

Teaching and learning in 2020 review - call for evidence

Response from the General Teaching Council for England

Summary

The General Teaching Council (GTC) welcomes this timely and important review. We hope it will create a shared understanding of what is meant by personalised learning and clarify the nature and extent of the long-term political commitment to helping the education service deliver this approach.

There is a pressing need to align personalised learning policy and practice with the outcomes being aimed for by *Every Child Matters* (ECM). Personalised learning must support the aim to raise standards of achievement for all, including the significant minorities of underachieving pupils. By realigning policy, there is a real opportunity to deliver services in a new and better way, to generate better outcomes for all pupils and to close the achievement gap.

A constrained vision and policy for personalised learning that is limited to 'catch-up' and 'stretch' and extended extra-curricular provision will not deliver this. These provisions are important but they are not sufficient to lift the system to the next level of performance.

The GTC has examined the research and evidence from practice that relates to personalised learning. This suggests that it is possible to create a meaningful, system wide approach to personalised learning, through the combination of the following tools:

- a) a developed and widespread understanding of assessment for learning (AfL),
- b) using dialogue with pupils to enable them to play a more active role in their education ('pupil voice')
- c) new approaches to learning that make best use of new technologies.

The GTC is committed to the need for these tools to be underpinned by professional development for teachers that fully supports their capacity to change their practice.

By adopting this guiding pedagogy and a teacher-learner relationship which responds to pupils' 'voices', schools and other settings will be better placed to deliver the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes, including high standards of achievement, for all children. It is in this 'mix' that adaptive classrooms are created which respond reliably and creatively to learner context, needs, aspirations and interests.

It is interesting to note that the most frequent choice for development and innovation made by teachers participating in the GTC Teacher Learning Academy is assessment for learning and its effect on pedagogy and pupil outcomes.

There are also some significant policy tensions and barriers that need to be addressed to release the capacity of the system to embrace personalised learning fully.

A range of evidence indicates that the current extent of individual testing, coupled with its high stakes use for comparative institutional performance tables, has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement and well being of children and young people.

The GTC recommends:

- additional resourced provision for those at highest risk of under-attainment including higher ratios of staffing where needed (question one).
- significantly enhanced resources for local teacher development in the area of assessment for learning practices (question two)
- a matching shift in the use of summative assessment data - greater use must be made of such data to inform decisions about teaching and learning, with less emphasis on comparative institutional performance measures (question two)
- a further shift in the balance of schools' accountability away from the centre and towards to the community, parents and pupils (question two)
- universal and properly resourced continuing professional development for all teachers and staff (question four)
- a requirement to collaborate across institutions (question seven)
- support for families in poverty and with low literacy and numeracy to enable them to better engage with their children's learning (question eight).

The GTC believes that this review must make explicit the assumptions and theories of learning that are implied in Government policy. We fear that currently these may not always be well-founded or congruent one with another. In particular, the GTC has serious concerns about the validity of the Gifted and Talented policy, both in principle and as practised. We also question some of the debate and policy formulation on setting and admissions policies.

These policies seem to be based upon a theory that children's abilities are fixed. The GTC believes that theories that young people's development over time is dynamic and varied are more persuasive. Such theories are also more helpful when pursuing the best possible outcomes for children.

The GTC believes that the time has arrived for teachers to re-engage with the theoretical and empirical research basis of the pedagogies they adopt, so that their decision making in the adaptive classroom is well founded and generates the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Teaching and learning in 2020 review - call for evidence

Response from the General Teaching Council for England

Introduction

- 1 The General Teaching Council for England (GTC) is the independent professional body for the teaching profession. Its main duties are to regulate the teaching profession and to advise the Secretary of State on a range of issues that concern teachers and teaching and learning. The Council acts in the public interest to contribute to raising standards of teaching and learning.
- 2 The GTC welcomes the opportunity to submit initial evidence to this review led by Christine Gilbert. The GTC wishes to make a contribution both to the review group's vision and to its final recommendations for the delivery of that vision. The Council is happy to provide follow-up information on any of the issues raised if required.
- 3 The GTC is aware of the Government's drive to personalise public services including education. It is useful to recall David Miliband's 2004 definition of personalised learning, in which he described it as covering "*every aspect of teaching...designed around a pupil's needs...*". He said it was not about "*pupils left to their own devices*"¹. David Miliband also stated that personalised learning could not be defined in a top down way but that schools needed to find ways of delivering it within their own context and from their own starting point. As outlined below, the Government now appears to be adopting a narrower and more prescriptive approach.
- 4 The five key components for the delivery of personalised learning that emerged from Miliband's vision were reinforced by the DfES's *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learning* (2004). They underpin the questions being posed in this review. The Council is concerned, in contrast, by the narrow view of personalisation evident in the 2005 White Paper, *High Standards; Better Schools for All*. This focused on "*intensive small group tuition in literacy and numeracy for those falling behind...and extra stretch for the gifted and talented*"². The Council's response to the White Paper stated:

"The GTC urges the Government to hold fast to its earlier vision of personalised learning. This envisages a much greater use of assessment for learning matched with resources and flexibility to tailor the teaching and learning offer to each student".
- 5 The GTC's recently defined personalised learning as "*an education system which can be tailored to the needs of the learner and therefore have the potential to raise standards of achievement for every individual*". The Council believes that the needs of the learner should be encompassed in the five *Every Child Matters* (ECM) outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and

achieving, making a positive contribution to society and achieving economic well-being. The ECM agenda should be at the heart of personalising learning. That way, multi-agency services can be targeted at those groups of pupils whose additional needs affect their capacity to learn.

- 6 Though the Government has championed the ECM agenda over the last three years, this is still not aligned with the standards agenda. The recent Education and Skills Select Committee Report on special education needs (SEN) highlights that “*The Schools White Paper does not make a single reference to (the) five outcomes and continues to focus solely on raising academic attainment as the key priority and presumably the primary measure of success and progress for children*”. In developing its vision for personalised learning, the Review group needs to consider how the ECM outcomes can be given the same kind of value as academic achievement.
- 7 The GTC maintains that pupil’s abilities develop and change over time and within different contexts. The Council therefore warns against policies that appear to assume that pupils’ abilities are fixed. We have concerns about the adverse effects that the Gifted and Talented programme, admissions policies and setting and grouping strategies might have on pupils who are not judged to be in the higher-achieving groups at the time of selection.
- 8 The GTC believes that the current universal testing regime, the inspection system and performance tables continue to promote a narrowly focused and high stakes accountability system. This is despite the advent of the new Section 5 model and the use of contextual value added data. The accountability regime inhibits the capacity of schools to deliver sustainable personalised learning and limits local influence on schooling. While this review has no remit for change in these areas, it is impossible to consider the levers for change in the lead up to 2020 without acknowledging that this is a major barrier to reform.
- 9 The Council’s own policy work on personalised learning is focusing on the classroom and changes in relationships between teachers and learners as the initial ‘gateway’ for schools in finding ways to personalise learning. The GTC has prioritised three policy/research areas which it sees as critical to changing the teaching and learning culture. These are:
 - **Assessment for learning (AfL)** which has the potential to transform the relationship between teachers and pupils from one of ‘*delivery-receipt*’ to one where they are ‘*partners in pursuit of a shared goal*’
 - **Pupil voice** - the Pedagogies with the E-learning Resources (PELRS) research project supported by the GTC takes the pupil role in the classroom a step further by sharing of expertise and skills between pupils and teachers as a learning approach
 - **Continuing professional development (CPD)** - the GTC Teacher Learning Academy model encourages teachers to be explicit about their own learning and their theories and beliefs about learning and to use the classroom as a site for exploring these, in pursuit of deepening and/or broadening their practice.

These issues are discussed further in the appropriate sections of this response.

- 10 Attempting to look ahead to 2020 poses a challenge because we cannot be certain how ICT technologies will develop and at what pace. It is important that we do not assume that the curriculum will continue to be wholly or mainly subject based. Cross-curricular learning, particularly for 14- to 19-year-olds, will offer some exciting and flexible new approaches to personalised learning.

GTC Response to Review Questions

Q1. What teaching and learning strategies work best in personalising learning, especially in core subjects and for particular underachieving groups?

- 11 In this section, the GTC proposes two main approaches to support and improve teaching and learning for all pupils:
 - firstly, the GTC considers personalised learning to be most effective where teachers have a wide portfolio of teaching and learning strategies that they understand and can use flexibly, appropriately and creatively to meet the needs of children and young people
 - secondly, the GTC recommends a system of additional resourced provision for those at the highest risk of under-attainment.
- 12 The Council maintains that a broad definition, closer to the original five DfES characteristics of personalised learning – AfL, engaging teaching and learning strategies, teacher professional development, creative school organisation and partnership beyond the school – would be the most effective way to engage students and raise standards. A policy response which includes additional provisions for the most able and the least advantaged is important but unlikely to lift the system to the next level of performance.
- 13 The GTC has examined the research and evidence from practice on personalised learning. This suggests that it is possible to create a meaningful, system wide approach to personalised learning, through the combination of the following tools:
 - a) a developed and widespread understanding of assessment for learning (AfL) – see question two
 - b) using dialogue with pupils to enable them to play a more active role in their education ('pupil voice') – see question three
 - c) new approaches to learning that make best use of new technologies – see question six.

These tools must be underpinned by professional development for teachers that fully supports their capacity to change their practice.

- 14 This would require a fundamental change to practice for many teachers. There is evidence that the National Strategies have begun to stimulate this approach to practice some classrooms. However, there is considerable distance to travel in the majority.
- 15 By adopting this guiding pedagogy and a teacher-learner relationship which responds to pupils' voice, schools and other settings will be better placed to deliver the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes, including high standards of achievement, for all children. It is in this 'mix' that adaptive classrooms are created which respond consistently and creatively to learner context, needs, aspirations and interests.

The remainder of our response to question 1 focuses on strategies affecting particular underachieving groups.

Under-represented groups, minority ethnic groups, SEN and children with disabilities

- 16 There is nothing about personalised learning in itself that will challenge inequalities, unless the implementation of personalised learning has an explicit equality dimension. As outlined below, positive duties exist in law to ensure equalities in provision. Schools need support to implement these throughout teaching and learning.
- 17 Schools need to ensure their teaching and learning strategies meet positive equality duties in the *Race Relations Act* and the *Disability Discrimination Act*. By the beginning of 2007, schools will have to produce their Disability Equality Scheme and Race Equality Policy, as well as a gender equality scheme in future, and will need support in the complex journey of mainstreaming equality in policy and practice.
- 18 It is possible that personalised learning could exacerbate differences as pupils and parents with greater resources exploit the new opportunities more than those with fewer physical and social resources. For example, according to the EQUITY (Equal Opportunities In IT For Young People) Campaign – supported by the National College for School Leadership and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust – fewer than one in four school children have home access to the internet and high income families are five times more likely to own a home computer³.
- 19 When auditing personalised learning for equality at a local and classroom level, equality needs to be understood at four levels: formal equality of access and/or provision; equality of circumstance; equality of participation and/or treatment; and equality of outcome.

Gifted and talented students

- 20 'Gifted and talented' is clearly a social as much as cognitive construct and the criteria for the selection of pupils are confused. According to the Excellence in Cities⁴ criteria, students can be chosen on the basis of high ability in academic

subjects, sport, music or arts and also abilities in areas such as “advanced social skills and leadership qualities”. However, Lord Adonis’s July 2006 letter to schools indicating which of their pupils fall within the top five per cent on the basis of their Key Stage 2 English and maths scores will encourage schools to nominate only this narrow range of pupils for the gifted and talented register.

- 21 There are academic gains for pupils identified as gifted and talented when they are given full time specialist programmes and given specialist tuition in separate groups within a mixed class. However, the effects on the other pupils in the class and school remain unknown.⁵
- 22 The existence of a register of gifted and talented pupils does not recognise that pupils’ abilities change over time, and according to context: and indeed that there is no single agreed definition of ability.
- 23 According to evidence given by Professor David Gillborn to the DfES, various research studies suggest that when teachers separate students on the basis of assumed ‘ability’, black students are frequently over-represented in the lower-ranked groups. Gillborn also cites DfES data to demonstrate that white pupils were identified as ‘gifted and talented’ at more than twice the rate of Black Caribbean children and five times the rate for their Black African peers.⁶
- 24 The Council proposes that the review recommends ways of supporting teachers in engaging and stretching *all* pupils, and of helping them to challenge any notions of ‘ability’ – however asserted – that presuppose limits on potential.

Setting and grouping

- 25 A literature review, commissioned by DfES and published in 2005, suggests that no single form of organisational grouping benefits all pupils. In ability-based grouping, pupils in lower groups are vulnerable to making less progress, becoming de-motivated and developing anti-school attitudes. These pupils experience poorer teaching and a limited range of curricular and assessment opportunities that are likely to have an impact on later life chances.⁷
- 26 Pupils from some minority ethnic groups and pupils with SEN are over-represented in lower sets. There is a dearth of research evidence on the effects of organisational grouping on the progress and learning outcomes of either of these groups of pupils. There is some evidence of the potential benefits of flexible organisational grouping and within-class grouping that allow for the effective deployment of teaching assistance for pupils with SEN – although consideration should be given as to whether this assistance is best provided by a teaching assistant or classroom teacher.⁸

Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties (EBD)

- 27 The findings of a systematic review of research, which was designed to uncover and synthesise studies of successful teaching and learning strategies for EBD pupils in mainstream classes⁹ proposed strategies in three areas:

- programmes that provide pupils with specific capabilities to improve their communication skills, manage their anger and/or monitor their behaviour
- the physical arrangement of the classroom
- systems of rewards and sanctions, and finding out what pupils think would work.

A summary of the review, designed for practising teachers, can be found on the GTC's Research of the Month (RoM) website:
www.gtce.org.uk/Researchofthemoth.

The GTC recommends:

Further systemic additional resourced provision for those at highest risk of under-attainment, including higher ratios of staffing where needed.

Q2. What do schools need to do to understand the needs of all their students and what do they need access to in order to do this?

- 28 Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a key mechanism for teachers to understand their pupils' learning needs, and to develop 'learning to learn' skills in their pupils; the GTC would recommend that further resources become available to support teachers' understanding and use of AfL strategies.
- 29 AfL helps schools diagnose pupil needs by promoting pupil self- and peer-assessment, high-order and deep questioning by teachers, the use of comment only marking and regular feedback on progress. Paul Black and colleagues' AfL action research with teachers reflected an increasing demand from teachers to know more about theories and models of learning in order to support their students further. Another change in teacher approach identified from the same research project was that teachers felt they were really facilitating learning rather than feeling obliged to cover the curriculum at all costs¹⁰. The latter finding is significant in the shift away from teachers taking prime responsibility for their students' learning towards the students themselves taking greater ownership for their progress and attainment.
- 30 However, in terms of personalising learning, it is also critical that AfL is not seen as merely a set of improved assessment strategies that are an embedded strand of the national strategy implementation across schools. As Hopkins stressed, there is a need to '*develop the strategies and techniques... but also to go 'deeper' and 'wider' and 'construct a shared understanding nationally of what assessment for learning entails and how it sits within teaching and learning, so that we are secure in the rationale of how and why it works'*¹¹.
- 31 The GTC's assessment policy proposals recommend that teachers' formative assessment skills be developed first through initial teacher training (ITT) and CPD, with more specialist roles in assessment in line with the Chartered Assessor programme and the creation of 'assessment communities' across schools and localities.

- 32 As the GTC's response to the Schools White Paper highlighted, the Paper failed to deal with:

“the one significant lever that would best free up the system to deliver personalised learning and local influence on schooling and outcome – change to the assessment regime and the deployment of unmediated comparative data in the public realm”.

- 33 The GTC supports a more contextualised accountability model where schools are given more responsibility to provide enhanced information for parents on individual pupil progress and on school improvement. If schools can involve parents and pupils effectively in the processes of school self-evaluation, they will have a powerful further mechanism understanding how well the school is targeting need. The focus for the system must be on combining quantitative and qualitative pupil level data and using this, in partnership with pupils and parents, to plan the personal learning pathway of the child or young person.

The GTC recommends:

- **Additional resources to support further local development/teacher learning of AfL strategies to personalise learning.**
- **The development of an accountability regime that alleviates the burden of accountability to the centre to release local influence.**
- **a further shift in the balance of schools' accountability away from the centre and towards to the community, parents and pupils**

Q3. How can schools support learners to become independent learners and engage them in personalising teaching and learning?

- 34 In this section, the Council feels that the focus on 'independent' learners may be misplaced. Of course, students should be able to think and act independently and creatively, but they should also be aware of and able to draw upon interdependencies. Students should be able to draw upon the abilities and knowledge of teachers, school staff, other students, parents and others in their learning.

Assessment for Learning

- 35 As mentioned under question two, the GTC strongly encourages the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL), in which teachers – together with pupils – use evidence to establish where pupils are in their learning, what their goals are and how best to reach them. (Please see question two for further evidence.)

The importance of pupil voice

- 36 The Council believes that consulting pupils and involving them in teaching and learning approaches – as well as wider issues affecting the whole school – leads to higher pupil engagement and attainment. This view is grounded in the work of many research studies, including the linked studies within the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme, led by Jean Rudduck¹², whose team examined the benefits and practical applications of the principle of 'pupil voice'. The GTC's view is also informed by messages emerging from the PELRS project, as outlined below.

Developing Pedagogies for E-learning Resources project

- 37 The Developing Pedagogies for E-learning Resources (PELRS) project, based at Manchester Metropolitan University and funded by the GTC, found evidence that an action-research approach which involved pupils explicitly in understanding how they learn fostered a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility for learning.
- 38 The PELRS project was designed in response to the fact that the level of spending on ICT in education has not been matched by the extent of change that is observable in other areas of society. The project focused, not on ICT skills, but on the kinds of learning that ICT now makes possible.
- 39 As part of this, the project redefined classroom roles, so that learners could take on the role of teacher for a specific issue, or the teacher could be recast as a learner; this was found to be a powerful way to circumvent traditional school practices that get in the way of learning and foster more creative ways of working. PELRS challenged the notion of fixed roles of teachers, pupils and others within the learning sphere and showed that these roles are not given or fixed, but can be negotiated and placed in creative tension in order to find new ways of working.
- 40 PELRS showed that pupils welcomed the chance to take responsibility for their own learning and that structured group work with opportunities for collaboration on joint ICT-led presentation projects was very effective both in helping learners take control of their learning, and in helping them engage with the curriculum content set out by the teacher. The PELRS pedagogical framework also enabled pupils to work independently and interdependently to gain expertise in a particular theme, which they then shared with peers through presentations and coaching.
- 41 Pupils' engagement was increased through working in groups, taking control of learning, negotiating timescales and engaging in metacognitive processes. At present, these kinds of skills are not capable of being assessed in the national testing system.

A description of the work with schools and its theoretical basis is available at www.pelrs.org.uk

Further research on the importance of pupil voice

- 42 As part of the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), a number of linked projects, directed by Professor Jean Rudduck¹³, were undertaken on different aspects of 'pupil voice'.
- 43 The researchers identified a range of factors that pupils said helped to engage them in learning, including:
- being involved in a variety of activities: in particular, pupils felt that practical work not only helped them to understand difficult concepts, but also engendered a sense of achievement, especially when there was a tangible 'end product'
 - receiving positive feedback and encouragement from their teachers: even the more confident learners seemed to need reassurance that they were making good progress on a regular basis
 - having opportunities to make choices in the classroom
 - feeling that the work they were doing was interesting and pitched at a level they felt comfortable with, yet also challenged by.
- 44 The pupils also suggested a number of teaching approaches which they felt would help them engage more deeply, more actively, more sociably and with more responsibility in classroom learning activities.
- 45 Most of the teachers in the studies made direct use of their pupils' suggestions. How effective the teachers were at making use of their pupils' suggestions appeared to depend on:
- a) the extent to which individual teachers believed their pupils could contribute usefully to learning
 - b) teachers' planning and ability to overcome problems, and
 - c) teachers having a realistic assessment of how far pupils had developed the skills necessary to play an active part in classroom planning.

Clearly this work has important implications for the way schools construct the learning environment and the GTC has published a summary of this work, designed for practicing teachers, available at:

www.gtce.org.uk/Researchofthefmonth

Q4. How should the school workforce be trained and deployed to support personalisation of teaching and learning?

- 46 The GTC believes that teachers' understanding of theories of learning and pedagogy need to be better developed through initial training and continued professional development and that Assessment for Learning again has a key role to play in this.
- 47 The Council has already advocated more specialist assessment roles within teachers' career structures and these should encompass particular expertise in

personalising learning. The GTC Teacher Learning Academy discussed in detail in this section reflects a model for recognising professional learning as teachers progress through their career.

- 48 The Council recognises that a teacher's development must reflect the needs of their school and pupils, and that a teacher's individual needs and interest cannot be considered in isolation from whole-school needs. However, evidence from a series of systematic reviews on teachers' professional development suggests that teachers' professional development is most effective if teachers are able to 'personalise' their own learning, for example by identifying the particular focus for learning, by working with their peers and by having access to specialist expertise over time, in order to receive feedback on the changes they are trying to bring about.
- 49 These reviews are available on the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating (EPPI) Centre website at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/EPPIWeb/home.aspx?&page=/reel/reviews.htm>

Summaries designed for teachers can be found on the GTC's Research of the Month website: www.gtce.org.uk/Researchofthemonth

The GTC Teacher Learning Academy

- 50 The GTC Teacher Learning Academy offers public and professional recognition for teachers' learning, development and improvement work. It supports the concept of personalised teacher learning by offering teachers a way of addressing their CPD goals through its emphasis on individual developmental trajectories in context, interrogating practice with colleagues and evaluating the effects of changes to practice within the setting and for learners.
- 51 It aims to stimulate learning experiences for teachers which are effective for them, their pupils, their schools and for the education service. It seeks to support learning communities within and beyond schools that enrich teaching practice and support innovation.
- 52 The GTC Teacher Learning Academy has been developed in line with the findings of the first EPPI systematic review commissioned by the GTC with the support of the National Union of Teachers (NUT). It is underpinned by a clear and explicit set of principles that are designed to support teachers to:
- draw on knowledge from research and other colleagues
 - plan, evaluate and spread their own learning
 - draw on expert support from other teachers, advisers or teacher educators
 - experiment with disciplined creativity and learn as much from what did not work as from what did.
- 53 The GTC Teacher Learning Academy proposes a process of professional development through which participating teachers will acquire the crucial skills the need to personalise the learning of all their students. The process follows the following steps – the six core dimensions of the GTC Teacher Learning Academy:

- access to peer support, coaching and/or mentoring
- engagement with an appropriate knowledge base
- planning of professional learning and change activity (i.e. a teacher learning project)
- carrying out a change activity (i.e. implementing the teacher learning project)
- evaluating the impact on practice/own learning
- disseminating what has been learned.

54 Its findings have influenced policy direction, as evident in the key role for CPD in the DfES's *Five Year Strategy* and the high value now placed on sustained CPD and mentoring and coaching in the new professionalism agenda. The GTC developed the Teacher Learning Academy with those key findings in mind and offers teachers an accessible, relevant but nonetheless rigorous way to demonstrate commitment to their own learning in the future.

55 In a paper written for the TLA in 2005, David Hopkins, former Chief Adviser on School Standards at the DfES, said that *"unless teachers see their continuing development as an essential part of their professionalism the system will be unable to make the next big step forward in standards of learning and achievement. It is for this reason that the key principles and core dimensions of the Teacher Learning Academy are so important. They provide a robust and comprehensive analysis of what constitutes teacher professional skill and the GTC, through the various stages of the academy process, provides a methodology for taking these dimensions to scale¹⁴"*.

The school workforce and the role of teaching assistants

56 The range of existing support staff in schools make up a complex jigsaw of roles and responsibilities including those related to teaching and learning, behaviour and guidance and administration and organisation. Added to these are educational psychologists, colleagues from health, social services and the police and a range of volunteers including parents and governors. The Council believes that all teachers need professional development to work effectively with colleagues offering a growing range of support roles in schools.

57 In its advice to the Secretary of State on teachers working with support staff in 2002, the GTC advocated that schools examine their existing skills across the whole range of teaching and support roles undertaken by staff, and develop a better understanding of the role of professionals from other services. Such an audit goes beyond identifying how to redistribute administrative tasks to examining core teaching and learning processes and how these are best supported.

58 The Council believes that where possible, development in these skills areas should be team based and involve teachers and support staff as well as other adult professionals. Research studies reflect the limitations of 'in-service training...typically conducted in groups which included only other instructional assistants' (Giangreco, 1997).

- 59 Part of team building training and further development should involve early opportunities to observe each other in the classroom and development activities that 'may result in learning to challenge assumptions on the part of both teachers and paid adult support staff'. These include varying the roles played by each so that the teacher works with small groups of pupils while support staff work with the rest of the class in a more monitoring role (Moyles, 1998).

Joint statement of inter-professional values

- 60 Practitioners from different sectors are increasingly involved in inter-professional work with children and young people. The GTC is working with colleagues from the General Social Care Council and the Nursing Midwifery Council on a joint statement of interprofessional values and a programme of engagement during autumn and spring 2006/7. The aim is to involve children and young people and wide range of children's practitioners and their organisations in the debate about effective, collaborative delivery of personalised services in the context of ECM.

The GTC recommends:

- **A universal resourced expectation of continuing professional development for all teachers and staff.**

Q5. How could schools make use of flexibilities in the National Curriculum to support personalisation?

- 61 The schools system needs to give teachers a sense of trust and permission to apply the national curriculum flexibly and creatively. This was a key theme from the recent GTC Personalised Learning Research Colloquium, at which the group considered it crucial that teachers have the freedom to be creative and adopt personalised approaches.
- 62 The colloquium identified two barriers to teachers' creativity:
- a) the system of national testing, which encourages some teachers to "teach to the test" and narrows teaching methods and content; and
 - b) the extent to which school leaders and middle managers create an ethos of flexibility, cross-curricular working and trust in teachers' skills and creativity.
- 63 The Council welcomes recent moves by the DfES and QCA to create a more flexible curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, the curriculum will only support personalised learning and the ECM agenda, where there is more flexibility across all Key Stages.

Alternative curriculum programmes

- 64 The National Foundation for Educational Research undertook an investigation of the differences alternative curriculum programmes can make to students at KS4¹⁵.
- 65 The research looked at a study of schools offering an alternative KS4 curriculum to disengaged students, many of whom were underachieving and/or not attending school. Alternatives included spending more time on developing key skills, spending part of the week at college, in training or with an employer learning vocational skills, or attending community activities.
- 66 The researchers report that the participants who took part in their study strongly believed that well planned, well run and well monitored alternative curriculum programmes helped to re-engage and re-motivate previously disaffected and disengaged young people.
- 67 In their report, the researchers explored a number of features underpinning alternative programmes including:
- creating a supportive school context
 - making and sustaining collaborative partnerships
 - encouraging and acknowledging student achievement
 - monitoring, assessing and evaluating the outcomes.
- 68 A summary, designed for teachers, is available on the GTC's Research of the Month website: www.gtce.org.uk/Researchofthemonth

Q6. How should schools make best use of resources (including ICT) to support personalised learning?

Teachers, teaching assistants and pupils

- 69 Teachers are the most important resource available to schools, and evidence from Ofsted, research studies and teacher testimony shows that the quality of teaching has the highest level of impact on pupil learning. The GTC response to question four indicates how continuing professional development and the school workforce can best be applied to support teachers in delivering effective teaching and learning. As mentioned in question five, teachers also need to be granted the freedom and trust to exercise their professional judgement and creativity in the classroom.
- 70 Pupils are also an essential resource in learning, and our response to question three provides evidence on the importance of consulting pupils on their learning and the effectiveness of peer coaching and peer assessment.

Funding

- 71 Greater proportionate investment and external expert support for pupil learning and school development must go to schools serving the poorest communities. Weighted funding is needed to resource the wraparound provision, staffing and staff development that are pre-requisites to higher standards for these pupils.
- 72 The challenge of falling rolls in primary schools can be seized as an opportunity to create better staffing to support additional provision, personalise learning, deliver on the five outcomes of ECM and release resource into staff, curriculum and school development.

ICT

- 73 For sustainable and effective innovation to take place teachers need greater engagement with the learning potential of ICT in education. As the evidence from the PELRS project below indicates, new pedagogies need to develop in line with new technologies and teachers need structured supported opportunities to enquire into effective and creative use of these technologies for learning, and to develop their teaching practice accordingly. Research intelligence such as that produced by PELRS needs to be developed with larger number of schools and teachers and made accessible throughout the workforce.
- 74 The GTC has welcomed the DfES's desire to build a practice based research environment and encouraged further support through the GTC Teacher Learning Academy (see question four) to pursue this approach
- 75 As mentioned under question one, the government needs to look at closely the existing digital divide and using technology to reach traditionally 'hard to reach' learner. There is a risk that because children from lower socio-economic backgrounds have less access to ICT, they may be further disadvantaged as ICT grows in importance.
- 76 Expansion in ICT for schools, should be complemented by the provision of framework agreements in which practising teachers can acquire broadband access and state of the art equipment where they need it - in the school and in the home

Developing Pedagogies for E-learning Resources Project (PELRS)

- 77 In addition to the findings on the importance of pupil voice (mentioned in question three), the PELRS project¹⁶ showed how teachers can harness the power of technology to change the way that their particular subject is taught, and at the same time develop their own professional learning.
- 78 PELRS was designed in part to address the problem that many teachers are reluctant to use innovative processes with ICT in their classroom, except at a fairly basic level, because of a lack of complete technical mastery. In the PELRS project, groups of pupils worked independently to gain the expertise in a

particular technique or software package and then shared that with peers and with the teacher. This freed teachers from the pressure to show they had total expertise and allowed pools of expertise to be created within the classroom and shared across groups.

- 79 The researchers believe formal, skills-based ICT lessons are less likely to give teachers a model of how to use a new technology in their practice because of the nature of lesson planning and delivery in their usual mode. PELRS offers the opportunity to explore new equipment and techniques in a genuinely open-ended way, and therefore to embed the technology more effectively into the work of the classroom. The “pupils as teachers” and “pupils as producers of media” strategies in PELRS have gives the opportunity for whole class sharing of work, based largely on input from the pupils – who then find them engaging and motivating, and work hard to produce the best possible outputs for these.
- 80 PELRS researchers welcome the ongoing investment in interactive whiteboards, but cautioned that this technology may reinforce rather than change the dominance of traditional teaching modes. A more ‘transformative’ use of the technology involves pupils as well as teachers planning and delivering lessons with access to a shared resource in the classroom.

For a full description of the empirical work in school and its theoretical basis, please visit www.pelrs.org.uk

Q7. What should be the role of others beyond the school in helping personalise teaching and learning?

School collaboration

- 81 Research evidence¹⁷ indicates that collaboration between providers is more likely to transfer effective practice than central determination. Collaboration across the system can be an essential safeguard against inequitable provision and helps to spread and scale up best practice.
- 82 Schools and colleges need incentives to act in collaboration to achieve better outcomes across a whole local area. The 2005 White Paper and Education and Inspections Bill fail to create these incentives and this misses an opportunity to provide consistently high provision that is available to all. The review group may wish to examine the experience of the health sector to see the extent to which mergers and the creation of multi-hospital Trusts have liberated good practice.
- 83 In terms of working with practitioners and institutions beyond schools, teachers can learn from others about the threats and opportunities associated with customised packages. It is also important to learn from the early experiences of reforms in Key Stage 4 and collaborations with further education colleges and business – in the past, young people have not always been well served when they are learning in more than one place, for example in terms of coherence, pastoral support and guidance.

- 84 If teachers are going to be increasingly required to broker and commission opportunities through external partners, many teachers may need to adapt and learn these skills.

Recognising learning beyond the classroom

- 85 One thing that might be classed as ‘personalising’ is finding ways for formal learning to recognise/validate learning that takes place via other means. The review may like to consider whether schools could develop criteria along the lines of the GTC Teacher Learning Academy, mentioned in question four.
- 86 This could validate the learning that young people do, for example, in constructing their Bebo pages, taking on a mentorship role in their sports club, starting a new Saturday job, working with a learning mentor. This would reposition schools as ‘validators’ of learning as well as ‘deliverers’ and might increase young people’s perceptions of the relevance of schools. A by-product would be that schools would be more aware of pupils’ backgrounds and interests, which might contribute to personalisation.

Using experts from outside schools

- 87 If a wider range of people are recognised as making a contribution to learning it would be valuable to enhance the skills of those who might make a contribution but who are not going to train to teach. A training package (perhaps drawing on the summer school element of Teach First) might be of use to those from creative industries, the voluntary sector, police, health, guidance etc who may be working effectively in and around schools without necessarily having skills to orient that involvement towards learning.

The GTC recommends:

A requirement to collaborate across institutions.

Q8. What capacities do parents need in order to engage with their children’s learning and how should schools seek to engage them?

Reaching all parents

- 88 The GTC has previously commended government for the investment in parenting represented by the Sure Start programme. This vision of empowerment needs to be extended into support for the families of school-age children.
- 89 There is a significant body of work on parental engagement – research and evidence from family learning programme outcomes¹⁸. This research shows the importance of parental engagement, and that where quality targeted programmes are in place to achieve this, they have the added benefit of significantly increasing the parents’ engagement with the wider issue of whole

school development and governance. It is this order of intervention which the Government needs to focus effort upon to achieve its adult literacy and numeracy targets and its aspiration to engage parents inclusively in the schooling system.

- 90 Two agendas – reforms in 14-19 education and skills and ECM – both feature greater levels of support for parents and parenting. As there are supply issues with this emerging workforce, and new people will need to be employed, and skills augmented, it is a good time to ensure that parents are helped to engage with personalised learning in a number of ways:
- helping schools to achieve the fullest picture of their child’s interests, strengths, preferences, circumstances
 - negotiating the available opportunities to support their child’s development
 - ensuring that the offer to their child is not based on limiting assumptions about their capacity or potential
- 91 A literature review was commissioned by the DfES in 2003 to identify and understand the impact of parental involvement on children’s educational progress and strategies for enhancing their involvement¹⁹. This research also appears in a summary form, designed for teachers, on the GTC’s Research of the Month website: www.gtce.org.uk/Researchofthemonth
- 92 The review established that parental involvement has a significant positive effect on children’s achievement in school, although schools need to work hard to ensure that the approach to parental involvement is one of ‘partners in education’. In order to enhance their children’s achievements, parents need to be able to model for, and transmit to, their children high learning aspirations, and the values of social engagement and citizenship. Social class was found to be a key component in how far parents were involved in a ‘partnership’ with their children’s schools in this sense, and there is a clear need for programmes to provide support and intervention to assist parents, particularly from lower socio-economic groups, to engage with their children in this way.

Accountability to parents

- 93 It is clear from work carried out by MORI²⁰ and GFK NOP²¹ for the GTC that parents do not place the same overall value on performance tables as the Government. Parents express an overall preference for verbal information on pupil progress and performance. They would like more tailored and descriptive information and see effective accountability on an individual school basis rather than a regional or national basis. Parents raised questions about the validity of league tables and overall the tables are not the significant factor in parents’ choices about schools or their subsequent evaluations of schools.

Involving parents in pupil assessment

- 94 The GTC believes that parents/carers and pupils are key consultees for schools as part of their school self-evaluation processes. It is through the development

of genuine and coherent consultation strategies by schools that those groups can begin to feel that they are making a difference and develop investment in contributing to the further development of the institution²².

- 95 In its recommendations on pupil assessment, the Council promoted the idea of schools involving parents as part of their "assessment community", building on parent and carers' concern for the progress of their child into an interest and involvement in a dialogue between teachers, parents and other groups about teaching and learning. The Council believes that involving parents/carers and others in this way is important in trying to develop an accountability model that is based more strongly on involvement and engagement²³.

The GTC recommends:

Support for families in poverty and with low literacy and numeracy to enable them to better engage with their children's learning.

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