39	
Worle	172	28	
Wyvern	60	21	
Totals	1385	189	1574
Percentage	88%	12%	100

Appendix 5

South Gloucestershire Local Authority area attainments in 2008-9

Table A: South Gloucestershire 2008-9 Points gained at Level 2

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Brimsham Green Sch	48818	1426	1452	2129
Castle School	89432	3274	3290	4069
Chipping Sodbury School	33509	0	4412	7316
Downend School	62229	278	7796	5372
Filton High School	38495	760	5760	2119
Grange School	27315	1314	13352	5257
Hanham High School	35431	1086	2532	4359
John Cabot Academy	46349	0	13936	4378
The Ridings Federation Yate International Academy	15220	0	7544	2242
Kingsfield School	36487	1338	11556	7351
Mangotsfield School	54060	400	8152	1807
Marlwood School	62781	1750	6128	1580
Patchway High School	48529	2274	9336	1018
The Ridings Federation Winterbourne International Academy	82116	2126	4528	3553
Sir Bernard Lovell School	47041	528	44200	2793
TOTALS	727812	16554	143974	55343
Percentage (rounded)	77%	2%	15%	6%
		17%		

Table B: South Gloucestershire 2008-9 Points gained at Level 1

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Brimsham Green Sch	13876	920	0	456
Castle School	15613	872	280	488
Chipping Sodbury School	18667	0	140	374
Downend School	22004	510	0	1266
Filton High School	19189	1448	140	2501
Grange School	20939	1778	140	1101
Hanham High School	15868	1490	0	2052
John Cabot Academy	9846	446	0	537
The Ridings Federation Yate International Academy	6069	0	140	2136
Kingsfield School	19653	3056	0	4520
Mangotsfield School	19275	1914	420	520
Marlwood School	10082	1610	476	809
Patchway High School	19648	5918	280	264
The Ridings Federation Winterbourne International Academy	21660	1308	0	404
Sir Bernard Lovell School	16624	944	140	885
TOTALS	249013	22214	2156	18313
Percentage (rounded)	85%	8%	1%	6%
		9%		

KEY TO TABLES A and B

- a) Includes GCSEs, short course GCSEs, and some GCSE AS
- b) The only 'single' vocational GCSE is in Additional Applied Science. This column also includes double Award vocational GCSEs in Applied Art and Design, Applied Business, Applied Engineering, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism.
- c) Includes BTEC First and National Certificates and Diplomas and a range of EdExcel, OCR and City and Guilds national awards, certificates and diplomas. In table A this column also includes a tiny minority of vocational awards that are smaller in size than a GCSE.
- d) Comprises ASDAN general, rather than specific vocational areas. These include problem-solving, working with others, preparation for employment, career planning, literacy and numeracy qualifications etc.

Table C: South Gloucestershire 2008-09 Number of students gaining Level 2 'Threshold' (ie 5+ A*-C GCSE or equivalent) with and without vocational qualifications

School	No. gaining 'threshold' without vocational	Further no. gaining 'threshold' that includes vocational
Brimsham Green Sch	122	13
Castle School	201	13
Chipping Sodbury School	76	27
Downend School	134	35
Filton High School	86	21
Grange School	60	38
Hanham High School	82	22
John Cabot Academy	110	35
The Ridings Federation Yate International Academy	34	25
Kingsfield School	88	40
Mangotsfield School	123	26
Marlwood School	144	23
Patchway High School	117	23
The Ridings Federation Winterbourne International Academy	189	30
Sir Bernard Lovell School	118	78
TOTALS	1684	449
Percentage (rounded)	79%	21%

Appendix 6
Bath & North East Somerset Local Authority area attainments in 2008-9

Table A: Bath & North East Somerset 2008-9 Points gained at Level 2

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Beechen Cliff School	51047	968	8848	166
Broadlands School	38008	1970	12028	75
Chew Valley School	54718	240	8874	50
Culverhay School	8561	834	14048	62.5
Fosse Way School	1331	92	0	0
Hayesfield School	58366	4010	2002	9217
Norton Hill School	74360	3776	6278	0
Oldfield School	59897	758	3332	12.5
Ralph Allen School	48487	796	115	1299
Somervale School	27978	378	9472	225
St Gregory's School	56794	0	1288	639
St Mark's School	16780	0	2046	262.5
The Link Centre	476	0	80	87.5
Wellsway School	70030	0	14050	0
Writhlington School	44564	2978	53673	384.5
Three Ways School	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	611397	16800	136134	12481
Pecentages	79%	2%	17.5%	1.5%
		19.5%		

KEY TO TABLES A and B

- a) Includes GCSEs, short course GCSEs, and some GCSE AS
- b) The only 'single' vocational GCSE is in Additional Applied Science. This column also includes double Award vocational GCSEs in Applied Art and Design, Applied Business, Applied Engineering, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism.
- c) Includes BTEC First and National Certificates and Diplomas and a range of EdExcel, OCR and City and Guilds national awards, certificates and diplomas. In table A this column also includes a tiny minority of vocational awards that are smaller in size than a GCSE.
- d) Comprises ASDAN general, rather than specific vocational areas. These include problem-solving, working with others, preparation for employment, career planning, literacy and numeracy qualifications etc.

Table B: Bath & North East Somerset 2008-9 Points gained at Level 1

School	GCSE full and short (a)	Vocational GCSE (b)	Vocational (c)	Other (d)
Beechen Cliff School	7835	436	375	637.5
Broadlands School	16859	1730	2487.5	37.5
Chew Valley School	14360	530	1811.75	0
Culverhay School	5466	650	143.75	149.5
Fosse Way School	616	0	125	0
Hayesfield School	9466	3084	827.5	3245
Norton Hill School	10818	452	268.75	1050
Oldfield School	7854	68	325	0
Ralph Allen School	12173	204	1387.5	1500
Somervale School	9799	1562	681.25	647.5
St Gregory's School	6361	0	1205.25	225
St Mark's School	8741	0	414.75	56
The Link Centre	369	0	437.5	0
Wellsway School	11742	0	434	0
Writhlington School	11133	408	1316.25	850
Three Ways School	0	0	76	0
TOTALS	133592	9124	12316.75	8398
Percentages (rounded)	82%	5.5%	7.5%	5%
			13%	

Table C: Bath & North East Somerset 2008-09 Number of students gaining Level 2 'Threshold' (ie 5+ A*-C GCSE or equivalent) with and without vocational qualifications			
School	No. gaining 'Threshold' without vocational	Further no. gaining 'Threshold' that includes vocational	
Beechen Cliff School	117	22	
Broadlands School	94	51	
Chew Valley School	124	32	
Culverhay School	22	26	
Fosse Way School	3	1	
Hayesfield School	136	11	
Norton Hill School	157	23	
Oldfield School	136	12	
Ralph Allen School	113	4	
Somervale School	61	26	
St Gregory's School	115	10	
St Mark's School	33	7	
Wellsway School	166	23	
Writhlington School	97	105	
Totals:	1374	353	1727
Percentage:	79.5%	20.5%	100

APPENDIX 7 (Revised)

Short accounts of cases from the Work Related Learning Project Evaluation

These are based on longer case studies that were written to facilitate data sharing and analysis within the team.

Energy and enjoyment in science!

Work-related learning includes developing new relationships with new sources of ideas and information. One local authority has used a 'STEM Ambassador' scheme to make new links between science teachers and individuals in companies and organisations who want to work with schools (STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). An engineer from the Ministry of Defence has worked with teachers to develop two lessons in science, which fit with the science schemes of work at KS4. In one school this takes the form of a project on crumple zones, which as well as being a 'high-tech' topic, can also be represented in 'low-tech' and accessible ways (such as how to protect a raw egg which should not break when dropped to the floor). It extends to include tasks on protective materials, such as Kevlar* or Gortex*, or the materials used by firefighters and others in the most dangerous or demanding environments.

As a science advisor commented, this initiative was about young people enjoying their learning more, but was also in keeping with a wider effort to persuade more young people to study science and consider careers in STEM fields. It 'enthused' many learners and it 'energised' the science teachers involved.

(*These are likely to be registered trademarks)

A film for the community

Work-related learning can mean re-shaping the curriculum and how we teach in quite fundamental ways. In one school, a teacher meets a small group of Year 10 students for four hours every Wednesday for activities leading to the OCR Media qualification, which is an option for students alongside core GCSE courses. The group is making a film on the local area for an external client (a local town community association) and this included writing a proposal, costing it, negotiations with the client, holding meetings as a team, agreeing on a division of labour, and so on. It also included storyboarding and the many other activities that go into film making. Once underway, the students worked in pairs and took responsibility for different bits of the task, and the teacher coordinated, acting as overall producer, executive and director. Making the film entailed the young people learning a great deal about their community and locality and its history, including family links with a long-gone mining industry in the area. Like the teacher, the young people were very enthusiastic about both the substance and the process of what they were doing. They enjoyed using state-of-the-art computers and editing software. One said 'We make decisions all the time and it makes a difference not doing things just because the teacher says'. They all felt much more 'in

control' of this part of their whole schooling experience. Nearly all agreed that this activity made Wednesday 'the best day of the week'. They liked having a 'real deadline' and working as part of a team.

The teacher co-ordinating this activity thought that all students should do something like this as part of their schooling, 'because it's practical and involves a lot of people skills as well as learning to be organised and managing their own time. They recently ran a meeting, which was the first time they had ever done it'. He added that 'students like the association with the world of work, and it is easier for them to get engaged here than in some school subjects'. He also added that for some of the group, their full attendance for OCR Media contrasted sharply with their variable attendance in other subjects. However, the way this is currently organised prevents most students from getting the opportunity to pursue it: those deemed more 'academic' would do English Literature GCSE, those 'on the GCSE C/D borderline' would do Media Studies GCSE, and those remaining would either do the OCR Media or participate in the Increased Flexibility Programme which would take them into a local FE college for one day per week.

Real World Maths

Work-related learning includes using good, work-based scenarios to bring to life important aspects of the curriculum. One Advanced Skills Teacher, influenced in part by the materials on the website of the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), decided to generate new, differentiated materials and approaches for his Maths classes. He chose workplaces and businesses that would be familiar to the students (a garage, a pub, a hairdressing salon and an airport). With each of these, he was visiting the premises and talking to key staff to ascertain how mathematical processes were used in a range of day-to-day tasks. He then generated activities using real (or nearly real) data and used these in lessons, together with some video material from NCETM.

This teacher had spent a short time working in Engineering, and this helped him identify ways of helping students to understand the importance of Maths. He did however feel that his approach was different to that of many of his colleagues, who did not appreciate the need to innovate in such ways and who appeared nervous of doing anything that might change what they currently do with students predicted to gain higher GCSE results. As a result, he sometimes felt as if he was 'going out on a limb'.

The lessons were very successful. The young people who were interviewed said 'It was better than doing plain Maths, and watching a video first made it more interesting'. They also said that they valued learning that was 'helping us to see what Maths has to do with our future life' and was 'not just doing sums'. Several agreed with the student who said, 'We remember what we do in these lessons'.

Sharing workplace opportunities and contacts

BTEC programmes are conceived as 'general vocational', but it is often difficult for teachers to make substantial or genuine connections with workplaces on their own, and the last thing that people in such workplaces

need is an endless stream of individual teachers who want their time! There are several solutions to this problem, two of which are as follows:

- The first is to bring different groups of students together for one-day level workshops, in which structured activities give face-to-face contact with various individuals and occupations. The Work Related Learning Project organised a series of such workshops for each BTEC programme area, at a time when many schools were expanding their BTEC provision or doing it for the first time. The workshops were highly successful; not only were they enjoyable and highly informative, but they also generated a substantial amount of the evidence needed by each student for assessment purposes.
- A second solution is for clusters of teachers to meet from time to time to share ideas and intelligence about specific opportunities for visits to workplaces. Sometimes it can be difficult to 'harness' such things and make the most of them for curriculum and assessment purposes. Teachers can share tasks and ways of working – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts! A good example of this, driven by a Local Authority Science Adviser, brought Science teachers together to share how they were tackling the BTEC syllabus, which was relatively new to many of them. The meeting also functioned to share contacts and opportunities, including some already available through a broker working on behalf of employers.

Rediscovering 'why I came into teaching'

Work-related learning can be a vehicle for professional renewal. In one Local Authority, preparations for the new Diplomas had meant groups of teachers getting together to plan a new curriculum and new ways of working with students. For some this meant new links between school and college-based teachers who had previously been entirely separate. For others, it meant drawing on their considerable experience to construct new activities and projects that learners would do. This brought a new sense of autonomy and excitement of a sort that for many teachers had been missing from their careers since the introduction of the National Curriculum some 20 years earlier. As one Drama teacher put it 'our preparation for the Diplomas has been brilliant and it has reminded me of why I came into teaching in the first place'.

Vocational programmes as a community resource

Work related learning can mean building up a relationship between a school or college and parts of the local community, where learners get new opportunities and at the same time there is a gain of some kind in the community. In one example, in an area of particular social deprivation, notions of 'the world of work' loomed large, and the courses sought to give learners opportunities to experience it whilst giving something back to their wider community. General examples included visits and guest speakers and placements for the students. Specific examples included: (a) a drop-in 'surgery' for owners and carers of horses – which were quite numerous in and near the surrounding housing estate. This facility was hosted by the Animal Care student cohort, who also helped with the running of a local city farm. They also held an open afternoon for invited guests and the wider public, with students acting as tour-guides and talking to

people about their course; (b) Students on a nearby Childcare programme hosted visits from several nurseries and organisations including Surestart, and staffed the on-site childcare provision, in turn enabling other members of the community to access the learning facilities.

Such activities encouraged wider participation in formal learning, and were generally easier to engage the students with than some formal curriculum activities. They also involved providing something real for the community (in this instance childcare support or animal care expertise) whilst building students' confidence and aiding the development of communication skills through demonstrating subject specific knowledge to a range of audiences.

'Speed-networking' techniques on a Performing Arts taster course

To help a new BTEC Performing Arts award get off the ground in a collaborative partnership, a taster event was arranged. A whole day's activities were planned for potential students from the partnership including ice-breakers, meeting staff and fellow potential students, team building activities, networking opportunities and curriculum related activities, culminating in the performance of a scene from a musical. The idea was that this would give the potential students 'a real taste' of what the programme entailed, helping them to 'hit the ground running' in September if they joined.

The award leader's ethos was to incorporate the breadth of subjects under the Performing Arts' umbrella. It included aspects of music, drama and dance, each of which fed into the end 'product', the short performance, to which participants' families were invited. It was also filmed, with the intention being to make it available to the students on DVD. The day featured workshops in music, dance, drama and acting to prepare them for the performance, which, despite a few logistical problems, was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The non-performing, more theoretical part of the event focussed on speed networking. The programme tutors pulled in favours from people they knew in the industry e.g. dancers, musicians, choreographers, producers, a sound engineer, a lighting technician, journalists, arts educators, arts administrators and so on. The pupils had a script and a 10 minute interview with each of them, asking things like how their education had prepared them for the professional role, what they do in their job, what sort of money they earned, and so forth. The idea was to offer a view regarding where the course may take them. They spoke with one person then moved on to the next, and in a short space of time covered a whole range of Performing Arts' careers' opportunities.

One participant, the sound engineer, was a friend of the award leader, and used to be both a musician and a teacher, and could articulate the worth of the course, for instance the skills learnt on it. The speed-networking worked in 'wowing' kids and because they met 'normal people' who offered some currency or worth as far as the course goes. As professionals working in the industry, the insights offered by the guests were of a different order and valued differently to those of tutors. For the taster day the LSC funded publicity, certificates, helped with

communications, and took photos. Most of the industry guests gave their time for free.

Developing problem-solving skills in maths

GCSE maths lessons can often follow a typical pattern which involves introducing a topic or skill, practice, extension of the skill, more practice and revision. The emphasis is on learning and practising the maths required for success at GCSE.

In contrast, the introduction of WRL activities in one school provided the opportunity to ask students to respond to problems by *applying* maths. Students needed to be able to think creatively about what maths would be required to address a particular problem. The activities were developed through collaboration between maths teachers in one school and an Advanced Skills Teacher from a neighbouring school.

The most successful activity used the IKEA website and catalogue, and pupils particularly enjoyed working with the website. One pupil, who normally appeared to lack motivation, so much enjoyed the class, that it encouraged teachers to use the activity with a range of other pupils.

Teachers commented that pupils need to learn how to go about doing more open problem-solving tasks, if they are used to a different approach to learning maths in most of their lessons. The school planned to include one lesson in each module (comprising six lessons) which would involve such open-ended problem-solving tasks using the maths skills that pupils had learned during the module.

Creating curriculum links with local employers

Not all school subjects have ready access to networks such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) ambassadors or Education Business Partnerships that support curriculum projects. In one local authority the advisor for WRL took on the role of co-ordinating and improving employer engagement in curriculum projects in collaboration with a number of subject advisors.

Links were established with, for example, a large transportation company, and with the local magistrates' court. Teachers from a number of schools worked with these organisations, supported by LA advisors, to develop curriculum resources that could be used both in their own schools and by teachers elsewhere. The vision of the advisor for WRL was that WRL represented a different way of teaching, and was something that could be 'in every subject at every level'. She said: 'WRL should never be an add-on, something you do on a special day, in a special lesson'. She believed that embedding WRL activities in the curriculum could have a positive effect on attendance, engagement, disaffection and discipline, and help to improve grades particularly around the achievement of 5 x A*-C grades at GCSE.

DJ, AMB & RW

May 2010.