

Module 12 Topic 2: Delivering the Goods

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Topic Description

This topic deals with several issues connected with the development of schools during a period of rapid change in the knowledge age of the 21st century. It starts by discussing the nature and content of the curriculum and argues that the current content-dominated curriculum is an anachronism in an age in which the knowledge explosion is doubling the volume of information available every two years. It presents a cogent plea for a curriculum based upon both knowledge and the skills necessary to process that knowledge and develops lessons that enable students to understand what those skills might be and how they might be fostered. It continues by raising issues of the ownership of learning and the empowerment of learners citing examples and case studies from industry and other schools, which have already started the process. The issue of individual learning styles follows and the new research into how people learn is studied. In order to implement these it will be necessary to break down the existing barriers to learning, and to cast a new eye into the way in which pupils are assessed, the objective being to create a failure-free and flexible system in which everyone learns at his/her own pace and according to his/her own learning style. It is understood that, in many countries curriculum content and mass examination systems are determined by national governments, often with little knowledge of new developments or concern for individual learners. However, it is considered that schoolteachers knowledge at the chalk-face can help influence other to bring a more pupil centred approach to the business of education.

Topic Objectives

The objectives of this topic are

- a) to develop understanding and knowledge of the new elements in the school curriculum of the 21st century
- b) to raise and discuss issues related to the ownership and assessment of learning and how to cater for individual learning styles in the school
- c) to understand what the barriers to learning are and how to break them down, and the support structures that need to be put in place to implement a 21st century learning strategy in the school.

Target Audiences

There are a variety of target audiences for this topic.

- a) Initially there are the decision-makers – the politicians elected to give direction to many aspects of the city's focus and to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing environment within which the city and the school operates.
- b) Secondly there are those city professionals whose responsibility it is to provide a school system open to the needs and demands of the 21st century.
- c) Thirdly there are the administrative staff and teachers who are preparing youngsters of all ages to live in a vastly different society in the future, one where change is constant, where employment depends on adaptability and flexibility and where learning is for everyone and for life.

- d) Fourthly there are the pupils and students themselves who should be included in this crucial debate about their own futures.
- e) Fifthly there are those who have a deep interest in the progress of the school – the parents, the governors, the members of the community around it – who can contribute much to its ethos, its processes and its effective operation.
- f) Sixthly, there are the National Government Advisers, Inspectors and Civil Servants who determine the content of the curriculum and influence the way in which schools operate in many other ways
- g) Lastly there are the ordinary citizens whose interest arises from the sort of inclusive and interactive society created in the concept of the learning city. All of these can profit from the seminars this module generates.

Lesson 12.2.1 – The curriculum and its content

Lesson objectives

The objectives of this lesson are to examine the current content of the school curriculum, to question its usefulness in the context of rapid change in the 21st century and to give some insights into the new contexts in which a different curriculum would be useful

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

1. Introduce the curriculum of the school and ask the class how useful it is in the context of the 21st century. Hand out toolbox item 1 and ask the class individually to complete the questions.
2. Bring into plenary. Discuss the results of the completion of the table and then ask what answers they gave to question 2. Ask if they saw whether a conflict arises between the two parts. In an age of information explosion how do we decide which subset of which subject to teach? What is essential knowledge and what is not. Is teaching facts for regurgitation in examinations a relevant education in this day and age? Are teachers really so ignorant of today's imperatives? This should be a lively discussion.
3. Hand out toolbox items 2a, 2b and 2c. Divide the class into groups of 3 and ask them to complete the questions in 2c. When they have done so bring together in plenary and compare the answers. Discuss in particular the Learning Ladder – how many such ladders exist in the school? What did they underline in the last question. Explain that, in the next lesson, we will be examining what sort of things should go into the new curriculum and how.

Lesson 12.2.2: Skills and Values in the Curriculum

Lesson objectives

The objectives of this lesson are

to increase understanding of the difference between formal, informal and non-formal learning and the ways in which that understanding can be used in the school curriculum

to identify the skills, competences and values needed for life in the 21st century and to suggest ways in which they can be brought into the curriculum of the school.

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

NB This lesson may be divided into 2 separate lessons dependent on the time available for teaching it.

1. Introduce the idea of learning and its different forms. Are there any other contexts in which people learn besides the formal learning which takes place in school. Introduce the idea that we are learning all the time from when we are first brought into the world. What sort of learning do babies do? What sort of learning is taking place when we cross the road? Come to the conclusion about formal and non-formal learning.
2. Divide the class into groups of two or three. Hand out toolbox items 4a and 4B. Ask the groups to complete the questions and exercises in 4B.
3. Bring together in plenary and discuss the answers. Concentrate on the practical implications of this new knowledge and how it can be used in the context of the school.
4. Introduce the idea of the skills, competences and values based curriculum. Which skills and which values? Take a few suggestions of each, divide into groups of three and hand out toolbox item 5A. Ask them to complete the boxes with skills and competences that are important for life in the 21st century.
5. Bring into plenary and consolidate the lists on the board or flip-chart at the front. Hand out toolbox item 5B – check to see if there are any other that have been missed previously.
6. Hand out toolbox item 6 and divide the class into different groups of two. Ask the groups to complete the questions
7. Compare results in plenary again with the emphasis on the practical ways in which these skills and values might be introduced into the curriculum.
8. Complete the lesson by discussing the opinions expressed in the last question.

Lesson 12.2.3: The Ownership of Learning and Support for it

Lesson Objectives

The objectives of this lesson are

- a) to give an understanding of the need for pupils to own their own learning and ways of how this may be done
- b) to provide Case Studies of learning ownership in action and initiate discussion on how the principles can be implemented in other schools
- c) to initiate ideas on the support structures which schools will need in the 21st century and how they may be provided.

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

NB This lesson may need to be divided into 2 separate lessons dependent upon the time available to teach it.

1. Introduce the topic of ownership of learning. Remind them of the quotations in previous lessons

People will only plan for consistent learning activities throughout their lives if they want to learn. They will not want to continue to learn if their experiences of learning in early life have been unsuccessful and personally negative. They will not feel motivated to take part in learning whose content and methods do not take proper account of their cultural perspectives and life experiences.

European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning

Ownership does not always mean that the learner decides the content of the curriculum, though his/her assent to it would be a step in the right direction. At the very least, it can mean that the learning is the subject of an accord between the teacher/lecturer and the student, and that the teacher/lecturer has at least made some effort to justify to the student the need for a particular content, the insights and new knowledge it will give, and the way(s) in which will be learned. Such a compact increases commitment and motivation on both sides, and gives the learner a clear idea of the why, the who, the when and the how of the learning. At a more advanced level, and with the use of lifelong learning tools described in chapter 4, learners will become much more able to diagnose their own learning requirements and styles and take action to satisfy them.

(Lifelong Learning in Action)

1. Discover what the class understands by the word.
2. Hand out Toolbox Item 7, divide into groups of two and ask the class to complete the questions.
3. Bring together and discuss the results and the opinions expressed in question 5.
4. Distribute toolbox item 8 Divide the class into groups of three and ask them to read the Case Studies and then respond to the questions at the end. Get them to do a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) on the Case Studies with reference to their own school.
5. Bring into plenary and discuss the answers with particular reference to the feasibility of carrying out the changes in their own school..
6. Introduce the topic of support in the school. What might be needed for a true 21st Century organisation? Hand out Toolbox item 9, divide into different groups of two and ask the groups to complete the questions.
7. Bring into plenary and discuss the results.

4. Lesson 12.2.4: Barriers to Learning and their removal

Lesson Objectives

The objectives of this lesson are:

- a) To identify the barriers to learning in schools and to discuss ways of removing them
- b) To examine a Case Study of a school which has already implemented a methodology of barrier removal

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

1. Introduce the idea of barriers to learning. Ask the class to identify one pupil each who is underachieving and to jot down 3 reasons why that is so. Make a list on the board of the barriers identified by the class.
2. Hand out toolbox Item 10, divide the class into groups of two and ask them to answer question 1.
3. Bring into plenary and discuss the answers to question 1. Are there any new barriers here? What priority did the class assign to each Which ones came out on top (Normally it will be the personal/family background related ones). Start a discussion about what can be done about this?
4. At a suitable point ask the groups to complete questions 2 and 3. Again bring back to plenary and ask what additional points have been made in the blank boxes. Ask them to identify a) the three they would think the most important in the short term and b) the three most important in the longer term. Discuss the results of this exercise.
5. Hand out toolbox item 11 – point out that the Case Study (a school in Sweden) recapitulates several points made in previous lessons and introduces new ones. But it puts much of the lessons together into one school. Ask them to make a list of the new ideas introduced.
6. Discuss with the class the feasibility of introducing some of these methods into their own school. Which ones are suitable and which ones not? And why!

Lesson 12.2.5: Catering for Individual Learning Styles

Lesson Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to identify different learning styles and their origins and to explore to what extent and how the school takes these into account

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

1. Introduce the topic of individual learning styles – how do each of the members of the class think they learn best? Has anyone ever taken these into account during their own learning?
2. Hand out toolbox item 11, divide into groups of two and ask for completion of the questions. Bring into plenary and ask what learning styles there are?
3. Hand out toolbox item 12. Ask for examples of each type of intelligence. Complete the questions in groups of two and then discuss in plenary. Why do schools not take these into account?
4. Initiate a web search in groups of 3 for these intelligences and for information on Individual Learning Styles and accelerated learning. Groups report back their findings to the whole class and relate it particularly to the issues of how it can be used in the school situation.

Lesson 12.2.6: The Assessment of Learning

Lesson Objectives

The objectives of this lesson are to study the effect of current assessment systems on lifelong learning and to examine alternatives

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

1. Open up the subject of assessment and examinations – what are they for? Do they achieve this? How do class members deliver them as part of the system?
2. Hand out toolbox items 13 A and B. Divide into groups of two and ask the groups to answer the questions on 13B. Ask them to keep an open mind while doing so.
3. Bring into plenary and discuss the results – concentrate particularly on the way in which failure is embedded into the system and its effects upon a large number of learners. Discuss what the alternatives might be.
4. Hand out toolbox item 14. Divide into different groups of 2 and ask for completion of the questions.
5. Bring into plenary and discuss the results. Point out the link between the 2 lessons on learning styles and assessment. Come to a conclusion about the fairness and effect of current-day examination systems.

Topic 2, Toolbox item 1 – Delivering the goods, Removing the obstacles.

A..Curriculum Content

**Exercise 1: Which of the following subjects are compulsory and which are optional in the school curriculum and when? Add other subjects in the blank boxes. O= optional, c= compulsory
In the right hand box please put an X against a subject where you have difficulty in finding qualified teachers.**

	In the early years	In the middle years	In the upper school	X
National Language				
National Literature				
Mathematics				
General Science				
Physics				
Chemistry				
Biology				
Geography				
History				
Media Studies				
Crafts (woodwork, metalwork, design)				
A second language (say which)				
A third language (say which)				
Domestic Science (Cookery etc)				
Economics				

Exercise 2: The quotation below is taken from a popular book of the 1980s. The process has accelerated even more today. What effect do you think that this might have on the standard curriculum?

'Scientific and technical information increases by 13% per year (which means that it doubles every 5.5 years) and, since this is a self-generating process, by 1990, the amount of information in the world will be 4-7 times what it was in 1986'

(John Naisbitt - Megatrends 1987)

Exercise 3: Give your opinion of the quotation below. Have things changed much since 1970?

2. 'We need new laws, new education, new attitudes. The danger is that two cultures exist, those that know about, influence and are able to cope with, the implacable growth of science ad technology in our lives, and those that ignore its implications. Most sociologists trail along some way behind, not quite knowing what is happening. Behind them come the majority of civil servants, lawyers, politicians, and last of all, teachers, who are preparing people to live in this new age. They belong to the other of the two cultures...'

(Martin and Norman 'The computerised society' (1970)

Toolbox Item 2A: Curriculum for a new age

(extract from Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21st Century Education)

An old educational graffittum says, *'If you learn one useless thing a day, in a whole year you could learn 365 useless things.'* Much has been made in this book of the transition from information to skills in a lifelong learning society. We have said that, while the development of memory skills is important in educational development, the regurgitation of memorized information is no substitute for understanding, insight and knowledge - nor is it a reliable indicator of intelligence. The learning ladder, shown in Figure 1 demonstrates how information and knowledge per se is no longer sufficient to sustain the individual in a learning society, and how understanding and insight are levels at which learning systems should aim.

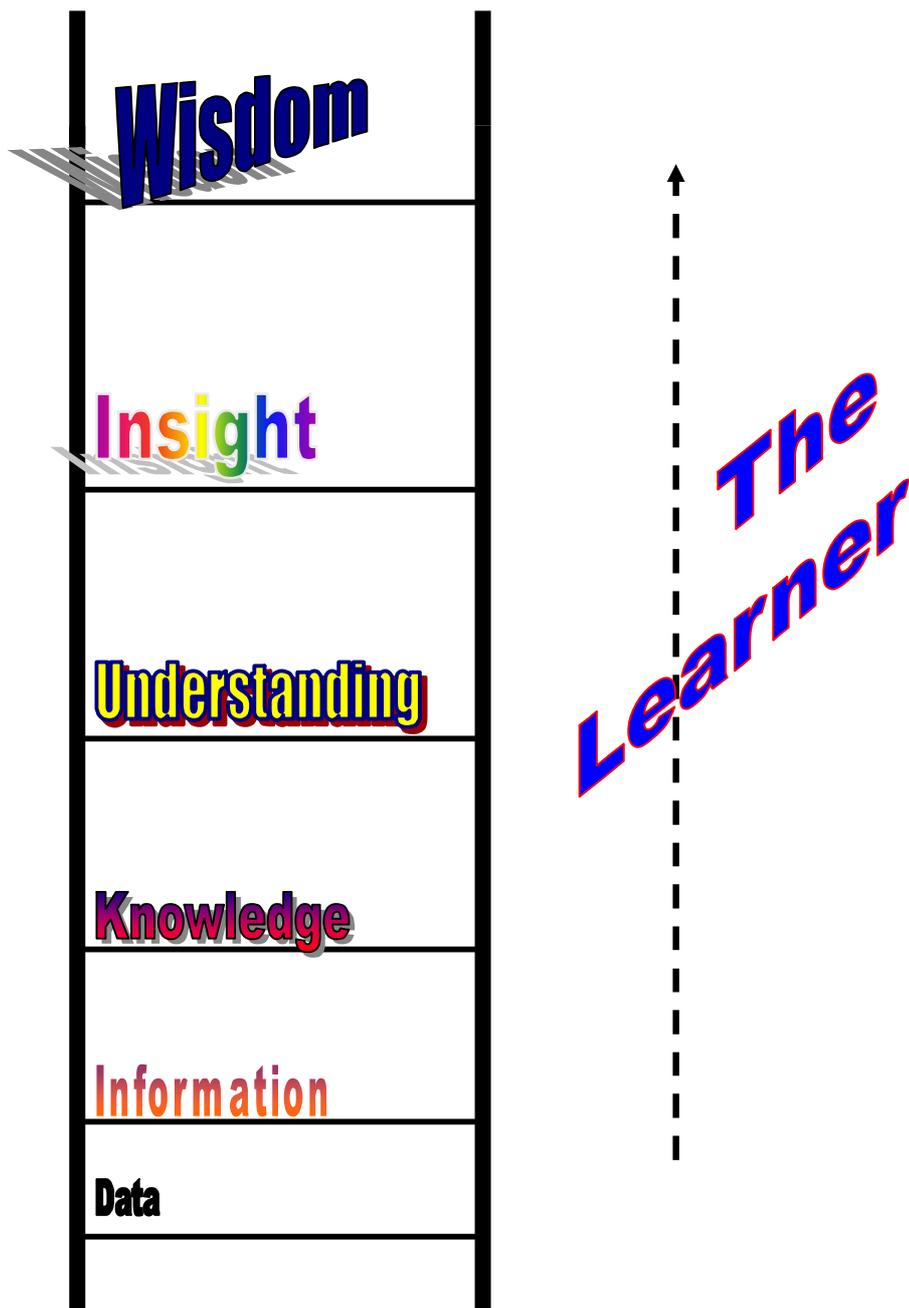
That means that 'what to think' is superseded by 'how to think'. If the focus is now on the needs and demands of the learner, then the old method of imposing large quantities of information onto people and hoping that some of it sticks, becomes obsolete. Naisbitt and Aburdine are of the opinion that *'too many young people, brimming with creativity, are run through a system that recognizes and deals with only the linear, logical and rational side of human and social reality.'* And they are right. Creativity, imagination, vision and insight have been too long absent from the curriculum of our education organizations, mainly because they are not easily examinable, and partly because they encourage a questioning of accepted wisdom and authority, in the more authoritarian cultures a difficult concept to cope with.

However such attitudes cannot survive in a society dominated by change and knowledge explosion. The 21st century will require people to make value judgements on a host of scientific, technological, environmental and financial topics from bio-babies to single currencies. The curriculum of all educational organizations should therefore be focused upon developing insight and intuition, self-esteem and self-knowledge, and individuals who can judge critically what is acceptable and what is not, differentiate between what is quality and what is not, from the evidence put before them.

And all of this within a holistic framework and an unselfish system of values and ethics which treats all human beings equally, recognizes man's obligations as a steward of the planet and understands the rights and bases of other creeds, cultures, races and peoples. This is a tall order, and it won't be implemented under the present education and training paradigm.

Who should lead us into this brave new world? Undoubtedly, teachers and lecturers have a key role as guardians and deliverers of the message. That they do not in general do so at present can be attributed to a multitude of reasons, some of which have been enumerated in other chapters - government control of the curriculum, inadequate teacher training, resistance from society and parents, lack of leadership, a media which in the words of Longworth and Davies, *'is being used, in ever more influential ways, to inform, distort, inspire, trivialize, challenge, deceive, stimulate, mislead, somnambulise, or make us ever more intelligent, bitter, complacent, enlivened, depressed, active, passive.'*

But this is too pat an answer. Many educators are the front line in the struggle against the cynicism, ignorance and indifference they encounter in modern society. But the opposition is too strong for even the most heroic efforts of a profession long accustomed to dealing with failure. Teachers are but one change agent in the continuing development of human potential, albeit a crucial one. National and international governments, industry, communities, NGOs and visionary individuals will determine and implement the new pathways to effective learning in a learning society.



The Learning Ladder

A Personal Voyage from Data to Wisdom

Toolbox Item 2C - Some exercises

1. 'If you learn one useless thing a day, in a whole year you could learn 365 useless things.' Name one useless thing which each member of your group has learned today.

2. To what extent do you believe that memorisation is an indicator of intelligence? _____

3. Look at the Learning ladder diagram. Describe what it means to your group.

4. At which level on the ladder do you believe that the majority of learning goes on in your school?

5. What efforts do you make to increase that level? How do you do it?

6. At which level do you consider yourself to be in your own learning at this moment?

7. Have you had any insights today? If so, name one each?

8. Why do you think that creativity, imagination, vision and insight are absent from the curriculum?

9. How would you insert these into the curriculum at your school?

10. What is holding you back from doing so?

11. In your opinion, what effect does the media have on your job?

12. From where in your community might you expect to receive help?

13. Underline in item 2A the sentences which should be taken into account when devising a curriculum for the 21st century.

Tool box Item 3: The curriculum and the learner

Often curriculum content is decided at governmental level and assessed by external agencies. However schools are closer to the needs and demands of the learners and have considerable flexibility in the value they add to the education of children. These exercises promote an exploration of the school's perception of these needs and demands in the context of modern learning knowledge

Exercise 1: Please indicate how relevant you consider the following quotations should be to the future development of the curriculum at your school

1= crucial, 2= very relevant, 3= relevant, 4= only partly relevant, 5= not at all relevant

People will only plan for consistent learning activities throughout their lives if they want to learn. They will not want to continue to learn if their experiences of learning in early life have been unsuccessful and personally negative. They will not feel motivated to take part in learning whose content and methods do not take proper account of their cultural perspectives and life experiences.

European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning

Real learning is not what many of us grew up thinking it was. It is not simply memorising facts, learning drills or soaking up traditional wisdom. While these activities may be required in learning, they are only a part of a larger process.

Charles Handy

The common curriculum should reflect the realities of an information-dominated world and address the real needs of children for the future. Skills development is an example. Learning to learn and the other high-order skills of thinking, information handling, decision-making and problem-solving are crucial to tomorrow's world

Longworth (Making Lifelong Learning work)

'Teaching' for me is not the imposition of another's ideas or knowledge, but the expert opening up of the mind and the intellect to allow it to take in the understanding, beauty and wisdom of our passage on this earth. Perhaps the problem is not the school, but the stifling system which puts teachers into the position of information brokers within artificially fragmented subject areas.'

Input to Learning Communities web forum 2003

Exercise 2 Comments about the curriculum?

Toolbox item 4A

Formal, Informal and non-formal learning

(extract from Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21st century education)

Not all learning is carried out in educational institutions. The European Commission's memorandum on lifelong learning highlights three basic categories of purposeful learning activity.

- *Formal learning, which takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognized diplomas and qualifications.*
- *Non-formal learning, which takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalized certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups (such as in youth organizations, trades unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organizations or services that have been set up to complement formal systems (such as arts, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations).*
- *Informal learning, which is a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be recognized even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills.*

We can quibble about the accuracy and usefulness of such categorizations, but it is evident that there is a distinction between the three and that all three play a part in the lives of individuals in and out of learning establishments.

Until now, formal learning has dominated policy thinking, shaping the ways in which education and training are provided, and colouring people's understandings of what counts as learning. The basic continuum of lifelong learning brings non-formal and informal learning much more fully into the picture. Non-formal learning, at first sight, appears to be outside the remit of schools, colleges, training centres and universities, though many adult education courses in the liberal arts would come under this heading. It is not usually seen as 'real' learning, and its outcomes have, until recently, little currency value on the labour market. Consequently non-formal learning is typically undervalued among learning providers, even though business and industry increasingly looks for many of the attributes picked up as a result of non-formal learning activities, for example leadership, personal energy and participation in community projects.

Informal learning is likely to be missed out of the picture altogether, although it is the oldest form of learning and, as we have seen, the well-spring of early childhood learning. Informal contexts provide an enormous learning reservoir and could be an important source of innovation for improving teaching and learning insights, if only we could step outside the self-imposed mental prison which constrains our perception of the purpose of school, college and university.

There is also the increased use of the term 'lifewide learning' to be borne in mind. While 'lifelong' learning relates to the activity of learning throughout a lifetime, 'lifewide' learning relates to the spread of learning taking place across the full range of our lives at any moment in time. It includes formal, non-formal and informal learning, and it reminds us that useful and enjoyable learning can and does take place in the family, in leisure time, in community life and in daily work. Further it indicates that teaching and learning are themselves roles and activities that can be changed and exchanged in different times and different places. Lastly, as the preface to his book shows, 'life-deep' learning is a new term to describe the insights and discernments which increase our awareness and understanding of particular issues in the wider world beyond our immediate environment. In a globalized world this type of learning is essential for international harmony and peace.

Toolbox Item 4B: some questions

1. Give one personal example each from your group of

1.1 Formal Learning _____

1.2 Informal Learning _____

1,3 Non- Formal Learning _____

2. How can this knowledge help in your teaching? _____ -

3. What do you think organisations value most when interviewing for a job? _____ -

4. What is the 'self-imposed mental prison' referred to by the author? How do we get out of it in the school context?

5. Give your own definitions and examples for the following in your personal lives:

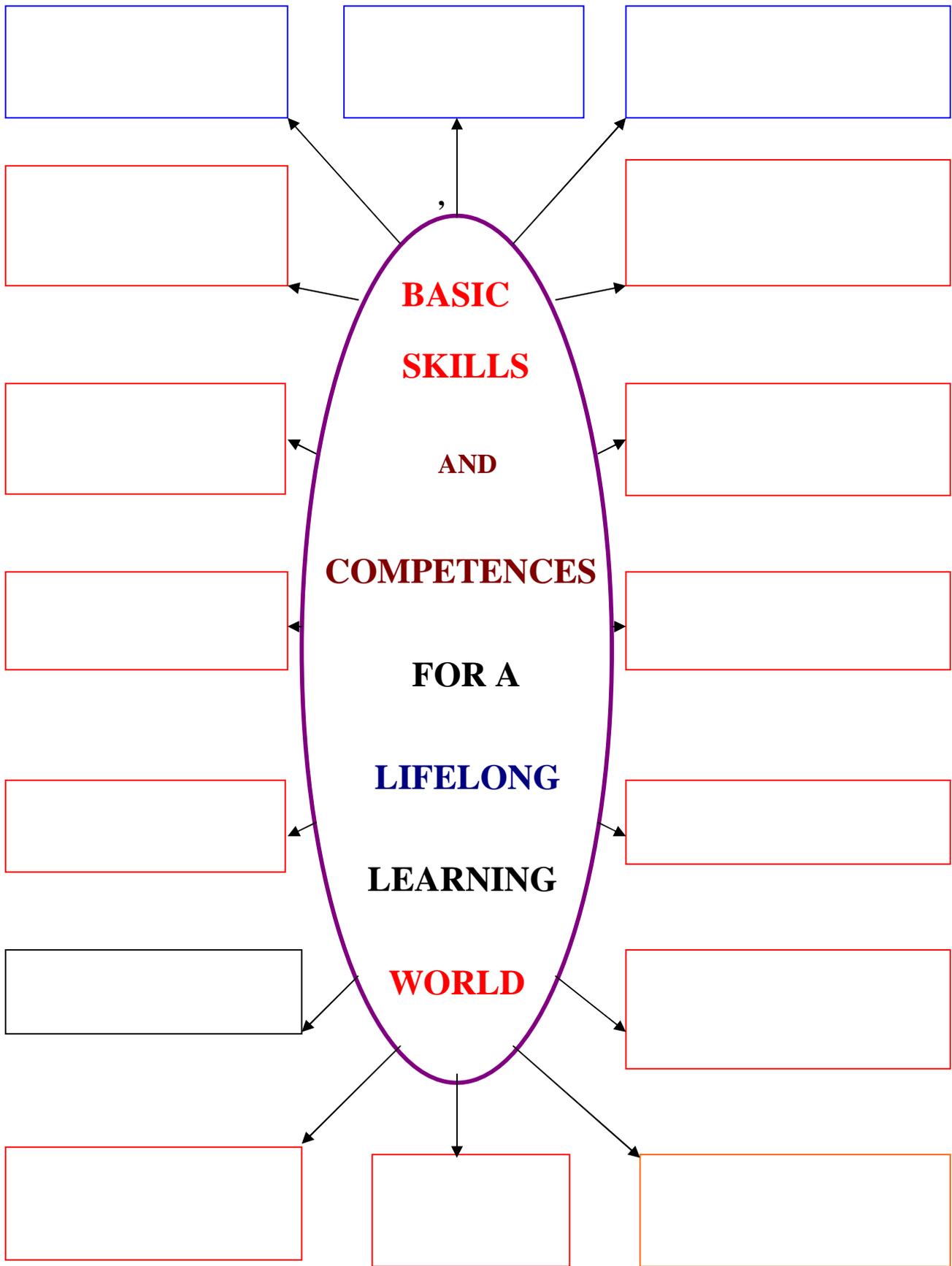
5.1 Lifelong learning _____

5.2 Life-wide Learning _____

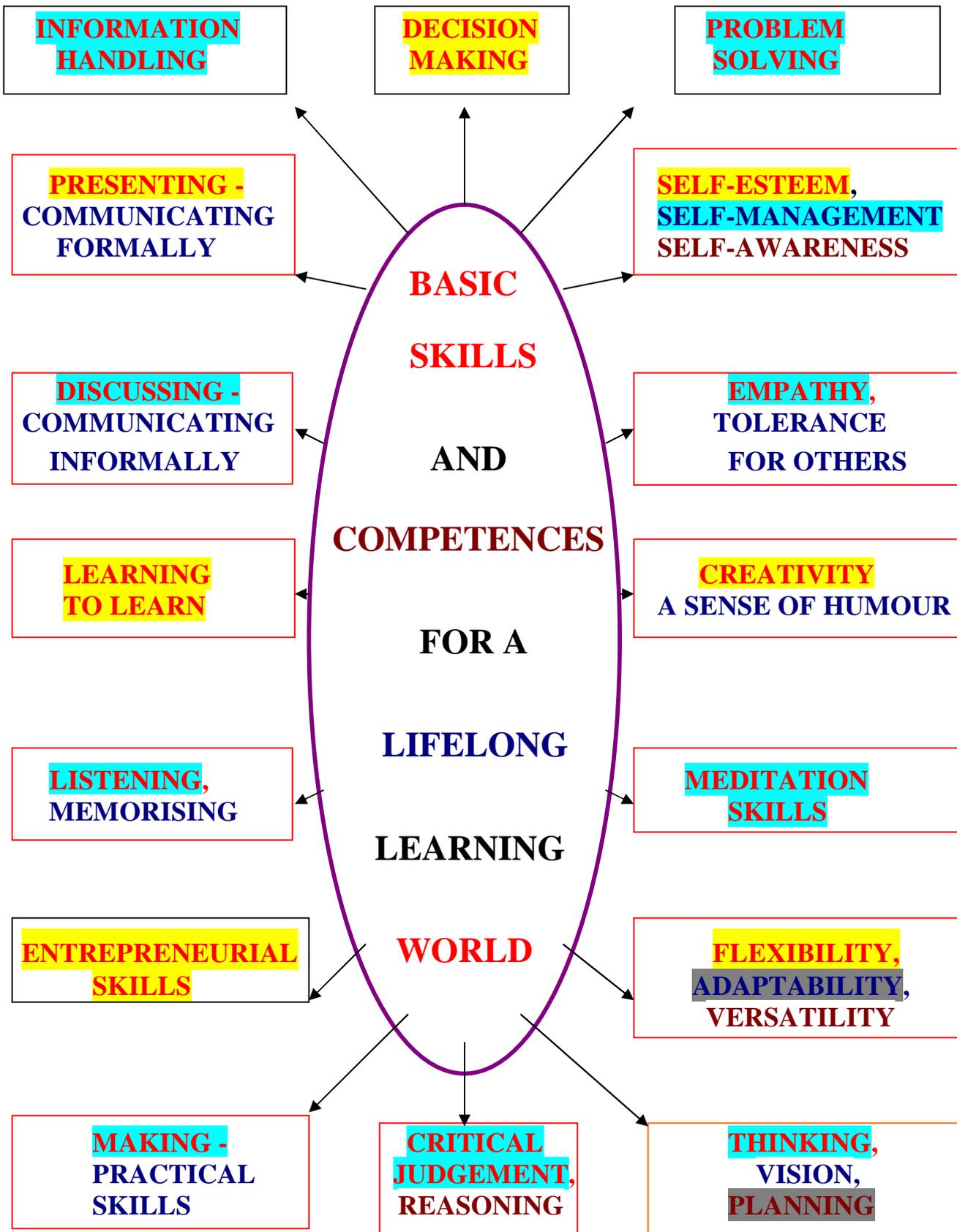
5.3 Life-deep Learning _____

6. Underline the sentences in the text which in your opinion should have an effect on what is taught at your school and how it is taught.

Toolbox Item 5A



Toolbox Item 5B



Toolbox Item 6 Curriculum Skills and Values

‘However, it has to be said too, that for the majority of education providers there is still a long way to go. They are providing an industrial age education for a post-industrial environment. The emphasis is still on information and memorisation rather than knowledge, high-order skills, understanding and values - teaching what to think and commit to memory, rather than how to think and how to discriminate between good, bad and indifferent. In an age in which information doubles every 5 years and then feeds upon itself to produce new knowledge, this is a nonsense.’
Longworth and Davies: Lifelong Learning

Exercise 1: According to the quotation, skills are at least as important as content. Please indicate by a mark from 1-5 in column 1 how relevant you consider the following generic skills to be in relation to life in the 21st century and the curriculum taught in the school. 1= crucial to 5= not at all relevant
 Also say similarly how much these skills are actually formally given to the pupils. 1= formally taught at all levels to 5= not taught at all. Please also add other skills and attributes not listed here in the empty boxes.

	1	2
1.1 Learning how to Learn		
1.2 Decision-making		
1.3 Problem-solving		
1.4 Information handling		
1.5 Thinking		
1.6 How to memorise effectively		
1.7 Communicating Formally – expressing oneself clearly verbally and orally		
1.8 Communicating Informally – debating, discussing, in play etc		
1.9 Critical Judgement – how to distinguish between good, bad and indifferent		
1.10 Self-awareness and self management		
1.11 Listening		
1.12 Teamwork		
1.13 Adaptability and Flexibility in changing situations		
1.14 Meditational Skills		
1.15 Empathy and Tolerance for others		
1.16 Parenting Skills		
1.17 Creativity and Imagination		
1.18 Entrepreneurial Skills		
1.19		
1.20		

Exercise 2: Please make a list of the values the school tries to instil in the minds of the pupils in order to serve them for life.

Exercise 3: . If you have any comments to make at this stage about skills learning and values in schools please put them here.

Toolbox Item 7: School organisation and ownership of learning

1 How are classes organised in the school?

- 1.1 By ability? (streamed) Yes/No
1.2 In Mixed Ability classes Yes/No
1.3 A mixture of the two Yes/No

Ownership of learning

'In Wigan pupils are responsible for setting their own learning objectives and putting them into action plans, receiving help and guidance from teachers in the early years but needing less and less as they mature. These action plans are discussed with parents in line with the school's policy on home-school partnership and assessed frequently with the teacher/mentor. This has been so successful that the older pupils write their own performance report'

Longworth (Lifelong Learning in Action)

...learning to learn suggests that all learners begin to question the habitual givens about their thoughts, values, attitudes, and knowledge and become critically reflective thinkers'

Galbraith, Report to U.S. Department of Education

Exercise 1. Many schools are working out schemes to give more ownership of their own learning to the pupils. In groups of 2, mark how much the ethos of the first of the above quotations is represented in the school's approach to learning and also your perception of the extent to which the teaching staff and parents believe that pupils might have ownership of their own learning . Mark similarly for the second quotations about the desirability of questioning 'givens'

1= very high priority to 5= completely unacceptable

	Quote 1	Quote 2
School's approach		
Staff attitude		
Parental attitude		

Exercise 2. How much ownership do pupils at your school have over their own learning? Which of the following is closest to the truth

- 4.1 Teacher decides the curriculum at all stages of school life and pupil learns
4.2 Teacher decides curriculum in first school years and discusses examination subject options with the pupil later in the school
4.3 Pupil has considerable control over what is learned at all stages of school life
4.4 Each pupil has personal targets discussed with the teacher at the beginning of each term and signed by both
4.5. As above and also transmitted to parents.

Exercise 3:. Discuss the main issues of ownership of learning in the school. Put down 5 suggestions how pupils can be given greater ownership

-
- 1.
-
- 2
-
- 3
-
- 4
-
- 5

Toolbox Item 8: Some Case Studies

Case Study 1

Chafford Hundred Campus in Essex, a new school, is an exciting place to be. Primary and secondary schools share the same facilities with joint headteachers, joint staffing and shared policies. The school's facilities are also for adult and community use. In the current academic year the secondary school has only Year 7 and a relatively small staff, so in terms of timetabling and blocking subjects there are some constraints at present. The curriculum for Year 7 is set out under 6 Unit headings - *Where's the Evidence? Let's Get Organised, Changes, One to One, Fit and Healthy Communities* - and identifies values, attitudes, and '21st century competences' that are intrinsic to the learning process. Details of the contribution of subject areas are given, within a clear time scale.

Students' planners list competences and students are asked to present evidence to support their development of particular competences. The information is to be reviewed at the end of each term and recorded via the school's intranet. Each student has a weekly opportunity for personal or small group reviewing before the start of the main school day.

Case Study 2

At the **City Technology College in Kingshurst Birmingham**, they are now in their second year of working with a curriculum centred on competences or 'personal capabilities' Having started with about 120 students working with 6 teachers on project-based work, the school now has over 330 students working in this way with 15 staff. Students there are articulate about their learning and have a clear understanding of its importance and its relevance to their future needs. Staff see new opportunities, welcome the lack of isolation, enjoy 'bouncing ideas off each other'

For the project work, Maths/ Design/Science are linked for 6 lessons in Year 7; English/Business/MFL are linked for 4 lessons in Year 8. When possible, an additional member of staff who can move between groups is allocated. Work is planned and developed through project titles such as *Energy* and *Religious Festivals*. As part of the *Energy* project Year 7 students designed and built windmills in Design, with sail dimensions and shapes calculated in Maths. In Science the windmills were used to drive a motor and the electrical charge produced measured. Other subjects may also contribute e.g. students cooked Jewish dishes in Food lessons as part of the *Religious Festivals* project.

Students use a self-evaluation grid to judge their progress in developing personal capabilities and the school is looking at ways of including supporting evidence from other sources. A major and exciting initiative involving local primary schools is currently underway: one school has trialled a project *Out of this World*. Seven others joined in January 2002.

Case Study 3

At **St John's School and Community College in Marlborough**, the feeling was strong that the National Curriculum was limiting the school's scope for further improvement. After only 10 weeks of exploring new possibilities with one third of year 7, with 3 teams of 5-6 staff working on modular courses, there is already evidence of 'dramatic changes', with staff very highly motivated and pupils responding positively to new ways of working. The challenge is to 'reshape the educational agenda', to create a love of learning and a desire for lifelong learning, to ensure that students learn how to learn. If this positive response continues, the school hopes to involve all 250 of Year 7 in a similar programme next year.

The integrated curriculum for Year 7 has six modules:

Making the News, Forests, what Makes us Unique, Going Places, Further, Higher Stronger, and Counting the Cost
There is a detailed *scheme* indicating the specific contributions to be made by staff from different subject areas, appropriate teaching strategies related to multiple intelligences for each part of the input, and the related category, or categories of *Opening minds* competences.

St John's is developing assessment procedures and looking for evidence of cognitive and attitudinal changes. Detailed documentation and careful monitoring will inform views of how the work will continue and develop.

In 2000, St John's was aligned with continuous improvement, setting and meeting demanding targets, pushing, very hard to create effective conditions for learning and achievement. However, there was also an emerging view that further improvement would be in inverse proportion to the amount of effort put in. The law of diminishing returns inevitably comes into play when a school is actually reaching the point at which higher levels of attainment are not possible given the parameters of the national examinations system and innate pupil ability. The time for radical innovation had come and it coincided with the RSA's launch of *Opening Minds*.

Its full involvement with the project began with a pilot group of Year 7 pupils [85] out of a year group of 250. The national newspaper headline 'The School that Threw Out the National Curriculum'; was in many respects true and drew a lot of interested attention from schools across the country. Indeed, we had thrown out the National Curriculum, creating a curriculum from scratch on the framework of the Opening Minds competences. The usual experience of the child leaving primary school and entering 3 large secondary school includes a new array of separate subjects all taught by different teachers who do not discuss content, style or learning strategy with each other. The Alternative Curriculum, as it has become known, is child-centred. The curriculum experience is planned by a teaching team of six to eight teachers, who plan a six-week module in outline and keep each other informed of where the learning journey is from the child's perspective.

Great emphasis is placed on teamwork, problem solving, the child taking responsibility for their own learning, relating to people and managing learning situations. Learning how to learn is a central feature of the learning experience. The project pilot group is now in Year 8 and all Year 7 (250 students) are fully involved.

As it reaches the end of the experimental phase, the experiences have been very positive. "Children who love learning so much and who learn so well that they can learn whatever they need to learn" (Holt, 1965) had been an aspirational goal of the project from the outset. While this may not be the stage reached yet, we have been surprised by how close to that objective we have moved. Children actively engaged in learning to the extent that they do not notice break time, teachers talking in corridors with enthusiasm about their Alternative Curriculum experiences, children taking control of the direction of lessons and results in the pilot group exceeding those in the control group in National Curriculum tests (maths, English and science) by 15%, have all been hallmarks of the project. Other indicators of student engagement with learning include improved attendance and improved behaviour compared with previous years, and fewer visits to the medical room! While the project has attracted very considerable interest from schools and LEAs across the country, and from teachers in Australia, Japan and Canada, there are certain dimensions that need significant attention. Apart from the complexity of timetabling teams of six teachers, finding time for module planning and evaluation is, and has been, difficult. It is only the high level of professional commitment demonstrated by those teaching the Alternative Curriculum that has enabled us to come so far so quickly.

The major problem that will continue to arise both for St John's and for those who are following in our footsteps, is to do with the nature of secondary education. For many years secondary teachers have been trained as subject specialists. However, they will need to leave the "box" behind and pursue the learning journey with the children wherever it goes, if they are to teach the Alternative Curriculum effectively. Provided that the teaching team has a balance of subject expertise, integration of the National Curriculum should not present a problem. However, barriers do exist where certain areas must be covered in a given Key Stage. One of the most interesting features of the Alternative Curriculum experience has been that, however high the expectation of the student is set, they invariably raise their performance to meet it. Year 7 students working on Year 8, 9, 10 and sometimes Year 11 topics - because that's where the learning journey can go - is not unusual. The Opening Minds project proclaims very clearly that the way that children are taught, what they are taught and the time frame in which they learn given areas, needs a radical overhaul. Teacher education likewise needs to move from a restricted framework of specialisation to an understanding of how learners learn, of subject interconnectivity and education in a global context.

Exercise 1: In groups of 3 please discuss the answers to the following questions

1. Name 3 things common to these 3 Case Studies.
2. They are all part of the 'Opening Minds' project run by the RSA (Royal Society of Arts) – in what way are minds being opened?
3. In what ways were children given ownership of their own learning?
4. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of organising the curriculum in this way.
5. What changes would need to be made in your school to cope with such new approaches?
6. What are the major implications for the national curriculum?
7. How long do you think it will take to implement these changes on the national scene? What are the barriers?

Toolbox Item 9: Support for Learning

In the OK Learning Centre of Espoo, teachers work with logopedists, psychologists and others in multi-professional teams to provide the children with a learning environment of high quality, to offer the necessary support and a feeling of security, to support the development of metacognition, to help pupils acknowledge, recognize and choose among factors relevant for their own development. The children themselves are encouraged and given the tools to influence their own learning and their own lives. This sort of supportive environment requires transparent openness between all the participants, a great deal of energy and dynamism on the part of the teachers and staff, plenty of variety and co-operation, achievable targets and flexible work schedules that would support the pupil's development. Pupils play a full part in the processes'
(Longworth – Lifelong Learning in Action)

Exercise 1: Please read the above quotation and, in groups of 3, give a mark for the following questions' 1= very true, to 5= not at all true

- 1.1 The situation described in the above quotation is close to the practice in my own school?
- 1.2 The school has a great deal of professional support available to us when we need it
- 1.3 Potential learning problems are identified early and dealt with in the appropriate manner
- 1.4 We involve the pupils themselves in the solution of their learning problems
- 1.5 We look at least every month at the individual learning needs of each pupil and discuss them with the pupil and his/her parents
- 1.6 We believe that the individual development of each pupil is paramount but get little support from the local authority
- 1.7 The children themselves are encouraged and given the tools to influence their own learning and their own lives

Exercise 2: Please give a mark for the extent to which the following support mechanisms for learning are carried out at your school. 1= very true, to 5= not at all true

- 2.1 Every pupil has weekly learning targets and is fully aware of what is expected
- 2.2 All parents are involved in the child's learning process
- 2.3 In addition to the teacher, every child has mentor from within the school to help achieve learning objectives
- 2.4 There is a mentoring programme using volunteers working from outside the school
- 2.5 There is always a place for the pupil to go to discuss his/her learning difficulties
- 2.6 Children from difficult socio-economic backgrounds are given special early attention
- 2.7 As soon as a learning difficulty arises it is dealt with in the appropriate way
- 2.8 The availability of support and encouragement to use it is displayed prominently throughout the school

Exercise 3: Discuss issues of support with your colleagues and suggest 5 main ways in which the availability and quality support might be improved at your school.

1

2

3

4

5

Toolbox item 10: Barriers to Learning – and their removal

'In Britain, only 1 adult in 4 describes him/herself as a learner, 1 in 3 has taken no part in education or training since leaving school, at any one time only 14% of employees are taking part in job-related training, only 5% of the workforce has obtained an NVQ and over 40% of 18 year olds are not currently in any kind of education and training'

Fryer (Education for the 21st Century)

Exercise 1: The quotation above shows how a high percentage of the output of the schools in Britain is not fully committed to learning. In groups of 2 please mark your perception of the barriers to learning in your own school on a scale of 1 to 5. Add some of your own in the blank spaces 1= crucial 2= very important 3= of average importance 4= little importance 5= no relevance at all

1.1	Poor family culture of learning	
1.2	Insufficient personal and emotional support from the home	
1.3	Insufficient support services to catch reluctant learners early	
1.4	Low aspiration - perception of learning as irrelevant	
1.5	Low self-esteem – can't learn	
1.6	The school curriculum is seen as irrelevant	
1.7	Lack of facilities to study at home	
1.8	Poor standard of teaching	
1.9	Opposition from television and the media	
1.10	Peer group pressures to conform to other priorities	
1.11	Bullying in the school	
1.12	Puberty – physical changes give other priorities	
1.13	Over-anxious parents	
1.14	Lack of ownership of own learning	
1.15	Methods of teaching seen as old-fashioned	
1.16	Too many other distractions	
1.17	Large class sizes – little opportunity for individual attention	

Exercise 2: Now put an asterisk against the 5 most important in your school

Exercise 3: Which of the following strategies is the school adopting to remove the barriers? Add some of your own into the blank spaces.

3.1	Improving home-school relations	
3.2	Improving the delivery of the curriculum through modern methods	
3.3	Developing more active learning methods	
3.4	Setting weekly and termly learning targets	
3.5	Involving more people in the learning process	
3.6	Catching learning reluctance early	
3.7	Displaying eye-catching publicity for learning	
3.8	Adopting new learning methods based on new knowledge of how people learn	
3.9	Taking the idea of failure from the school	
3.10	Reducing class sizes	
3.11	Adding the development of personal learning skills into the curriculum	
3.12		

Exercise 4 Make 3 key comments about the content of the curriculum at your school

Toolbox item 11 – Du Kan Schools

Du Kan - You Can: A Method for An Individually-Adapted Way of Working

Harry Cruse

Lifelong Learning is about Learning and not about Teaching. If it were the latter, we may choose to call it Lifelong Training, or Lifelong Education or Lifelong Teaching. Thus the stimulus to learn has to come from the individual and the tools and techniques of learning to learn become increasingly more important. However, often there is a suspicion among teachers, parents and even children that handing over responsibility for learning to the learner is another way for teachers to abrogate their own responsibility to teach. In this paper, Harry Cruse, a Swedish Headteacher, points out that this is not so and describes a successful programme which emphasises the paramountcy of learning for the future.

DU KAN! YOU ARE ABLE TO!

How do you work with your pupils? Do you use textbooks or do you allow them to work on their own, freely I mean?

- Well working freely is not my thing, I don't believe in it. One of my colleagues once tried but gave up after a couple of weeks. She thought it was so messy. I rather keep to the textbook. It is calmer that way. Everyone is at the same place then and it easier to give homework and to give fair marks.

The dialogue above is common and in its conclusion not at all strange. Of course it will be "messy" when pupils unmethodically and randomly work with individual tasks and everyone simultaneously asks for help. Of course it will be "messy" when pupils work "freely" because free work for most people is synonymous with free from planning, free from homework, free from evaluation, free from responsibility.

If an individually-adapted way of working is to function the pupils must have a method. This method must be based on the individual pupil's own ability and create opportunities for the pupil to learn how to plan, evaluate, structure, and revise his work, and keep log-book and take responsibility.

It is important to make the pupil aware of the fact that his work is simplified by being methodical. Some pupils have found a method they think fits and functions well, but generally pupils have no method at all. They dare not test different ways of working but sit waiting for the teacher to tell them what and how to do. The teacher is the educated methodical person so "he knows best".

It may be so but if we want to educate pupils to become independent and responsible grown-ups having a sound knowledge of formulating and solving problems and understanding and accepting that **learning is lifelong** the pupil must be taught to be his own methodical person. He must be **the real owner of both his life and his learning**. The teacher must share his methodical knowledge with his pupils and not be restrained by a diffuse feeling that he will lose power and they "will take over".

It is also important that the method is simple and not too complicated and it must not be felt as a strait-jacket. It has to function as a support and driving-force for the pupils in their work. It must also be natural and possible to use outside school in "real life" when formulating and solving problems.

The method of Du Kan is natural and not too complicated. It makes the pupil **a member of a learning organisation understanding and preparing his life of lifelong learning**. "Du Kan" means "you are able to" or "you can" and the name is made of the first letters of the following Swedish words (corresponding English words in brackets):

- **d**ynamisk (dynamic)
- **u**tvecklande (developing)
- **k**reativ (creative)
- **a**ktiv (active)
- **n**yfiken (curious).

Du Kan is a **dynamic and developing method for creative, active, and curious pupils - and teachers**.

When pupils work according to this method they develop their skill to:

- take initiative
- plan their work
- follow their plan
- evaluate their work
- be responsible for their work
- read books
- illustrate
- analyse pictures
- listen and reflect
- cooperate and lead
- distinguish the essential from the unessential

- revise their work
- choose a suitable task
- enter deeply into interesting tasks
- set bounds to their work
- give themselves homework
- be creative
- dare .

The teacher who works according to this method will gradually change his roles. His pupils will not regard him as the only responsible person for the work in the classroom. As the pupils plan their own work and work individually no-one needs to have a bad conscience if everyone has not reached just as far and done just as much as the other pupils. The pupils will regard the teacher as a member of a learning organisation where he is the leader and where his pedagogical resources, leadership skills, and overall knowledge and experience are very usable.

When the work is running, the teacher will have many opportunities to give individual guidance to his pupils. He will not in the first place be a fault-localizer and a marker but an experienced mentor. He can adapt his work and his advice to the pupil's specific needs and the pupil will in that way get "tailor-made" help.

Teachers have not by tradition, strangely enough, been looked upon as leaders. In the training of teachers the schools of education have more or less disregarded the importance of the very much professional leadership which is necessary if an individually-adapted and democratic way of working is to function in the learning organisation every school class constitutes. The teacher's work has among other things consisted of planning and controlling all teaching and learning activities in the classroom: He controls by written or oral tests the homework he has decided and given, he prepares and gives new homework. All pupils do the same things at the same time and the teacher has total control of what is taking place in the classroom and what kind of knowledge the pupils are to be taught. It is more teaching than learning.

There is no best leadership. An effective leader is interested in both the tasks and the individuals he leads. When pupils come to school they have different readiness. Some of them have high ability and high willingness. Some have low ability and low willingness. The teacher must then know how to lead. In the situational leadership there are four different styles:

- Telling - provide specific instructions and closely supervise performance
- Selling - explain decisions and provide opportunity for clarification
- Participating - share ideas and facilitate in decision making
- Delegating - turn over responsibility for decisions and implementation.

When teachers work according to the Du Kan-method they use the style of situational leadership. As they are aware of the fact that there are a lot of different variables that affect each teaching and learning situation it is important for them to develop an instinctive feeling in order to be able to diagnose what leadership every pupil needs in every situation. Step by step the teacher comes to an understanding and insight in what professional leadership is and ***how to lead a learning organisation and help every pupil to develop and learn in his best way and to prepare for lifelong learning.***

Working like this should be seen as a process where each individual's learning and development depends on his/her ambition, team work skill, and attitude. In an environment where the teacher regards his pupils as enterprising, creative, interested, and responsible fellow workers and where pupils are given full confidence, the room will literally vibrate with good and fruitful ideas.

As mentioned above every pupil must have the right to be the owner of both his life and his learning and to learn in his best way. It is his learning that matters: learning by doing, learning by reading, learning by showing and telling, learning by listening, learning by reflecting, and last but not least learning by dialogues with one or two classmates or with the whole class. If there is a good social climate in the class and a corporate character has been created so that each and everyone dares to hang out his/her assumptions the dialogues will be fruitful and generate new knowledge generating new knowledge and so on. Border guards, that is pupils who understand the network of knowledge, will help pupils who do not yet understand the corporate vision of the class to grasp the principles.

There are at least six skills pupils - and teachers too for that matter - should gradually improve in their lifelong learning, at school - and in life too, of course. These are:

- Communication Skill
- Interpersonal Skill
- Time Management Skill
- Research Skill
- Problem Solving Skill
- Teamwork Skill.

These skills must be developed individually and step by step at a pace decided by the learner, not by the teacher. Seven changes should also take place in the personality of the pupils if they are to develop into mature people over the years: - From a passive state to a state of increasing activity.

- From a state of dependency upon others to a state of relative independence.

- From behaving in only a few ways to a capacity of behaving in many ways.
- From erratic, casual, and shallow interests to stronger and deeper ones
- From a short time perspective to long time perspective.
- From subordinate position to equal or superior position.
- From lack of awareness of "self" to awareness and control over "self".

Learning and working according to the Du Kan-method gives each pupil and the teacher opportunities to develop in the ways mentioned above. The pupil learns to see the work with his task structured and at the same time comprehensively and is then able to decide if he should work with it or not. Facing a new task he learns to think like this:

- Is this task easy or difficult?
- What resources are available.?
- How much do I want to learn? How much do I want to work with the task?
- How long time will it take.? How much time can I afford?
- Shall I work alone or together with someone?
- Where shall the work be done.?
- How do I do the work?
- When, where, and how will the result of my work be shown?

Professionals mostly know if it is worth working with a task or trying to solve a problem or not. They are experienced problem solvers and can without losing their self-respect say "Yes, I will do this. It is possible for me. There are enough resources. I have time enough. But I will do it my way". They can also say "No, I won't do it. I have not time enough."

If we want to regard pupils as serious fellow workers who come to school not because they are forced to but because they want to learn we must listen to them and let them participate "in the game" as much and as often as possible. They will never score if they "sit on the subs' bench" all the time.

Some exercises

Exercise 1: Make list of 6 new ideas introduced in this paper.

Exercise 2: Name the 5 most attractive aspects of this school

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Exercise 3: What would be the response if you tried to implement this at your school?

From parents	
From teachers	
From the LEA	
From the community	

Exercise 4: What would need to be done to make it possible in the longer term?

Toolbox Item 12: Individual Learning Styles.

'In order to facilitate better learning, learning providers must take into account the learning styles and preferences of each individual and tailor courses to them. '

Longworth - Lifelong Learning in Action

'The National Curriculum and other initiatives continue to force schools into a straitjacket of conformity. The opportunities for learners to develop a love of learning, an understanding of preferred learning styles and 'to think outside the box' have at best not been encouraged and at worst, have been squashed.'

Patrick Hazlewood, Head, St John's College, Marlborough

Exercise 1: Each individual has a different learning style and much research has been done in recent years to understand how people learn. Some enjoy academic study in a classroom, others prefer to learn by doing, yet others may learn better alone in front of a computer or by reading or by discussing with a tutor or in groups. Please give a mark for the following questions.

1= very much, every pupil is assessed and/or catered for according to learning style to 5= no attempt is made to measure or cater for this.

- To what extent does your school try to measure the learning styles of its pupils?
- How much flexibility is there in the school curriculum for teaching pupils according to their preferred styles of learning
- Classroom environment with teacher
- Individually with computer software
- Individually with a tutor
- In small groups with a tutor
- Learning actively by doing
- Learning by tv or satellite

Exercise 2: Discuss your own personal learning styles with two class-mates. Make 3 relevant comments below.

Toolbox item 12: Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner identifies intelligences which often determine our preferred learning styles. They are:

Verbal/linguistic	words, listening, speaking, dialogue	
Visual/Spatial	images, drawings, puzzles, visualization	
Logical/Mathematical	reasoning, facts, sequencing, ranking, patterning	
Musical/Rhythmic	melody, beat, classical, singing, playing	
Bodily/kinaesthetic	activity, running, jumping, touching, feeling, performing	
Interpersonal	interacting, communicating, charisma, socialising, empathising	
Intra-personal	environmental awareness, observing	
Naturalist	Recognising and classifying objects in the environment	

Zohar and Marshall add another

Spiritual Intelligence	<i>'the capacity to make meaning – the soul's intelligence. It is linked to the capacity to see lives in wholes, not fragments, and to regenerate ourselves. It is connected to the ability to challenge whether we want to play by the rules of the situation in which we find ourselves</i>	
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And Goleman yet another

emotional intelligence	one's ability to understand one's own emotions, to empathize with others and to behave appropriately	
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Exercises.

1. Assess your estimate of your own intelligence in each domain on a scale of 1 to 10 in each box to the right
2. Identify one person you know who would score highly in each of the domains shown above. Write their name to the right
3. How would you go about developing spiritual and emotional intelligence in your pupils?

Toolbox Item 13A – Assessment and failure

(From Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21st Century Education)

Written on an obscure wall of an august university in the USA were the words 'please don't give me any more information, I already know what I think!' It is a reflection of the information overload many of us suffer from and the difficulties of assimilating new inputs that would cause us to reflect on the assumptions we have made in the past. In another sense it is also a reflection of the conservative and failure-oriented malaise which the assessment industry, the end process of the educational cycle, inculcates into our consciousness. It doesn't have to be like that. Good teachers and lecturers give encouragement - they inspire, they cajole, they stimulate, they lead, they offer enlightenment. That is their function in life and the objective of all this activity is to produce an expansion in the knowledge, capability and understanding of the learner within a particular subject or skill.

The student is required to prove that new knowledge and/or behaviour has been absorbed and, unfortunately, the way in which this is normally done is through the mechanism of an examination at the end of the course. Occasionally, more enlightened continuous assessment regimes dominate, in which the student proves capability in a more gradual manner during the period of the education, but the higher the level in the system, the more it seems incumbent upon the student to swot up and remember vast tracts of information and knowledge in a very short period of time after the education has been delivered, including that which was taught some nine months previously.

The objective here is to weed out those without the necessary memory skills, and those who, for whatever reason – sickness on the day, inability to write legibly, emotional stress, laziness, under/over-confidence – cannot achieve the level required. In other words, failure is embedded into the system in order to celebrate success - it is one of education's paradoxes at work

Few people would dispute the need to adopt and maintain standards. No-one would want to be treated by a doctor who has failed to grasp the elementary principles of medicine, and few passengers would want to cross a railway bridge designed by an engineer who does not understand the principles of materials stress. Examinations are one of the few ways of obtaining the proof of competency. But there is also an uncomfortable feeling in many circles that mass examination systems of this kind are both ineffective and wasteful of talent, especially in the lower reaches of the education industry.

Jenny Bryce, from the Australian Council for Educational Research, identifies school certification as one of the major barriers militating against schools becoming lifelong learning communities. *'The influence of year 11 and 12 certification is not entirely bad'*, she says *'but in many cases it encourages a competitive, more superficial approach to learning, What can I do well in?, How much do I have to know? Rather than 'What do I need to learn? And Where do I go from here? ... it moves the ownership of learning away from the individual and classifies some people as 'failures', which is one of the strongest deterrents to learning.'*

Lifelong Learning concepts are changing the way we see assessment and accreditation. Perhaps surprisingly, the new thinking comes from industry. In 1996, the European Round Table of Industrialists, a consortium of the Heads of the 42 largest European companies, published five essential ingredients of a learning society, shown below

A Learning Society would be one in which.....
1. Learning is accepted as a continuing activity throughout life
2. Learners take responsibility for their own progress
3. Assessment confirms progress rather than brands failure
4. Capability, personal and shared values, team-working are recognised equally with the pursuit of knowledge
5. Learning is a partnership between students, parents, teachers, employers and the community, who all work together to improve performance

They seem to indicate that European Industry values much more highly who a person is and the qualities he/she can demonstrate as a learner above the pieces of paper and qualifications so beloved of Governments and schools. Numbers 3 and 4 are particularly interesting in this context, especially in view of their provenance. The goal of a failure free assessment system in which every learner accepts the challenge of his/her several learning curves, and uses assessment to determine where he/she is on that curve without odious comparisons with others, is still a long way away. But it is an ideal to aim for!

Toolbox item 13B Some Exercises

1. What do you think the author means by the ‘conservative and failure-oriented malaise which the examination industry has inculcated into our consciousness’ .?

2. Have you ever introduced failure into your lessons? If so, how?

3. Provide some justifications for end of year examinations?

4. What alternatives are there?

5. What do you think the author means by ‘weeding out those without the necessary memory skills?’

6. What is the paradox referred to in the passage?

7. What does the ERT mean by ‘Assessment confirms progress rather than brands failure?’

9. Why do you think an industrial body would express this opinion?

10. For you is an examination a ‘learning opportunity’ ? How might you persuade others it is.

11. A failure free assessment system. Is it possible? What might it look like?

12. Look at the characteristics of a Learning Society. How might they reflect your school’s approach to learning?

Exercise 5: Are any of the following intelligences taken into account in school examinations?

		Yes	No
5.1	Verbal/linguistic intelligence - words, listening, speaking, dialogue		
5.2	Visual/Spatial intelligence – images, drawings, puzzles, visualization		
5.3	Logical/Mathematical intelligence– reasoning, facts, sequencing, ranking, patterning		
5.4	Musical/Rhythmic intelligence– melody, beat, classical, singing, playing		
5.5	Bodily/kinaesthetic intelligence – activity, running, jumping, touching, feeling, performing		
5.6	Interpersonal intelligence– interacting, communicating, charisma, socialising		
5.7	Intra-personal intelligence – environmental awareness, observing		
5.8	Naturalist intelligence - recognising and classifying objects in the environment		
5.9	Emotional intelligence – empathising, understanding one’s own emotions		
5.10	Spiritual intelligence – searching for and making meaning, seeing ‘wholes’		

Exercise 6: Is there any means in the school of testing the pupils when they are ready to be tested rather than all at the same time. Yes/No

Exercise 7: Discuss with 2 of your class-mates how you would reform the examination system to ensure that failure is eliminated and people are not switched off learning for life. Make 6 recommendations

1

2

3

4

5

6

Context

Opening minds is based on a competence framework involving five categories of competence, comprising twenty-four competences in all (see inside back covers). The question for the project is to establish how best such a curriculum framework could be assessed.

Assessment in schools tends to be used for three different purposes:

- As a direct aid to teaching and learning, for formative purposes
- As a means of recognising achievements of individuals, for certification purposes
- As a means of providing public accountability of institutions and teachers, judging their effectiveness not that of the student.

In practice it is very difficult for any one assessment to serve all three purposes, as the design requirements are different. The early years of National Curriculum assessment were in fact bedevilled by attempts to do just that. The third purpose in particular needs a separate approach.

In the *Opening minds* project it is the first of these purposes that is the focus of attention. We want to emphasise the importance of assessment as an aid to learning, for providing information about individual progress, and for assisting young people to make realistic judgements about themselves and how they need to develop. We are also conscious that, in assessing capabilities and competences that are not necessarily amenable to written examination, teachers will also be facing new challenges. But this will also give them the opportunity to reassert the importance of their own professional judgement.

A New Approach

So what will be different about assessment in *Opening minds*? First of all, as explained above, the emphasis will be on assessment as an aid to teaching and learning (although summative information can also be provided at stages where this is felt to be necessary). Secondly, the *Opening minds* competences are not specific to a particular subject, so this will present challenges to teachers and students who are used to a subject approach only. This will often require working across subjects and in a variety of teams. Thus, methodologies for this type of assessment will need to be developed. Another aspect of this that merits attention is that most conventional assessment involves teachers assessing the "unaided" work of the pupil. Many of the *Opening minds* competences on the other hand require pupils to work with others. What approach or approaches are best suited to this, and how do you assess differing contributions to the joint effort?

The project should therefore also produce some interesting suggestions as to how professional teacher development - both initial and continuing - could best be supported. In addition, we want to produce a system which the students themselves can understand and use, and which brings home to them the fundamental importance of those competences which are not necessarily addressed by the documentation available to them about National Curriculum subjects.

Assessment in Practice

In order to test out assessment in the context of *Opening minds*, the project schools have agreed to work with just one category of competences in the first instance: competences for Relating to People. This category was chosen because of its clear importance in life, and because of its potential applicability to almost all school activity. Furthermore, it was thought to be a particularly interesting category to start with because it will assist teachers to develop the capacity to assess interpersonal skills of pupils, rather than individual skills with which they are more familiar.

Working with the teachers from the project schools, a single statement for Relating to People has been prepared for each of Key Stage 3 and 4. This has meant that the language used, as well as the level of demand, can be varied according to the age of the learners. We have also tried to make the approach compatible with, and providing progression to, the post-16 Key Skill "Working With Others".

Starting in September 2001, a number of schools are trying out these statements and the associated guidance and materials provided. The success or otherwise of this trial will be judged against a number of criteria:

- Can the methodology be used with any curriculum approach? We already have examples of it being used across the whole curriculum, within a group of cognate subjects (Maths, Science and Technology), and within the context of a Citizenship and PSHE programme.
- Can it be used in relation to extra-curricular activity, such as work experience and school sports teams?
- Is it valid and reliable?

- Is the approach, manageable, and understandable, by teachers?
- Is the approach understandable by, and helpful to, students themselves?
- Is the approach cost-effective and low on bureaucracy?

We are interested in other desirable features too:

- Does the approach foster learner autonomy, through the use of peer- and self-assessment?
- Does it contribute to professional development, through moderation across the curriculum and across schools, improving teacher confidence in making professional judgements themselves?
- Can quality information about student progress and performance be generated, linked to other processes such as Progress File?

The Future

Initial feedback is encouraging, but it is still too early in the life of the project to draw any firm conclusions. There are a number of interesting areas for possible further work at some time in the future, including applying the approach to cover other areas of competence, and analysing any adjustments to the approach that might be needed if it were extended to the full age range of school pupils.

The POF version of this booklet, available on the RSAs website, includes sample pages from the Assessment Materials currently being trialled in several of the schools.

New thinking on Intelligence and how people learn

Much of this is based on new knowledge about how people learn. Brain-based research indicates that the ability to learn is significantly influenced by the way in which people cope with emotions, the nature of the learning environment and by teaching the skills of thinking. Hence industry classrooms are designed to take this into account. Equally the research of Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences should have an influence both on the way we teach and the way we evaluate. His eight intelligences are

- Verbal/linguistic - words, listening, speaking, dialogue
- Visual/Spatial – images, drawings, puzzles, visualization
- Logical/Mathematical – reasoning, facts, sequencing, ranking, patterning
- Musical/Rhythmic – melody, beat, classical, singing, playing
- Bodily/kinaesthetic – activity, running, jumping, touching, feeling, performing
- Interpersonal – interacting, communicating, charisma, socialising, empathising
- Intra-personal – environmental awareness, observing,
- Naturalist - recognition and classification of objects in the environment

He agonised long over a ninth – spiritual intelligence – but rejected it. However, most observers and researchers tend to include this in their own list of human intelligences, just as they also include Goleman's concepts of emotional intelligence, that is one's ability to understand one's own emotions, to empathize with others and to behave appropriately.

Zohar and Marshall define Spiritual Intelligence as '*the capacity to make meaning – the soul's intelligence. It is linked to the capacity to see lives in wholes, not fragments, and to regenerate ourselves. It is connected to the ability to challenge whether we want to play by the rules of the situation in which we find ourselves. A person with a well-developed Spiritual Quotient may not make a business decision on financial grounds alone, preferring ethics.*' SQ emphasizes the search for meaning, vision and value as the most important aspect of being human. It awakens the sleeping talent in students and workers and makes them much more productive. New techniques of learning, such as accelerated learning, owe much to the application of all these intelligences, which should be required knowledge for both teachers and examiners and indeed anyone in a profession which purports to concern itself with the business of learning. They provoke the need for a radical re-examination of what exactly it is that they should be measuring and the sort of education that should be provided.