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No 52

Evaluation of the Technical and Vocational
Education Initiative (TVEI) Extension

Educational Research Group

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Evaluation of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) Extension

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The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) was first introduced as a pilot scheme in 1984 and extended in 1988 to all local authority funded schools as a national programme which ran until 1997. At education authority level the 'projects', as TVEI activities were known, lasted for varying periods within the overall duration of the initiative. Altogether education authorities in Scotland received approximately £100 million to fund TVEI activity.

TVEI aimed to equip all school and college students in the 14-18 age group with the knowledge and skills required for success in adult working life. The objective was to produce a more highly skilled, competent, effective and enterprising workforce, able to respond to the demands of a fast-changing, technological society.

Towards the end of 1996, the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) commissioned an evaluation of the TVEI Extension to take a national overview.

Aims of the evaluation

The key objective of the study was to identify what benefits have been derived from the TVEI Extension scheme and to identify lessons for the future. The structure and reporting of the evaluation centred around five intermediate TVEI objectives, which are outlined in the following focus statements:

1. relate what is learned in schools and colleges to the world of work
2. improve skills and qualifications for all, particularly in science, technology, information technology and modern languages
3. provide young people with direct experience of the world of work through real work experience
4. enable young people to learn to be effective, enterprising and capable at work through active and practical learning methods
5. provide counselling, guidance, individual action plans, records of achievement and opportunities to progress to higher levels of achievement.

Research Approach

The evaluation approach had to recognise that there was no clearly measured baseline, and, even if there had been, it would not have presented a consistent picture across Scotland. For this reason it is not possible to establish any universal, objective basis against which impact could be measured. Another consideration was in isolating the contribution which TVEI made to any observed changes. Many other significant developments had been going on, such as the issue of SCCC guidelines on the

nature and structure of the curriculum, Standard Grade developments, increased use of National Certificate (NC) modules and Higher Still. These were making their own contributions to Scottish education.

Because of this the evaluation method could not take a 'before and after' approach –instead current policy and practice in local authorities and schools and colleges was examined, and through consultation, TVEI-supported activities were identified and assessed to see how they had contributed to current practice.

An examination of each education authority's records was made to determine their objectives in each of the focus statement areas, and to establish local targets and actions taken. A postal survey of headteachers and teachers was carried out, and case studies undertaken in a sample of schools and colleges involved in the survey. This led to interviews with key players in TVEI implementation.

The education authority records were summarised and entered into a database structured around the five focus statements. The accounts of developments in each authority were not necessarily comprehensive. Data on detailed costs, numbers of pupils involved in particular initiatives etc, while available at a local level during the project, were generally not recorded in the annual progress reports. Despite these limitations, the information in the database highlights common themes and activities across authorities and provides useful examples of the ways in which TVEI brought about change.

The design of the postal questionnaire was also structured around the five TVEI focus statements. Headteachers' and teachers' questionnaires explored their experience and perceptions of TVEI. Case study schools were selected to ensure that a range of levels of involvement in TVEI was achieved. Special Education Needs (SEN) schools were included. In each school, interviews were carried out with the headteacher, a member of the senior management team, a group of principal teachers, and a group of classroom teachers. Interviews were also conducted at four further education colleges and with three officers at education authorities. The case studies built upon the initial findings and added greater depth and detail.

Findings

The findings presented in this Interchange are mainly drawn from the case studies because that is the stage at which the research reached its fullest development. The document review and questionnaire survey will not, therefore, be the subject of detailed reporting here.

It is worth mentioning here briefly the effect of the pilot projects before turning to look at the five focus statements.

Much was learned from TVEI Pilot Projects. With the extension of TVEI to all

students one of the major challenges facing schools was that of reconciling the existing demands of the curriculum for all students with the apparently new demands of science, technology, IT and modern languages. Changes in SCCC guidelines for S3/S4, together with TVEI, helped achieve the desired ends. The idea of TVEI as a 'bolt-on' to the curriculum was overtaken by the idea of the permeation of TVEI's underlying principles through all aspects of the curriculum.

Focus Statement One — relate what is learned in schools and colleges to the world of work

Schools and colleges recognised that work-orientated learning is now an integral part of their provision. TVEI had resulted in a 'change in climate', a 'cultural shift' achieved through more focused and relevant provision.

Increased funding and support was effective in bringing about changes in emphasis. Schools and colleges recognised, however, that this could only be made available to those meeting the very specific requirements of the other focus statements. As a result, they re-assessed their priorities and aligned them with those of TVEI.

If funding was to be obtained, TVEI had to be an effective agent for change. Local authority statements of policy on TVEI helped in this respect, in particular by establishing a process of TVEI coordination. Schools and colleges followed suit and TVEI took on a momentum of its own. This quickly resulted in the carrying out, at regional and local levels, audits of provision with an identification of gaps to be filled. At the same time, 'networking' (a process closely identified with TVEI) became commonplace —for the collation and exchange of information, organisation of INSET (In-Service Training), development of courses and materials and dissemination of good practice. Practices which had taken place in some schools (such as Education Industry Links, Understanding Industry Days, Industrial Awareness Days, Education Business Partnerships, work experience) became common to all schools and have continued.

TVEI encouraged colleges to look at their induction programmes and liaison arrangements with schools, their approaches to flexible learning and to open learning and the content of their own courses. In particular, colleges looked more closely at their provision for students with learning difficulties and received much TVEI support in this area.

Special Educational Needs schools were very much involved in the TVEI Extension and were particularly appreciative of the opportunities provided by networking for staff and students alike. Work-experience activities were expanded and access to TVEI funding to underwrite previously unavailable specialist equipment was seen as a real boost. Certification of achievement through National Certificate modules also became a feature.

A 'change in climate': relating what was learned to the world of work



became an integral part of the provision of schools and colleges.

The TVEI Extension was appreciated in SEN schools. Notable developments were: networking by staff



and students, work experience, and the provision of specialist equipment.

Many of the processes and practices of management and organisation which were introduced by TVEI



remain in place today. A notable example is the practice of bidding for resources.

Support funding was much appreciated in all establishments in terms of staffing. This enabled a range of initiatives to take place, including:

- the appointment of ‘dedicated’ TVEI coordinators
- the status given to aspects of TVEI (such as equal opportunities) by specific TVEI-funded appointments (through responsibility elements) many of which have been consolidated in schools and colleges
- the provision of time (through buying in cover) for school and college staff to network and to produce, monitor and evaluate TVEI-related courses.

TVEI made considerable contributions to shaping the organisation of and provision in today’s schools and colleges. Much was learned regarding institutional, financial and other resources, particularly in the areas of bidding for them, allocating them and their eventual use and management.

Focus Statement Two — improve skills and qualifications for all, in particular in science, technology, information technology and modern languages

TVEI was undoubtedly associated with dramatic changes in the following aspects of provision:

- modern languages
- information technology
- qualifications
- wider curricular choice
- flexible learning
- technological activities and applications
- key curricular content.

These changes were attributable in equal parts to the SCCC guidelines on the curriculum for S3-S6 and to TVEI. Undoubtedly the two married well. The view was often expressed that one could not have taken place without the other. SCCC guidelines accelerated the provision of science, technology, IT and modern languages beyond S3 for everyone, and this provision is now a common feature of the curriculum. TVEI support played a substantial role in this innovation. Opportunities for networking, INSET, time for course development, together with the provision of necessary resources and equipment were helpful too.

Modern Languages

The extension of the modern languages curriculum was an outstanding example

of this. Typical of developments across all subject areas was the work which took place in modern languages among local educational development services (EDS) and TVEI appointees. TVEI aims were clearly identified and it was obvious that the new cohort of modern languages students had clear needs for active and practical learning. Course production, the provision of appropriate INSET and the re-equipping of departments, all substantially financed by TVEI, provided a widespread response to these needs.

Information Technology

Few schools opted for discrete presentation of IT, except as an optional subject in a technology column. Most tried to encourage the development of the use of IT through the curriculum

Qualifications

Nationally recognised qualifications were available to everyone through the Standard Grade courses of S3 and S4. The provision of these courses had produced much work on differentiation in the curriculum. Schools had already moved along the path of individualised, resource-based, active and practical learning, and continued to develop these approaches, calling on TVEI resources to support them. Departments began to examine more closely the processes involved in learning and began to identify transferable skills which would themselves be life skills beyond school or college. Part of this process was the encouragement of more investigative approaches involving independent study and TVEI supported these.

An increasing population of schools were encouraged to develop coherent packages of SCOTVEC National Certificate modules beyond S4 involving clear progression, GSVQs, school group awards etc. Links with colleges proved very valuable in the initial stages of these developments. Recognition was also given by schools to the work done by SCOTVEC itself in establishing these courses.

Wider Curricular Choice

Wider curricular choice beyond S3, particularly in science, technology and modern languages, is now available to all. IT now plays a much more significant part in course provision in all departments. Beyond S4, courses have been widened to include many National Certificate modular courses. The idea of coherence and progression from S3 to S6 is established and students in S5/S6 often negotiate their own curriculum within a range of subjects, levels and types.

Flexible Learning

Schools and colleges began to create flexible learning centres where such learning could be developed and extended. Purpose-built or adapted provision was made in some cases, and the support of TVEI funding was most influential.

TVEI Extension resources were used to support and develop advance in individualised,



resource-based, active and practical learning, introduced through Standard Grade courses.

TVEI provided funding for many facilities and much equipment to enhance the



provision of technological activities and applications.

Technological Activities and Applications

Facilities and equipment for these were enhanced across schools and colleges. This TVEI-led activity created its own momentum and increased demand. Enhancements included purchase and use of CD-ROMS, desk-top publishing facilities, PCs, computers and software, and purchase of subject-specific items of sophisticated equipment.

Key Curricular Content

Key curricular elements such as the ability to communicate effectively, to compile and use numerical information effectively, to use science and technology appropriately and the development of effective personal and interpersonal skills were included in course design and structure in all departments. TVEI funding played a large part in this development.

Focus Statement Three — to provide young people with direct experience of the world of work through real work experience

This was regarded as the most tangible of the successful outcomes of TVEI. In contrast with the limited opportunities for work experience pre-TVEI, schools reported virtually 100 per cent provision of one week's work experience for all S4 students. This was regarded as a valuable feature of school provision.

Early Problems

Some early opposition from parents and staff to an apparent interruption or distraction from preparations for Scottish Examination Board (SEB) examinations was overcome and work experience is now accepted as an integral part of provision. A range of departments now capitalise on work experience in furthering specific curricular aims.

There were initially some problems in ensuring that there were sufficient work experience placements for all S4 students. Although some schools had extensive networks of contacts, most had to establish and develop them, which tended to be extremely time consuming.

Databases

The formalisation of the programme advanced significantly with the creation of databases of work experience opportunities. These were funded largely by TVEI and provided schools with a networked service or directory of potential placements. The coordination of work experience opportunities between schools in an area was helped significantly by the TVEI network. The compilation of these databases involved the careers service in checking the

placements for suitability. Local employers were made aware of the purposes behind work experience and this increased the educational validity of the exercise.

Work experience in Practice

At pre-determined periods all S4 students in a school would take part in work-experience (sometimes in half year groups). Their travelling expenses were often met. Students could arrange their own placements but usually used the database.

Schools prepared students thoroughly, usually through the Personal and Social Development (PSD) programme. In many schools students were visited during placements by a member of staff from either the school or the careers service. On return from work experience, students were de-briefed, sometimes by questionnaire. Many English departments encouraged students to use the experience as the basis for solo talks. Work experience diaries were often kept and used both in English and PSD. Work experience continued to a lesser extent (often in the form of work shadowing) in S5 and S6. This represented a significant extension of the experiences of some S5/S6 students.

Most schools arranged certification through National Certificate modules, adding to the credibility of the exercise among students, parents, staff and employers.

This focus statement has been enthusiastically and wholeheartedly adopted by schools and the practice has become firmly embedded and assimilated into the curriculum. In the majority of schools, work experience is an integral part of the overall Education/Industry Links programme for S1 to S6.

Focus Statement Four — to enable young people to be effective, enterprising and capable of work through active and practical learning methods

The effect of the implementation of this focus statement was described as one of the more fundamental and lasting aspects of TVEI. It involved for many a reappraisal of attitudes, approaches and methodologies which may have been implicit in other educational developments but which were explicit in TVEI.

Changes of Approach

The use of the word 'enable' for many meant a change of emphasis in their teaching. It implied encouraging people to acquire certain skills for themselves – problem solving, decision making, teamwork, research methods, inquiry skills – the skills of enterprise. More and more the focus was on the process of learning rather than on outputs.

The provision of work experience for all was a key development, and was regarded as



the most tangible success directly attributable to the TVEI Extension.

Active and Practical Learning

Standard Grade developments (as well as some revised Higher courses) had involved differentiation in the curriculum and more practical and active learning. TVEI represented a further development along those lines. Methodologies had to be altered to allow this skill acquisition to take place.

It was clear local authority EDS had similar priorities. Thus the two thrusts came happily together. TVEI coordination teams and EDS staff were able to work closely to produce INSET, which met the needs of this new approach.

Teacher Skills

Much work was done in helping teachers to acquire new skills by:

- establishing a coordination network which could respond in a coherent way to INSET needs
- enabling the dissemination of good practice
- providing generic INSET to a range of teachers
- enabling schools to identify and respond to emerging INSET needs
- enabling TVEI to provide courses and training
- releasing school staff (by funding supply staff) for wide-ranging INSET, and for writing course materials and monitoring and evaluation
- enabling closer liaison between schools
- enabling many teachers to acquire IT skills.

Lasting and fundamental developments were made which assessed the objective of enabling young people to be effective,



enterprising and capable of work. For many educators this involved a change of role from the traditional 'teacher' to that of 'enabler'.

Key Developments

Teachers agreed that certain key developments took place as a result of this TVEI focus statement. These included:

- individual student learning needs being identified and met using a range of learning activities, environments and resources which involved student-centred, individualised, resource-based learning
- school managers identifying whole-school strategies for flexible approaches to learning. Short life working groups which looked specifically at INSET and resource implications were often established to further this goal
- a range of exciting, innovative and professionally produced materials emerged founded on this skill-based approach
- teachers welcoming these developments as 'exciting', 'challenging', 'refreshing', encouraging them to let go of their more traditional 'teacher' role in favour of that of 'consultant' and 'enabler'
- independent study and the acquisition of study skills being encouraged.

Computer-Assisted Learning

Computer-assisted learning increased across the curriculum and became an integral part of the course provision. Teachers worried about the 'obsolescence factor' and school managers were making strenuous efforts to encourage departments, by using the bidding procedures adopted through TVEI, to put in place planning procedures which would partially overcome this problem.

Managing Change

Aspects of the management of change, built into TVEI INSET, have become features of development planning in schools and departments. Establishing criteria for success, the use of performance indicators, formal and informal reviews, quality audits and evaluation skills have both improved the climate for learning and contributed to management training. Many of these changes relied on TVEI-produced materials.

Specific TVEI support for these initiatives included:

- creation of management time for senior staff
- releasing of teachers to 'network' with others for course development
- the provision of cover staff to facilitate curriculum and staff development
- planning and target setting.

Most colleges embraced the concept of flexible learning and established flexible learning centres. Most of these trace their origin to TVEI support and funding. Once the idea took root, these centres flourished and grew and now contain specialised and sophisticated equipment not readily available to departments individually.

TVEI enabled Special Educational Needs schools to make use of a wide range of training and other opportunities, building on the fact that they were already centres of active and practical learning of an individualised type. Similarly the acquisition of TVEI-funded equipment enabled provision to be considerably enhanced and in some cases transformed.

Focus Statement Five — to provide counselling, guidance, individual action plans, records of achievement and opportunities to progress to a higher level of achievement

PSD and Guidance

Many schools took the opportunity to review and update their programmes of Personal and Social Development (PSD), particularly for S3-S6. TVEI sup-

Computer-assisted
learning became an



integral part of course
provision.

ported this. Some schools opted for specific timetabled PSD periods with a structured, coherent and progressive approach from S1 to S6; others attempted to make provision across the curriculum. Many denominational schools seemed to meet PSD requirements through RE provision, already scheduled in the S1 to S6 timetable. Where schools had carried out audits of PSD arrangements and gaps were identified, TVEI support was used to fill these.

Careers education provision was reviewed with careers staff playing a full part with school guidance and college liaison staff. Careers libraries in schools and colleges were upgraded. The deployment of JIIG-CAL (Job Ideas and Information Generator – Computer Assisted Learning) was an important feature of this strategy. Full staff training was provided. New careers materials were added to PSD programmes.

Individual Action Plans and National Records of Achievement

Using the experience of TVEI-pilot schools, most schools had introduced individual action plans, some from an early stage. Guidance staff largely carried out this work and it became the basis for pupil records of achievement and ultimately National Records of Achievement (NRA).

TVEI helped provide computer-assisted programmes to assist in the completion of NRAs. Where these programmes were enthusiastically adopted by schools and colleges they seemed to have some credibility with users. Much work remains to be done in this area. Overall, however, TVEI had a significant role in encouraging the use of NRAs and in supporting the initiative. Irrespective of the level of support for NRAs, schools and colleges seemed to have given higher priority to profiling and formative assessment.

Equal Opportunities

Most schools addressed this issue, particularly where it also had a high priority with the relevant local authority. Equal opportunities committees were established, curriculum audits carried out and option choices monitored for gender balance. Care was taken in PSD and careers provision to ensure the use of positive gender role-models. TVEI highlighted equal opportunities issues as an integral part of support packages (including training) offered to schools. Most schools and colleges see this area as one of unfinished business.

Conclusions

Staff Development

As a result of TVEI teachers developed new and better skills in curriculum development and course construction. The variety of teaching methods was widened to include resource-based, open, flexible learning techniques. The flexible use of resources improved, and innovative materials were produced.

The TVEI pilot had introduced individual action plans. The TVEI Extension supported



development in this field and encouraged schools to adopt the National Record of Achievement

School management and training procedures were improved, as were staff attitudes and practices in terms of planning, development and effective use of resources.

Staff development needs were identified and met with 'networking', allowing staff to link effectively with others for development work and INSET. Monitoring and evaluation are accepted as key parts of effective planning. Teachers monitored and audited their work, identifying targets and action points, using performance indicators and other criteria for success. Teachers' evaluation skills have been enhanced.

Learning and Teaching Methods

There was an increased use of information technology involving students in investigations, problem-solving and practical work. Students were given more responsibility for their own learning in terms of choice, pattern and rate of progress. Teachers themselves were led into new areas of skill/knowledge through increased use of information technology. Schools developed differentiation strategies, skills in learning and teaching, and supporting student-centred learning, and teachers increasingly accepted the roles of facilitator and consultant. As the increasing requirement for investigation became clear, students were encouraged to be self-reliant and to take part in team and group work.

INSET played a most important part in all this by making generic provision and by providing IT to support training and development. Modules were developed, evaluated and examples of good practice disseminated. Management training was provided and an understanding of the importance of communication, teamwork and relationships in the classroom promoted. Schools reviewed special educational needs and requirements for learning support.

A greater variety of methodologies became available to teachers through the cross-fertilisation of skills across subjects and modes, and with more equipment and resources helping to facilitate class management. This allowed better management of differentiation by task, enabling students to have individualised programmes of work which helped them to develop study skills and the ability to work in teams, groups and pairs. A better balance of methodologies was achieved, providing more time to address learning difficulties. These methodologies stressed process-based work, provided hands-on experience, geared classroom activities to the world of work and allowed students more influence in reviewing their own curricular progress and in developing their own personal and social action planning.

PSD and Guidance

All of this activity applied equally to PSD and guidance, where INSET led to the personal profiling, resources and suggestions for whole school PSD programmes, production of materials to support NC modules in residential experience, community involvement, enterprise activity, contemporary issues,

INSET was a most important factor in supporting



developments in learning and teaching methods.

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job-seeking skills, work experience and countering discrimination. PSD materials now cover areas such as life skills, health education, careers, personal profiling, resources and suggestions for whole-school activities.

The requirements of children with special educational needs were given higher priority and closer links were established with local secondary schools and colleges. Learning materials for the modules of the Skillstart group award and for the Lifestart and Workstart awards were produced and used on a widespread basis. TVEI-supported INSET took place. This encouraged skills acquisition and reduced the sense of isolation felt by some special educational needs teachers. Equipment and resources were provided to support activities related to TVEI. The effect of such provision seemed disproportionate to the relatively small amounts of money involved.

Management Implications

The clear importance of the structured management of such projects was established. TVEI laid the foundations for development planning. Bidding for funding became fundamental to the implementation of TVEI not least in the processes involved in preparing bids. The importance of supporting developments with high quality targeted staff development became clear. Time was bought in for curriculum development, staff development, familiarisation with new equipment, planning and target setting, releasing of teachers for core development work, training of staff in new technologies and providing experience of writing materials. The project management supplied by TVEI coordinators was pivotal.

Lessons for the Future

Rapid changes in new technology means that equipment bought through TVEI will have to be renewed. Future 'pump-priming' initiatives will have to take account of the fact that these costs cannot be met from smaller budgets.

The specific nature of TVEI focus statements enabled managers and decision-makers to be clear about aims and rationale for the programme. Factors in this success which could be replicated were that:

- it had a clear focus and coherent approach understood at all levels
- it enabled 'buying in time', allowing many aspects of development work to take place
- it was well funded
- it was supported by appropriate staff development
- it was integrated into the way schools and colleges worked, rather than 'bolted on'
- it was adaptable, within boundaries, to suit local needs
- it was integrated well with other national developments
- it was focused on young people's learning needs and the variety of teaching approaches required
- it had monitoring and evaluation built-in.

The TVEI focus statements made the aims and



rationale clear to managers and decision-makers.