Business in the Parliament Conference 2019

Workshop 4 – Aligning our future talent with the future skills needs of industry

Overview

We know that not all learning takes place in formal education. How do we recognise and capture the broad range of skills young people have and ensure they meet employers’ needs for industry today and how can they then be supported to become lifelong learners in the workplace?

Suggested discussion questions

1. What steps can Scottish Government and education stakeholders take to enhance recognition of the broad range of skills young people and adult learners have through non-formal learning and the development and understanding of skills developed via Active Learning?

2. What measures can be taken by Scottish Government and partners to improve the understanding by business of the benefits and skills development that non-formal learning brings?

3. How does the Scottish Government now prepare for the next 20 years to ensure a consistent approach to all skills recognition that aligns to the vital growth needs of our business sector?

4. How can more businesses, especially smaller and medium sized businesses, be supported to better engage with Government, DYW Regional Groups, schools and colleges to ensure young people are better prepared for the world of work and future skills needs are met?

Background

Technological innovation and large scale societal trends such as an ageing population and rural depopulation, global uncertainty and the global climate emergency are changing the world of work. The future is likely to be characterised by an exponential rate of change and the necessary skills to excel in this environment will include creativity, communication, collaboration and initiative, alongside technical skills. For businesses and individuals having the right skills to succeed in this uncertain future will be crucial.  

Research indicates that the contribution practical and active learning makes to the development of children, young people and adult learners can enhance their life chances and choices. It helps to identify and nurture our natural abilities to be creative, to make mistakes, to think critically, be entrepreneurial and help prepare for a rapidly changing world of work. Many of the jobs school, college and university graduates will go on to do require practical skills as well as academic qualifications.

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1 Skills 4.0: A Skills Model to Drive Scotland’s future: https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44684/skills-40_a-skills-model.pdf [Accessed 17 October 2019]

Teaching practitioners benefit from having an enterprising mind-set helping them to instil resilience and a 'can do' attitude in their learners, to help them thrive and be successful in an uncertain future. As part of the work underway by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to fully define the meta skills required to thrive in the future economy as a basis for future skills provision, a preliminary investigation is underway into the current practice and measurement of practical learning. It is anticipated that this will provide an insight into how third sector organisations contribute to the recognition of practical and informal learning, building on the work done by SDS in formulating their Skills 4.0 Framework.

**Scottish Government Policy Context**

Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence was introduced in 2010 following a 'National Debate on Education' which collected over 20,000 views. One of the main findings from this consultation was the previous 5-14 curriculum was too dominated by traditionally academic subjects. In essence, that curriculum failed to equip learners with the broad range of skills needed to thrive in a fast changing 21st century. Curriculum for Excellence therefore seeks to provide young people with a wide range of skills considered vital for learning, life and work. The newly refreshed curriculum narrative³ reaffirms this breadth of focus.

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is Scotland’s youth employment strategy aimed at creating an excellent, work relevant education offering to young people in Scotland, giving them the skills for the current and anticipated jobs market. This includes creating new vocational learning options; enabling young people to learn in a range of settings in their senior phase of school; embedding employer engagement in education; offering careers advice at an earlier point in school; and introducing new standards for careers guidance and work experience. There are now 21 employer-led DYW Regional Groups across the country, focused on establishing effective school-employer partnerships to deliver a high standard of work inspiration activity within schools.

The learner journey programme aims to deliver the Scottish Government’s ambition for a world class education and skills system. Taking this work forward will require strong joint leadership, supported by the right evidence base, to ensure continuing investment in the right qualifications and right types of learning to deliver the best outcomes for our young people and for the Scottish economy.

The creation of Foundation Apprenticeships supports the Scottish Government’s ambitions in DYW and the Learner Journey recommendations for an excellent, work relevant education offer to all young people in Scotland, that gives them skills for the current and anticipated jobs market. The FA programme is delivered through partnerships between schools, a local college or learning provider, and local employers. FAs provide industry-recognised qualifications in key sectors where there

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³ Available at [https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/](https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/)
is a real need for skilled employees. FAs are part of a family of apprenticeships, including Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships\textsuperscript{4}.

In looking across the whole working age population, the Scottish Government’s \textit{Future Skills Action Plan}, published in September this year sets out our long term ambition for a more flexible, agile and responsive skills system. This aims to ensure learners of all ages develop the skills they need to enter the labour market, continue to upskill and retrain throughout their working lives, adapting to changing workplaces in the face of an ageing workforce, technological advances and digitalisation.

\textit{Young Enterprise Scotland}

\textit{October 2019}

\textsuperscript{4} For more information on Scottish apprenticeships, please see: \url{https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/apprenticeships/}
Glossary

**Active Learning** - a form of learning in which teaching strives to involve students in the learning process more directly than in other methods. Students participate when they are doing something besides passively listening.

**Experiential Learning** - the process of learning through experience, specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing". It focuses on the learning process of the individual, such as going to the zoo to observe and interact the zoo environment, as opposed to reading about animals in a book.

**Informal Learning** – any learning that is not formal or non-formal, organised differently because if has no set objectives or learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner perspective.

**Interdisciplinary Learning** – a planned approach to learning which uses links across different subjects or disciplines to enhance learning. It promotes the development and application of what has been taught and learned in new and different ways.

**Meta Skills** – Higher order skills, in which individuals benefit by learning or acquiring new skills without being taught them.

**Practical Learning** – tasks in which students observe or manipulate real objects or materials or they witness a demonstration. It can motivate students, by stimulating interest and enjoyment. For instance, teaching laboratory skills enhances the learning of scientific knowledge.

**Skills 4.0 Framework** - a model of skills to enable individuals to excel in the future for consideration and use by policy makers, education and skills providers and bodies, employers and anyone with an interest in skills development.