

# Just Suppose...

- ... the virtual school became a reality?**
- ... students created digital learning resources?**
- ... students worked from home or elsewhere?**
- ... students led their own learning?**
- ... timetables were flexible?**

imagination



# Next Practice...

## ...in Resourcing Personalisation

Across the country today, students and teachers are working together to design and use a range of resources to personalise learning. Traditional education is being transformed through developments in using digital technology (laptops, Internet, email, wireless networks and VLEs), creating flexible arrangements with timetables and classes, and the reconceptualisation of schools themselves as learning environments.

In the Next Practice in Resourcing Personalisation project, which is being promoted by The Innovation Unit and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, radical models, such as those mentioned above, are being piloted in a systematic way to create more effective models for the future. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust is committed to working with The Innovation Unit on this project as part of its ongoing work to support innovative Development and Research networks.

Between late 2006 to March 2008, 17 field trials across the country are exploring new models for Resourcing Personalisation to transform education for all children.

## **Just Suppose** the virtual school became a reality?

Villiers High School in West London will seek to test the concept of the 'virtual school' - a school without walls. The school will pilot its use within a four week unit of learning for Science, English and Maths in Years 9 and 12. Students will use the virtual school during timetabled lessons in these subjects. The teachers will use this time to offer small group tutorials and drop-in sessions, thus enabling students to learn independently and to continue their learning beyond the school day. Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre and Hugh Christie Technology College in Kent, with the support of Hollingworth Business and Enterprise College in Rochdale, will develop a three session day and produce a 'flexitime toolkit'. This toolkit will stretch the boundaries of learning beyond the traditional school building. Another project, the Schome-NAGTY Teen Second Life Pilot, will use a virtual reality world in which students will work with their teachers to co-design an education system to better meet their needs in the 21st Century.

# Just Suppose students created digital learning resources?

Wildern School in Southampton is creating its own secure version of YouTube within its Virtual Learning Environment, for itself and eight feeder primaries. Students will learn to create and peer-review audio and video education resources. In Kent, Invicta Grammar School will develop ways for pupils to use common hand-held devices, such as mobile phones or MP3 players, to record their learning and create multimedia diaries and documentaries of their personalised learning journeys in History and Geography. Further north in Northumberland, Cramlington Community High School is using a Digital Toolbox with camera, microphone, and MP3 player equipment. Students will record interviews or create podcasts as part of an enquiry-based curriculum for Key Stage 3 based on an eight week humanities module. Back in Kent, The Cornwallis School will employ data mining techniques similar to those used by Tesco Clubcard systems to identify and target individuals and groups of students. They will be making use of the Experian MOSAIC software, which offers descriptors of communities by postcode which will enable staff to understand more about the kinds of experience pupils bring with them.

# Just Suppose students worked from home or elsewhere?

The Bridge Academy in London will provide 16 students in Year 9 with an ICT package, to enable them to work from home for one day a week. Further west in Hampshire, Bridgemy Community Sports College's personalised timetable will make provision for students who will be able to choose whether to work at school or elsewhere for a certain amount of time. For example, students might attend a local college or training course before continuing to work virtually or back in school outside traditional hours.

# Just Suppose students led their own learning?

Cambridgeshire's Crosshall Junior School is investigating how using the interests and concerns of Year 5 pupils will influence curriculum style and content. The



project will also ask whether the depth of learning will increase when pupils engage in the planning process of their learning journey. In2ition, a national venture, will use personalised approaches developed as part of NotSchool, to re-engage young people who are in danger of dropping out of school. Teenagers will negotiate with the school to study a number of subject areas of their choice.

## **Just Suppose** timetables were flexible?

Time will be the key factor at Leasowes Community College in the West Midlands. All students will follow a curriculum modelled on different time slots, ranging from a single lesson through to a whole week. The Southernway Federation, consisting of two primary schools, a junior and an infant school in Plymouth, will introduce a two-shift school day (from 8am to 1pm and 1pm to 6pm) for four weeks. The intention is to test whether pupils' learning capacities will be enhanced by working at times that better meet their, and their families', needs. De Ferrers Specialist Technology College in Staffordshire will develop a QA mechanism, through video observations and peer assessments, to look at the quality of learning across a number of Year 7 groups.

# The Thomas Hardy School's motivating the hard to reach

In this Dorset school, 50 students in Year 10 have been identified as being at risk of underachieving, but not because of ability. They will become part of a project exploring how motivational interviewing, taking part in challenging activities and Assessment for Learning, might address the needs of students who are not achieving their full potential, and who may have a resistance to learning. The project will look at the kind of language used when talking about assessment.

The interviewing techniques that will be used with 40 of the students have been developed in the NHS for tackling problem drinkers. The approach effects

an increase in self-motivation without assuming participants want to change. Students will be offered increased responsibility for their own learning, setting attainment and personalised process targets.

The second group of 10 students will take part in challenging activities aimed at boosting their self-confidence, including climbing, juggling, undertaking assembly for the whole of Year 10 (500 pupils) and cooking lunch for the Senior Management Team and Heads of Year. Their self-confidence and attitudes will be tested before and after.

## case studies

### John Cabot CTC is personalising transition

This South Gloucestershire school already has a robust personalised course for the whole of Year 7. In Years 9 to 11 students devise a curriculum with their teachers, and learning pathways have been developed in a range of subjects. In Years 11 to 13, students work on AS/A2 and vocational studies. The school is aware that students who are highly motivated by the learning programme in Year 7 dip in their engagement throughout Years 8 and 9, and seem to become more motivated again in Years 11 to 13. The school wants to tackle this dip.

The plan is to provide students from Years 8 and 9 with a structured learning programme that gives them elements of choice against set learning targets. Students will also have a series of e-learning days where they will be entitled to work from home or in school. The school will use a rigorous QA process to evaluate how well the Year 7 programme prepares students for the flexible learning programme in Years 8 and 9.



## Bolton and Bedfordshire Local Authorities' strategic student leadership

*"If we all work as a team, not alone, we can make what we want to happen. I think Student Action Teams are a great way to do this as we are bringing all the right people who can make a difference together to do some joint work." (Samantha, aged 14)*

Bolton and Bedfordshire Local Authorities have joined forces to support student action teams working with adults to co-construct strategic leadership roles in the deployment and delivery of personalised services for citizens. A number of school-based and authority-wide teams will use an action learning design to highlight current good practice and then constructively challenge this work to push towards what the Next Practice might be.

The student action team model engages young people in real decision making and action. This takes them beyond the classroom to work on issues valued by students themselves and the broader community, and which are linked to other curriculum and community goals. The project will seek to personalise learning and the wider system of Children's Services by empowering children, young people and adults to work collaboratively to solve problems and plan for their collective futures.

# Next Practice for a Changing World

None of us knows what the future holds, but we can work to shape that future, to ensure that, as far as possible, what happens is what we want to happen. The Innovation Unit is working with teachers and education leaders to help them to respond to this challenge. The Innovation Unit's main programme, Next Practice, champions practitioner-led innovation to tackle key challenges facing education today.

Next Practice is keenly aware of conventional good practice, but sets out to move it to a new level. Some Next Practice projects may involve use of the

Power to Innovate legislation, in order to improve standards. This enables the setting aside of regulation when there is a strong case that it inhibits innovation. The Next Practice in Resourcing Personalisation project is the second Next Practice project launched by The Innovation Unit. The other Next Practice projects being developed are:

- System Leadership
- Communities for Learning
- Involving parents in their children's learning

More details about these projects are available on The Innovation Unit's website: [www.innovation-unit.co.uk](http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk)

## Join the Community of Interest about Next Practice

We are inviting education professionals across the country to register their interest in this work. If you want to be kept in touch with how the Next Practice projects develop, you can join our Community of Interest. You can then read regular updates on how field trial projects are progressing, access new publications and development tools, and visit the field trial projects themselves, to see innovation in action. You may also get the opportunity to develop your own pilot project, with support from The Innovation Unit.

Join the Community of Interest now by emailing your contact details to: [nextpractice@innovation-unit.co.uk](mailto:nextpractice@innovation-unit.co.uk)

*(Please state which Next Practice project you are interested in.)*