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College Readiness: the benefits of developing independent study habits and deep learning in students

Dr Tristian Stobie, Director Education



Unintended outcomes from Curriculum 2000

The view from schools:

- Re-take culture' → Grade inflation
- Loss of teaching time
- Cognitive fragmentation

Higher Education concerns:

Problems in selection

- How to identify the very best?
- Opacity of outcomes
- Lack of readiness for HE
- Knowledge gap
- Loss of holistic understanding
- Lack of generic skills
 - *Independent work
 - *Research skills

Nuffield Review 2005

Concern at implications of the
'modular mind'

*'Lack of a coherent
understanding across topic
domains within a subject.'*

Concern at loss of focus

*'As a qualification, A Level has
become uncoupled from its
original purpose of qualifying a
young person for studying a
particular subject in Higher
Education.'*



Educational Landscape 2011

- “The Importance of Teaching”- *The Schools White Paper 2010, para 4.47*

theguardian

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Michael Gove to swap modules for single-exam GCSEs

Education secretary reveals plans as part of wide-ranging white paper covering teacher training, discipline and accountability

Patrick Wintour and Rachel Williams
The Guardian, Monday 22 November 2010
Article history



Fewer GCSE exams will be taken under Michael Gove

theguardian

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News Education English baccalaureate

Pupils switching to more traditional GCSE subjects, survey finds

More pupils are choosing English baccalaureate GCSEs as the government strips vocational subjects from school league tables

Jeevan Vasagar, education editor
guardian.co.uk, Wednesday 31 August 2011 18.47 BST



Gove plots A-level exam revolution

Jack Grimston

THE education secretary has signalled the death of A-levels in their current form and the reintroduction of traditional exams taken after two years.

Michael Gove wants to see A-levels become more academically rigorous and to scrap AS-levels, which are in the first year of the sixth form.

He is responding to complaints by universities that the current A-level system, introduced in 2000, fails to prepare pupils for in-depth study. The courses are broken up into four to six units over two years, each with its own exam.

The education secretary outlined the shake-up of A-levels yesterday at The Sunday Times Festival of Education at Wellington college, Berkshire.

He will invite universities to design new A-levels, modelled on the new Cambridge Pre-U qualification, taken by a number of leading state and independent schools in preference to A-levels.

Gove said: "We will see fewer modules and more exams at the end of two years of sixth form and, as a result, a revival of the art of deep thought."

He added: "We need to ensure that the knowledge expected of A-level students is at the university level."

Some of the changes will be implemented in the next year.

Under the new system, the gap between A-levels and university will be closed.

Under the new system, pupils will have to take a single exam for each subject.

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five subjects for AS-level before specialising in three or four for the second A-level year, known as A2.

Universities have complained that A-levels have become insufficiently rigorous and produce a glut of top grades

— 26.7% of papers last year received an A and one in eight pupils gained straight As. This year a new A* grade will be awarded for the first time in an attempt to pick out the brightest pupils.

Gove believes the dilution of standards can be reversed by inviting universities to redesign the exams based on their own requirements.

The existing exam boards — AQA, Edexcel and OCR, together with other bodies in Wales and Northern Ireland — could continue to offer the AS/A2 combination, but Gove believes schools will abandon these exams as it becomes clear that they do not meet university requirements.

The Pre-U, which will be awarded for the first time this summer, has so far been largely confined to the independent school sector. It is seen as more intellectually challenging and requires sixth-formers to take all their exams at the end of a course.

Gove's plans, to be introduced in three to five years, follow the announcement last week of curriculum reforms by Nick Gibb, his schools minister.

It emphasises the need for pupils to learn historical facts, great literary works and the fundamentals of science throughout their school career.

The government is expected to announce cuts this week to Labour's £55 billion Building Schools for the Future programme. It could scrap 700 projects, saving about £1 billion a year.

What will the schools revolution mean for your child?, Focus, page 15

The right reforms for A-levels, Editorial, page 18

The Telegraph

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Education News

'English Baccalaureate' to combat drop in academic GCSEs

A new English Baccalaureate certificate will be introduced to combat a "dramatic collapse" in the number of GCSE pupils taking serious academic subjects, the Education Secretary has announced.

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GCSE (KS4) AND A-LEVEL (KS5) LEAGUE TABLES »



Increasing research into college readiness & academic literacies



Mind The Gap: The Academic Hurdle For Sixth-Formers

7 July 2011

Sixth-form students need more support getting to grips with academic styles of writing when making the transition to university.

That's the view of University of Derby and Liverpool Hope University academic experts involved in a two-year study entitled: *Flying Start: communities and policies to ease the transition to university writing and assessment*.

Funded by HEFCE as part of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme managed by the Higher Education Academy, the project involved other education partners and was led by Liverpool Hope University's Professor Lin Norton and the University of Derby's Professor James Elander.

There were two project aims - to gain a more complete understanding of the problems students face with academic writing when transferring from sixth-form to higher education, and identify how best to help them cope. A key finding was that sixth-form students who engage in academic writing workshops with university student mentors build their confidence in writing - with benefits for mentors too.

Lead author Professor Lin Norton said: "For students the gap between what is required at sixth form and degree level is immense. The division between the sectors and the pressures on schools to achieve good exam results



Professor James Elander

Bridging the gap: the importance of induction in underpinning information literacy



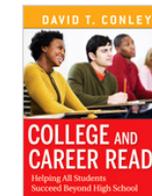
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There have been many articles reporting on new and innovative ways of delivering library induction to new university students. However, these often tend to be a discussion of the school's own

research was deliberately discrete, looking only at induction for recent school leavers and restricted geographically to County Durham. It did not take into account other parts of what is an increasingly diverse cohort of new students, notably international and mature students.

As part of the research, a series of visits were made to school and sixth-form-centre libraries in the area around Durham University's two campuses in Durham and Stockton-on-Tees. A survey established the details of the operational side of library services. It sought to find answers to questions such as whether students had access to an online catalogue, how many books they could borrow and whether fines were imposed - all areas that are routinely covered as part of a university library induction. The aim of this comparative framework was to establish how contrasting our services were and what areas needed greatest attention in the induction period. Further to this, a round-table discussion with school librarians from across County Durham assessed the strength of feeling that their students were unaware of the differences that they would find when using university libraries. This occasion also afforded the opportunity to present initial conclusions to

Latest News



College and Career Ready, the newest book by CEPR's director, David T. Conley, PhD, is now available in bookstores and online.

In this book, Conley provides research-backed descriptions of the knowledge and skills today's students need to ensure success beyond high school. The book explains the rationale and the methods for redesigning high schools to focus on college and career readiness.



A small study by Cambridge Assessment

- 23 admissions/academic tutors representing a wide range of subjects were interviewed 2009 - 2010
- Tutors were asked to describe the differences between thriving students and those experiencing difficulties
- Focus behaviour not subject specific knowledge
- 3 areas of competence appeared to make the difference to academic performance:
 - 1) Open Thinking Style
 - 2) Self-Directed Learning
 - 3) Emotional Resources
- Rated as core competence whether the student was studying physics, history or nursing



Core HE Competencies: Themes from Interviews

Open Thinking Style	Curious, investigative, critical about information, challenges own thinking, thinks of different possibilities, alternatives and perspectives, makes connections between ideas, uses X to solve Y, applies ideas from one field to another, imaginative, empathetic
Self-Directed Learning	Sense of purpose, goal oriented, proactive, self-reflective of performance, goes beyond what is asked, seeks opportunities to learn or try new techniques, organised, hard working, determined, maintains focus
Emotional Resources	Bounces back from mistakes and failures, feels positive about abilities, has confidence to try new things, manages anxieties and frustrations to get the work done, has social support, self-aware



Attempting to address the problem

- Similarity with '21st Century skills.' Metacognitive awareness and competence, resilience, risk taking, innovation.....
- *'Systematic education reform is needed that includes curriculum, pedagogy, teacher training and school organization. Reform is particularly needed in educational assessment....***Existing models of assessment typically fail to measure the skills, knowledge, attitudes and characteristics of self directed and collaborative learning that are increasingly important for our global economy and fast changing world.**' Darling-Hammond L [2000]. Education Policy Analysis Archives . 8 [1]
- University / FE Colleges must allow for broader assessment practices to be included and valued



Assessing College Readiness /21st Century Skills

- *Assessing a construct summatively adds meaning and extrinsic value to a greater number of people and drive pedagogical developments*
- *ATC21S Assessment and Teaching of 21st century skills project was launched at the learning and Technology World Forum 2009. Led by University of Melbourne in partnership with CISCO, INTEL and MICROSOFT. White papers published [www.atc21s.org]*

Trends noted [White Paper 5 : Policy frameworks for new assessments]

- Emphasis on teacher professional judgement [Finland Top of PISA]
- Increasing emphasis on open ended and curriculum embedded tasks that require students to analyze, apply knowledge and communicate more extensively
- Growing emphasis on project based, inquiry orientated learning. More emphasis on school based task, extended scientific investigations, use of IT. Solving problems in authentic contexts



Attempting to address the problem UK

- Reforming A Levels
- EPQ
- IB TOK, Extended Essay
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and Global Perspectives and Research (GPR)



An articulated two year programme

Global Perspectives

Critical thinking and research skills taught through an exploration of a broad range of global issues

Acquired skills, emerging personal perspective

Independent Research Report

Critical thinking and research skills used for an in-depth exploration of an independently formulated research question



Global Perspectives: the 'critical path'

Deconstruction

Detailed analysis of a point of view

Reconstruction

Identification and evaluation of evidence for and against competing points of view

Reflection

How have the student's own views been affected by the inquiry?

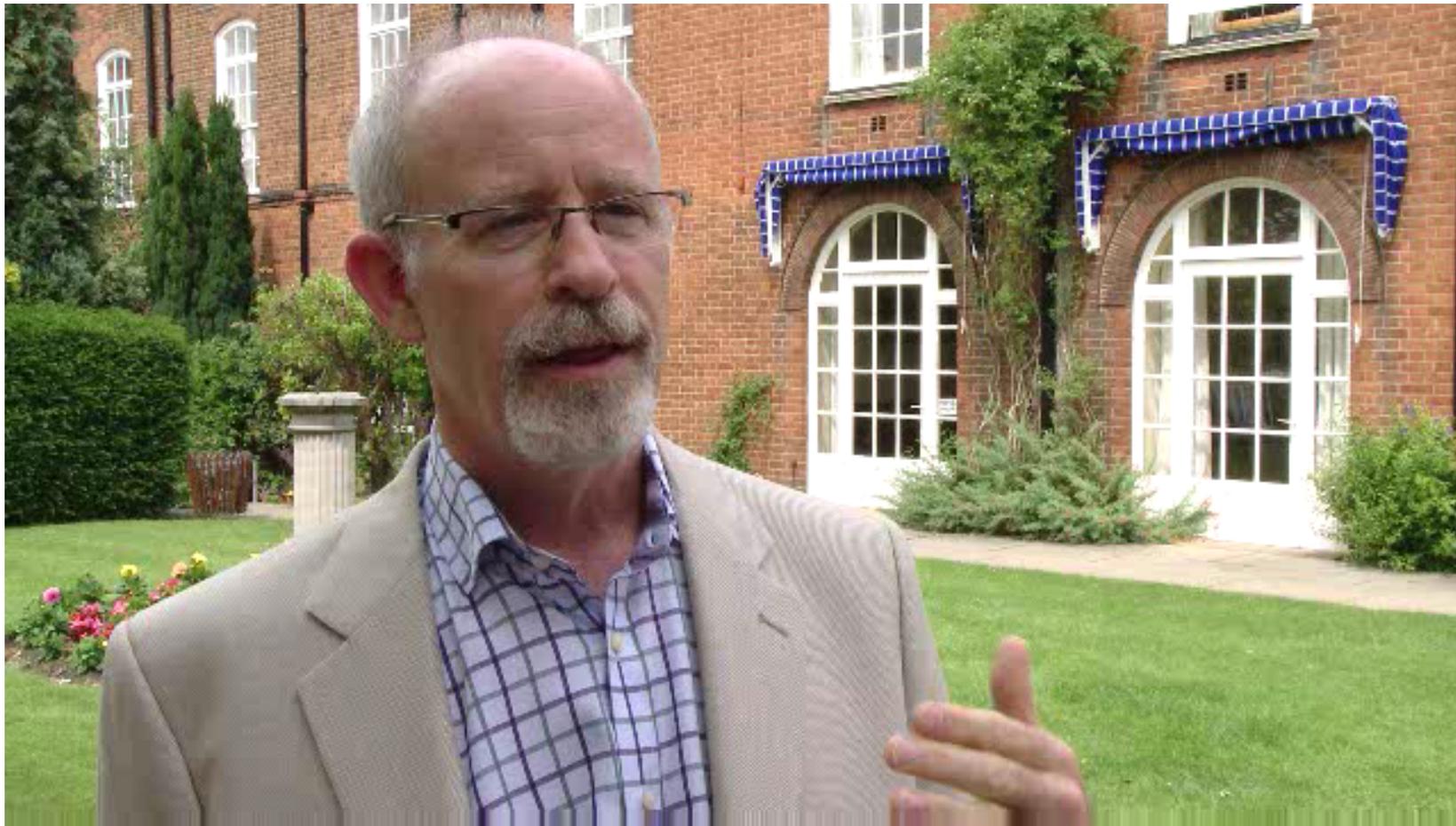
Presentation

An opportunity to address an issue holistically and in detail



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Response from Duke University





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