

Career Education in Schools in Scotland

A paper for the NICEC comparative study of careers education in schools in the UK and the Republic of Ireland

Sheila Semple

Director, Centre for Guidance, Careers and Personal and Social Development, University of Strathclyde

Terminology

This paper uses the term 'career education' in preference to the more usual 'careers education'. The most recent guidelines for career education in Scotland – A National Framework for Career Education in Scotland: Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) November 2001 – use this term after considerable consultation in preparation for their publication. LTS describes its reasoning for this change as follows:

'The term 'career education' is used in preference to the more traditional 'careers education' normally used in secondary schools. This signals a move from a narrower definition of 'career' to a broader one more appropriate for a wider age range that includes younger children.

Careers education has often been seen as primarily concerned with helping young school leavers make a decision on an occupational route. The broader view of *career* education includes the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions for future career development over an extended period. Such a view is appropriate in a changing world of work in which individuals are likely to experience several changes in their career during their working lives.'

(LTS 2001, page 1)

It remains to be seen to what extent this changed terminology will become used in practice, but this paper will use the term 'career education' throughout.

Brief historical overview

The early history of career education in Scotland shows it being present in two main areas. The first is under the broad heading of 'social education', for example, the Advisory Council on Education in 1947 included awareness of work issues under the general statement:

'...the community life of the school as a workshop within which the pupil would gain social and moral experience.'

The Memorandum on Junior Secondary Education in 1955, in using the term 'social education' for the first time in a policy document, began to speak about 'education for citizenship', an early use of the current phrase. Within this heading lay the preparation for a role as a worker. This focused primarily on the skills required for seeking and acquiring an opportunity (i.e. application and interview skills).

The second aspect is that, in a similar way to the English experience, the Youth Employment Service was involved in some limited group work in schools in preparation for a career interview.

An important development was the publication of 'Guidance in Secondary Schools' in 1968, which led to the setting up of the distinctive Scottish system of guidance (which was to include personal, social, curricular and vocational support delivered on a one-to-one basis and, increasingly, within a programme of personal and social education).

Reforms of the curriculum and of assessment in Scotland stimulated change also. For example, the Munn Report (SED/CCC 1977) – 'The structure of the curriculum in the third and fourth years of Scottish secondary schools' – noted in the clearest way to date, the demands of society:

'The fourth set of aims is concerned with the demands of society....schools have an inescapable duty to ensure that young people are equipped to perform the various roles which life in their society entails. They must acquire knowledge and skills which relate to the world of work, to leisure, to personal relationships and family life, and to effective membership of the community. In helping pupils to acquire such skills and knowledge, and in preparing them for these adult roles, the schools are fostering what we may call their social competence.'

This was to a large extent used as the basis of personal and social education programmes in schools following the implementation of the Munn recommendations.

A number of other initiatives, not least of which was Education for the Industrial Society, showed developments in linkages between the curriculum and the working world.

1986 saw the publication of 'More Than Feelings of Concern' (SCCC), a seminal document which in many ways is still held in the hearts and minds of the school guidance community in Scotland. Until very recently, this was the main central curricular guidance on career education in Scotland. It does, however, reflect a time of high unemployment for young people, suggesting that many young people might need to be helped, by a career education programme, to come to terms with the idea of a life without work (a notion very far indeed from the current political thinking).

Similarly to England, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in the 1980s helped to develop understanding and practice in career education, including work experience. TVEI materials and local guidelines appeared and the funding carrot encouraged actual changes in delivery in schools. Indeed, some of these TVEI products can still be seen actively in use (under a different title) in many parts of Scotland.

Scottish secondary schools have undergone a period of highly unsettling change in the curriculum over the 1990s and into the new century, and career education has rarely been drawn out as a theme on its own or had much priority in policy statements in comparison with curriculum developments. However, an HMI review of guidance in 1996 confirmed the importance of career education, and located it firmly within the guidance provision of the school:

'All pupils need to prepare for their future after they leave school. This preparation involves them in clarifying their ideas about the range of opportunities open to them in further and higher education, training and employment. They need assistance to make well-informed and realistic decisions based on their knowledge of themselves and of the opportunities available. Careers education is therefore an essential part of guidance provision.'

Effective Learning and Teaching in Scottish Secondary Schools: Guidance.

A report by HM Inspectors of Schools, SOEID, 1996 (p.61).

Schools have been challenged by the introduction, as part of the reform of the upper school curriculum known as Higher Still, of a guidance entitlement which focuses to a large extent on the vocational implications of curricular choice (Higher Still Development Unit, 1995). It is indicative, however, of the marginalised situation of career education in Scotland that the initial document on guidance within secondary schools contains recommendations on career education and guidance only within the appendix, an addition only made to the last draft.

Separate developments in the 1990s saw the production from the SCCC of 'Education Industry Links in Scotland 5-18: A Framework for Action'. This was followed by the launch of the Education for Work initiative and framework and support documents for Education for Work such as 'Education for Work: Education Industry links in Scotland – a National Framework' (Scottish CCC) and 'Education for Work: Guidance and Support for Schools' (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2000). These documents increasingly referred to career education as being part of the overall Education for Work initiative, and subsequent ministerial statements have suggested that career education and guidance comes under this banner too.

November 2001 saw the long-awaited publication of the first guidance to schools from the curriculum body, Learning and Teaching Scotland. Signed by both the Education minister and the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning minister, the new framework is the first to focus directly on career education. It has been published under the Education for Work banner, and has described learning outcomes from age 3-18, the first time that primary and pre-school children have been included in career education curricular guidance in Scotland.

It can be seen that career education has historically rested in secondary schools in Scotland within the personal and social education programme, managed and delivered as part of the guidance support of the school and timetabled alongside health and personal education. The 2001 framework on career education has been produced as part of the Education for Work provision, provision that has commonly been delivered and managed separately from the guidance provision in schools and education authorities.

2001 has also seen reviews and documents on Personal and Social Education and of PSE and guidance in primary schools. Due to report in June 2002 is a review of Education for Work by a committee of the Scottish Parliament. It remains to be seen whether the contradictions in the positioning of career education in policy and practice can be resolved.

Curriculum practice

A review of career education policy at local authority level (completed in preparation for the design of the new national framework) showed that all but one Scottish authority used the traditional DOTS framework in giving local guidance, therefore this model was used as the basis for the document. Career Education in Scotland (2001) defines the learning outcomes from each heading as:

- **Awareness of self**
- Identify and review personal strengths, interests, values and preferred lifestyles within the context of school, family and community

- Link personal review to the development of employability
- Review their process of career development and anticipate and plan for future career development needs
- Demonstrate an awareness of equal opportunities in their career decisions
- **Awareness of opportunity:**
 - Illustrate an understanding of work, training and education issues in career decisions with particular reference to current and future, local, national and international opportunities, self-employment and equal opportunities
 - Analyse job satisfaction, working conditions, roles and responsibilities in the workplace and place of learning
 - Describe the skills and attitudes required for employability
 - Gather, categorise and assess information and sources of information on career through ICT, paper and people sources
- **Understanding career decision making**
 - Express and justify personal preferences in education, work and training
 - Identify influences on career decision making (including stereotypical views)
 - Describe possible approaches to decision making in the context of career development and anticipate consequences of different career decisions
 - Describe the contribution of guidance services to career decision making and anticipate future decision points
- **Understanding transitions**
 - Describe and review the skills needed to make successful transitions into and within education, training and work
 - Describe and demonstrate application and interview skills needed for recruitment and selection into post-school education, training and work
 - Describe and review the support available from formal and informal sources at times of transition
 - Anticipate and plan for the demands of a new situation as a worker, student, trainee or job seeker, including equal opportunities issues

There are a number of emphases that make these outcomes different from any earlier approach in Scotland: linkages to employability skills; positive use of informal guidance sources; emphasis on understanding rather than knowledge of the opportunity structure; and increased perceptions of lifelong learning and career development.

In practice, only a small minority of schools will have developed a consistent programme covering traditional descriptions of the DOTS framework with clear progression in content and approach. There is, therefore, some way to go in implementing the framework. However, virtually all schools will have some form of career education input and will address the DOTS framework to a certain extent. Most schools organise career education as part of a rolling programme of Personal and Social Education, with a number of weeks devoted to career education, followed by some weeks covering health, records of achievement, etc; some have a discrete career education programme; and a very small number plan career education through the curriculum. Overall the extent to which careers education articulates with other parts of PSE is often limited.

In Scotland, the main focus of career education in practice is S2 (when Standard grade or National Qualification courses are being chosen) and S4 (when post-16 choices are being considered). A clear difficulty for schools is the design and delivery of career education in S5 and S6: the variation in student academic attainment, career intention, choice of post-school route and vocational maturity is very noticeable. This makes planning and delivery very difficult. Some have suggested that a short compulsory programme, combined with a choice of subsequent inputs based on the individual's needs, would be the most effective. This requires a clear identification of needs which is likely to be a complicated and time-consuming task; and a more individualised programme is difficult for schools to deliver within the twin constraints of resources and the timetable.

In most schools, career education is delivered in a variety of ways. A great deal is presented through classroom work, with discussions, worksheets and in some cases video material used. A key part of the programme is often the preparation, and debriefing, of one-week's work experience with a local company, and this is most commonly done in S3 or S4.

While many Scottish schools may have a post called 'careers co-ordinator', this is a role that involves links to the careers service and possibly an overview of the career education programme. It rarely involves the giving of careers advice, and is usually held by a member of the guidance team as a specialist remit (similar to having health education as a responsibility).

Although a member of the school's senior management team will have overall responsibility for the career education programme, normally within the context of the whole PSE programme, individual guidance teachers are likely to have responsibility for different aspects, eg the S2 PSE programme, work experience, the S5/S6 career input. The extent to which guidance teachers deliver career education to their own guidance caseload is variable, and it is often the case that non-specialists, (volunteer or non-volunteer) are timetabled to teach parts of the career programme.

careers service companies provide a professional career guidance service to schools, focusing mainly on individual specialist interviewing of pupils at key transition points in S4, S5 and S6. But pupils' readiness for, and their ability to make the most progress in, their career interview is dependent on the quality of the career education in the school. Careers advisers may well have a focused and limited input to career education delivery, perhaps when an understanding of the labour market is required.

Inspection and quality assurance

The common model for quality assurance in the curriculum in Scotland is 'How Good Is Our School.....?', indicators for self-evaluation of a number of aspects of the curriculum and school provision. 'How Good Is Our School at Education Industry Links?' is the most recent publication that might refer to career education, but a similar document designed to help schools measure themselves against the new framework is needed. HMI were consulted on early drafts of the framework, and now that it is published, will begin to seek evidence from schools during inspections on how the framework is being implemented. They, too, are likely to require some guidance on this, but there is little history in Scotland of HMI themselves being given specific training on quality assurance in specialist areas such as career education.

Training of school staff in career education

The responsibility for career education in secondary schools in Scotland has normally lain with the guidance team. A guidance teacher in Scotland is likely to hold a Post-graduate Certificate in Guidance, a recommended qualification which is compulsory in some local authorities but not all. This commonly has an element that looks at the PSE support programme, but not in any detail at the career education component of it. There is one specialist course at a similar level in Scotland that focuses on career education – The Post-graduate Certificate in Careers Education – and a small number of teachers, librarians and careers advisers have been trained on this. Numbers have remained small, as this course has not had a clear route to promotion compared to the Certificate in Guidance. A certificate course on Education for Work also exists, but focuses primarily on enterprise education and education industry links.

Over the three-year period from 1995 to 1998, the Scottish Office allocated around £600,000 to the training of teachers in career education. This was evidence of the importance of career work to government, and resulted in greatly increased in-service training, primarily to promote guidance teachers. While this was of great benefit, a key issue remaining is to support and inform those teachers without a guidance background who are delivering career education: such teachers typically lack confidence and will tend to fall back on safer methodologies of delivery such as worksheets and videos (less popular with pupils, and less effective).

In Scotland the McCrone report has recommended that Continuous Professional Development be required for the new Chartered Teacher Status. This will have implications for existing courses, but until the new CPD framework is fully agreed, these implications are not clear.

Professional organisations

The Scottish Guidance Association (SGA) provides a forum for debate, discussion and sharing of good practice for guidance teachers, teachers of PSE and those with an interest in the guidance/counselling of young people in Scotland. The SGA membership consists of over 100 schools/institutions and approximately 60 individual members, and has been in existence in its present form for over 10 years.

The SGA publishes a minimum of 5 Newsletters each year and organises two major annual events.

The Workshop Day in February each year attracts 150 delegates. It offers a choice of three training/learning opportunities from a typical menu of eight that would normally include at least one or two opportunities to learn or share good practice in the area of career education. The Annual Conference in June tends to focus on a single issue/presentation and again attracts towards 150 delegates. In recent years topics of *Education for Work* and *Progress File* have been presented and discussed.

The SGA committee consists of 12 volunteer members who meet on six Saturday mornings, at a central venue, during the session to discuss local and national issues and to plan and organise annual events and newsletter publications. There are no payments made to members of the committee except for travel or other expenses incurred on behalf of SGA. The current subscription for institution membership is £25 and for an individual member is £8.

The SGA also has representation on a number of guidance-related groups: the Guidance Network co-ordinated by Learning and Teaching Scotland; the SQA Advisory Group on Core Skills and Progression; and the Higher Still Development Unit. In recent years the SGA has begun to send delegates to other guidance-related conferences in the UK.

The Institute of Career Guidance in Scotland also has an interest in the development of career education in Scotland.

The future

The new framework for career education (and any support materials produced for it) will obviously have some impact. A clear challenge will be to persuade primary schools of their role in career education and to provide support materials that will pull out career-related learning in the 5-14 curriculum.

The Scottish Parliament, through its committee system, has shown considerable interest in career education and guidance and in Education for Work, and the results of the review of Education for Work are likely to have an impact, hopefully in resolving some of the difficulties concerning where career education is placed in the secondary school.

It is unfortunate that at this time, following the publication of the McCrone Report, where guidance in Scottish schools received little mention, that there is no national focus group in place which can influence the future direction of guidance in Scotland. Individual local authorities are undoubtedly discussing a variety of approaches, and the distinct possibility of fragmentation and inconsistency of guidance provision across Scotland is of considerable concern. Such fragmentation and inconsistency would inevitably impact on career education provision.

Lastly, a major change in Scotland will be the introduction of Careers Scotland in April 2002. This will bring together Careers Service Companies, Education Business Partnerships, Adult Guidance Networks and Local Learning Partnerships into one national organisation with two delivery arms, one covering the Highlands and Islands area and the other the rest of Scotland. A Development Manager has been appointed to Careers Scotland with responsibility for curriculum (under which comes career education and Education for Work). Careers Scotland may develop a quality assurance role: it will certainly have a role in the production of support materials for career education and in the encouragement of training. Careers Scotland has a considerable interest in ensuring that young people come well prepared by their school's career education programme for individual career guidance. Their interest and commitment is shown by their financial support for this consultation event.

References

- Higher Still Development Unit. (1995). *Guidance Arrangements Consultation Document*. Edinburgh: Higher Still Development Unit.
- Howieson, C. and Semple, S. (1996). *Guidance in Secondary Schools*. Edinburgh: Centre for Educational Sociology.
- Howieson, C. and Semple, S. (2001). *Effectiveness of Careers Services*. Edinburgh: Centre for Educational Sociology.
- Learning and Teaching Scotland. (2001). *Career Education in Scotland: a National Framework*. Dundee: LTS.
- Scottish Central Committee on Guidance. (1986). *More Than Feelings of Concern*. Edinburgh: Central Committee on the Curriculum.
- Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum. (1995). *Education Industry Links in Scotland 5-18: A Framework for Action*. Dundee: Scottish CCC.
- Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum. (1999). *Education for Work: Education Industry Links in Scotland – a National Framework*. Dundee: SCCC.
- Scottish Office Education and Industry Department. (1996). *Effective Learning and Teaching: Guidance. A report by HM Inspectors of Schools*. Edinburgh: HMSO.