

A response to the Leitch Review of Skills consultation from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

1. NIACE warmly welcomes the establishment of the Treasury's Leitch review of the skills needs of the UK economy over the next twenty years. As a member of the Skills Alliance, NIACE is committed to the Government's goals of strengthening skills, and learning throughout life, to address the twin goals of securing economic prosperity and social cohesion. However, it has concerns about whether the combination of current resource allocation, (from public and private contributions), legislative and regulatory frameworks in place are adequate to achieve those goals. In NIACE's view, these each need to be addressed to secure the platform change in participation in formal and informal learning that the country needs. NIACE further believes that an active programme is needed to secure employers', communities' and individuals' commitment to the cultural change required to address the scale of the challenge.
2. NIACE's own work focuses on adult learning, and in particular on measures to secure more and different learners, and better adult learning. We have undertaken a range of quantitative and qualitative studies, and managed Government funded national development programmes over the last twenty years to address barriers to participation and achievement; and strategies for successful participation and progression in formal and informal learning, for those people who benefited least from earlier passages of education and training.
3. NIACE's evidence to the Review is shaped by this experience and perspective. It is in three parts. This first introduction (pages 1-7) highlights our view that there is a powerful economic and social case for investing in learning throughout life, and for avoiding too narrow and utilitarian a focus on future investment. The second part (pages 8 – 26) addresses the questions raised in the Review's consultation, and the third (pages 27 onward) is an appendix summarising some distinctive features of adult participation in learning.

The current context

4. Whilst the UK has a proud record in securing highly qualified workers through its education and training system, the learning divide between the educationally skilled and confident and those who have little or no positive experience of learning at school or work is sharper than for most of the UK's industrial competitors, producing in the CBI's memorable phrase, a 'long tail of under-achievement'. As part three of this evidence shows, social class, age, prior educational experience, current labour market participation, and access to the internet are all powerful predictors of participation in education and training – in work or wider society. Despite a raft of policy interventions over the last decade, this gap between the learning rich and learning poor is stubbornly resilient, with consequent effects on productivity

5. For too many people, the belief that 'education's for other people' is borne out in day-to-day lived experience. Despite the evidence of the Government's Skills for Life survey that moving from entry level 3 to level 1 in numeracy skills has a 9% productivity impact on lifetime earnings, few in the lowest skills cohorts see early economic benefits from engaging in education and training.
6. NIACE has warmly welcomed, and worked hard to support the active labour market measures adopted by this government, the Skills for Life Strategy, and the more recent commitment in the Skills Strategy to create an entitlement to a level 2 qualification for all in the labour market, or seeking to rejoin it, who lack them. Our concern, however, centres on how these policies are translated into practice, and the unintended effects of the Government's Public Service Agreement targets in distorting the subtler dimensions of policy, resulting in perverse outcomes.
7. The first challenge government faces in addressing these targets is in ensuring that there is sufficient private and public investment to secure a major change in skills. There is a wide consensus that this must involve increased investment by the state, individuals and employers alike. The government has increased investment in post-compulsory education and training, but a short term increase in the age cohort of 16-19s, coupled with modest rises in participation rates among that cohort have meant that in England there is a reduction of £55 million in overall adult investment in 2005-6, (since the legislation is framed to ensure that young people's needs are met as a priority), with the prospect of further sharp reductions in the next two years, reinforced by the end of European Social Funding. In effect, success in addressing one Government priority is bought at the expense of worsening progress towards another. NIACE calculates that adult learning opportunities in England may drop by 1,500,000 or almost 40%, if no action is taken to ameliorate this. The result of this will be to destroy the infrastructure for an effective lifelong learning strategy that has been patiently built by the government since 1997.
8. Whilst NIACE believes that individuals who can afford to pay more should do so, little has been done to make a convincing public case to shift public opinion to recognise the personal and communal benefits from a change in pricing. The challenges faced by higher education institutions in maintaining viable part-time provision in a deregulated fees market with substantial price resistance to higher fees illustrates the problem. NIACE would be happy to support the government through measures to encourage an informed public debate on fees strategy, and mentoring and modelling to help providers develop strategies for increasing fee income whilst remaining accessible to under-represented groups and low income adults through a fair remissions policy.
9. The greatest gap between UK investment in post-16 education and training lies in the contribution made by UK employers when compared with comparable OECD countries. Whilst public investment is at the upper end of the range, combined public and private investment languishes in the lower reaches of OECD members' performance, and access to training is markedly skewed in favour of the most skilled staff. Whilst overall participation in training in the UK is high comparatively, it is for much shorter

cycles than in competitor states – for example, 46% of the NHS workforce, overwhelmingly from the least skilled segment, receive less than two days' training a year. The introduction of Employer Training Pilots has been warmly welcomed by industry, but when up to eighty percent of provision is deadweight, displacing investment employers would otherwise have made, the policy has had the reverse effect of that intended. At best ETPs muffle the message that for economic prosperity, employers need to increase substantially their investment in the skills of their staff.

10. NIACE welcomes the impact of trade union learning representatives, the legislation securing recognition for representatives, and the stimulus to learning at work fostered by the union learning fund, but recognises that overall volumes of learners reached by these developments remain modest, and that many of the least skilled and part-time workers are in non-unionised employment. They will need parallel outreach and peer-group mentoring schemes to stimulate demand for learning in many small and medium sized firms.
11. NIACE endorses the proposal first made by the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning that the Government should adopt a strategy comparable to that developed over twenty years to strengthen health and safety in UK workplaces. We believe that the Government should announce a medium term date by which industrial sectors without voluntarily agreed frameworks for industry wide commitment to training and development would have a licence to practice or comparable mechanism imposed. The evidence from the ETPs demonstrates the effectiveness that the introduction of a licence to practise has had on the social care sector, where volumes of training have increased sharply. NIACE believes that after thirty years Government needs to recognise that voluntarism in relation to workplace development will not secure a sufficiently large transformation in skills development to meet the country's needs.
12. NIACE also believes that the deadweight effect resulting from the level 2 entitlement should be offset, by making employer access to public funding for Level 2 qualification (though not for basic literacy and numeracy) conditional upon it being matched by explicit training and development spending on other staff.
13. Neither individual nor employer contributions will rise sufficiently in the immediate future to offset the crisis in individual routes to skills and to wider learning opportunities. NIACE believes the Government needs to increase its own investment in the short run, to secure provision for adults in the period up to 2009, when demographic pressures on post-school budgets ease.

Targets

14. NIACE has been impressed by the capacity for re-balancing public provision that setting national targets has secured. Notably in the area of literacy, language and numeracy work, the establishment of national targets has led to a transformation in the volume, quality and reach of provision. In addition

to the 750,000 who passed the national tests used to measure the effectiveness of the strategy, more than 1,500,000 other adults benefited from strengthening their literacy, numeracy and language skills – many of them in areas unmapped by the national tests. Yet, over time targets need to be reviewed, to ensure that what has been learned since they were set, is not forgotten

15. Professor John Bynner's research for NRDC, shows decisively that the strongest correlation between poor basic skills, poverty, and the inter-generational impact of adults' skills on their children's performance exists for people with skills below entry level 2. Provision for this group is not covered by the PSA target, and the key funder, the LSC, now instructs its local offices to secure no more than 20% of its work at pre-entry level. Effective policy would recognise the need for intensive investment for those with the lowest skills, and lower volumes of provision for those with the shortest journeys to undertake to secure achievements.
16. A different point needs to be made in relation to the Level 2 target, at least for those people seeking qualifications outside the workplace. The desire to ensure that people gaining level 2 qualifications have the breadth of skill, knowledge and understanding needed as a platform for sustained employability led policy makers to focus on the need for 'a full width level 2' – the equivalent of five GCSEs A to C. In the workplace strategies to ensure that workers' existing skills and experience are built on are addressed through the 'assess-train-assess' strategy – though the Engineering Employers' Federation has expressed frustration at the lack of flexibility with which much local practice is implemented.
17. Outside the workplace, no comparable strategy is in place. This means that learners with 4 GCSEs, seeking a fifth are excluded from the entitlement, because only learners undertaking a 'full-fat level 2' are supported. Most adults learn part-time and incrementally, and find it difficult to fit full-time study into other responsibilities. Those needing to build qualifications gradually are inhibited by the absence of a credit accumulation and transfer framework (the 'Framework for Achievement' heralded in the Skills Strategy but some years off) and, consequently, cannot benefit from public support to develop skills for employability.

Demography

18. The weaknesses in current policies are drawn sharply into focus by demographic change. Two in three jobs of the next decade cannot be filled by young labour market entrants because there are not enough young people in the age cohort. Despite this, the first four sector skills agreements assume volumes of recruitment of young people that total twice the entire cohort, and there are twenty-one more agreements to come. This provides a graphic illustration of the culture shift needed to change the orientation of employers away from an exclusive focus on recruiting and training young people towards investment in up-skilling existing workers and recruiting adults currently outside the labour force.

19. As the New Deal for Skills demonstrates, many of those currently outside the labour market need not only job-specific skills but also more general preparation for work. Indeed, employers regularly stress the importance of softer generic skills. NIACE has long argued that the key industrial skill is the skill of learning – and that that can be learned wherever learners' motivation is fired. The experience of Employee Development Schemes, like that pioneered by Ford and its unions, over almost twenty years, is that workers often gain confidence and skill in learning from studying whatever interests them, and then they transfer the skills to industrial contexts. In Ford's experience that strategy led to marked improvement in retention rates, reduced absenteeism and improved industrial relations – all with an impact on productivity.
20. That approach is paralleled in the much higher levels of investment committed in Nordic countries for civic and cultural education. The experience of Iceland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden alike is that they deal speedily with industrial reconstruction, and sustain high levels of productivity. High levels of social capital have a positive impact on productivity.
21. In addition to strengthening skills for existing workers, three key groups of potential employees will need to be targeted to meet the labour market needs of the UK economy over the next decade – older people, women, (particularly from minority ethnic and linguistic backgrounds), and migrants. Each present challenges to current arrangements for education and training. Older people have much lower levels of participation in education and training, inside and outside the labour force, and have lower levels of qualification. The Employee Training Pilots offer useful evidence to suggest that the level 2 entitlement can, however, secure increased opportunities for a much broader age cohort.
22. The UK already has relatively high levels of women's labour market participation, but this will need to be increased markedly over the next decade. Many women outside the waged labour market will want to undertake preliminary programmes of study, often at best tangentially related to vocational preparation, before moving on to explicit skills acquisition – as the research into the progression routes pursued by adults engaged with the Pre-School Learning Alliance demonstrates. There is significant under-representation in the workforce of women from minority ethnic and linguistic communities. Strengthened provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages provision, offered as distinct courses, and embedded into vocational studies will, in NIACE's view be necessary if these groups are to be effectively engaged.
23. Many economic migrants will share the need to strengthen English language skills, but others will seek to match their prior educational experience and qualifications against UK qualifications. Over the next years, the moves to harmonise European qualifications recognition will help with this, as will the Bologna process in higher education. However, NIACE's experience in supporting skills audits for refugees and asylum seekers highlights the importance of securing improved strategies for assessment and recognition of experience and qualifications, if significant numbers of black Britons and others settled here are not to be under-employed.

24. Each of these cohorts will need access to good information, advice and guidance, often offered in the first instance by peer groups. There will also be a need for the kind of outreach work in community settings and workplaces to engage and encourage many to undertake the skills development needed to maintain competitiveness. Much of this in community settings can be undertaken by voluntary and community sector agencies, properly supported by the state. There is a wealth of experience in the system in how to undertake such work successfully, but it is currently at risk given current funding pressures.
25. The Small Business Council regularly points out the importance of recognising the importance of informal learning at work, and NIACE's research with the Centre for Labour Market Studies at the University of Leicester highlights the value workers place on learning on the job, and from peer groups. Whilst qualifications are an important proxy for skills, it will be important for public policy to complement a focus on strengthening qualifications in the workforce with an encouragement to foster a learning culture at work. An important focus for future activity should be on building opportunity for reflection and learning, and an encouragement to foster innovation, into job design. It would be helpful, too, to strengthen measures to accredit prior learning.

Beyond the waged labour market

26. Increased participation in waged work by these groups will put pressure on those outside the waged economy to maintain the fabric of a vibrant civil society. Older people already take considerable responsibility in caring, volunteering and in the maintenance of many organisations of civil society. Such work is just as much in need of skills maintenance and development as learning at work. Indeed, part of the UK's commercial advantage lies in the quality of its civic life, and to maintain and enhance social cohesion and to foster an active citizenship in an ageing society will also make demands on post-compulsory education and training – as the Government recognised in the remit of the Learning and Skills Council and in successive White Papers.
27. The DfES-supported Wider Benefits of Learning Research Centre has produced a series of findings on the positive benefits of learning on health – securing prolonged active and independent life, shorter periods of morbidity; increased likelihood of giving up smoking; and inhibiting the onset of Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. It also shows that adult learners are more active in civic life. NIACE's own research demonstrates the role played by adult education provision in positive mental health strategies. For anyone outside work, but perhaps especially for those looking forward to two or three decades beyond waged work, learning offers the double benefit of stimulus to new activities combined with reducing the call on other hard-pressed health and social services.
28. The Government has recognised the importance of inter-generational learning in its *Every Child Matters* strategy. Family learning, like education

for active ageing, offers a virtuous circle, where increasing the skills and confidence of adults has a positive effect on performance at school.

29. The widespread international interest in learning communities and learning regions also points to the importance of the cultural context in which people work and live. Multi-national firms choose sites, in part at least, because of the quality of life employees can enjoy outside work. As science and innovation parks demonstrate there can be a multiplier effect where innovative firms co-locate. The same effects are seen when agencies of all sorts commit themselves to learning – as Donald Hirsch's work for OECD on learning cities suggested.
30. The benefits secured by investment in community learning go hand in hand with targeted vocational education for waged work. In a design- rich global marketplace, where creativity and innovation are at a premium, it will not be a sufficient strategy only to prepare workers for today's and yesterday's jobs – and since no one can be sure where and how new economies will develop, a commitment to strengthening the skill of learning, whatever the content, must be a bedrock of a future industrial strategy.
31. We are far from realising that approach currently, and the Government will need to arrive at a new settlement for adult learning as a first step to achieving it.

QUESTION 1A

Do you consider the current skills profile of the UK to be adequate? Please give details of why/why not

In considering the future skill needs of the UK economy, the Leitch Review will have to assess how best to overcome decades of underinvestment in skills; a culture of rationing access to skills by employers and by governments and also the indifference of many employers and individuals in the population towards the acquisition of additional or higher level skills. Put at its simplest, the UK has consistently invested less of its GDP in skills than its counterparts in many EU, OECD and Anglophone countries (see illustration in Table 1).

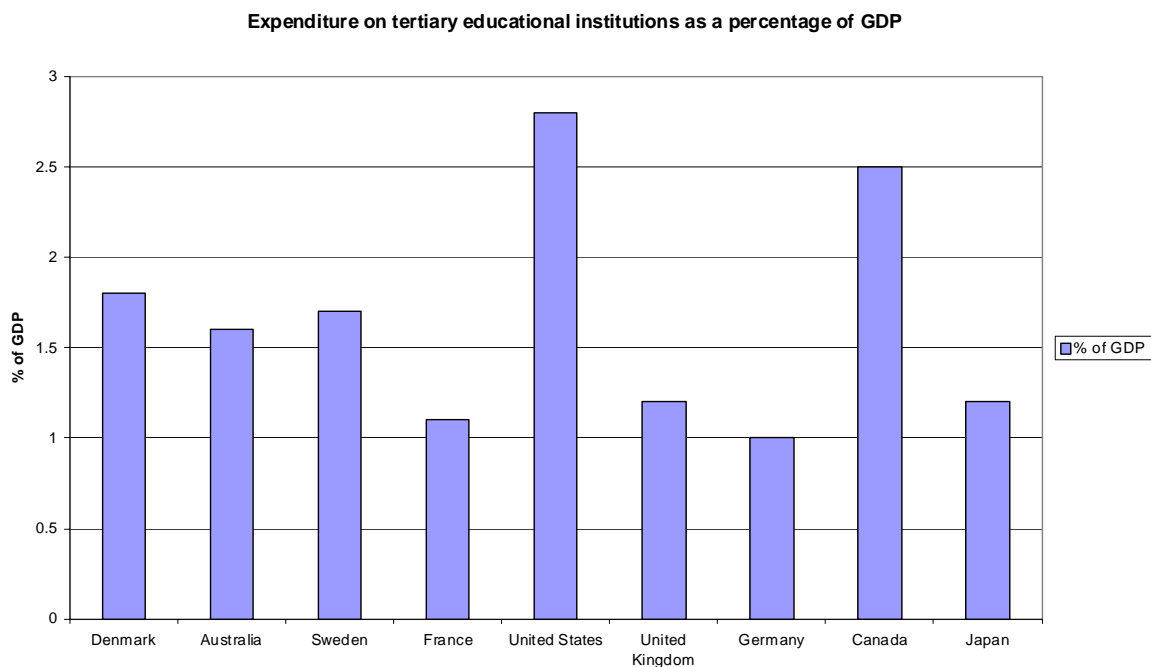


Table 1: Percentage of GDP spent from public and private sources on tertiary education in selected countries OECD countries. Derived from OECD "Education at a Glance 2004"

A second feature that the Review must address is the changing population profile of the UK. Society as a whole is getting older and the proportion the absolute and proportional total formed by older people is rising steadily (see Table 2) although for the next four years there is a temporary demographic blip of younger people completing their compulsory education.

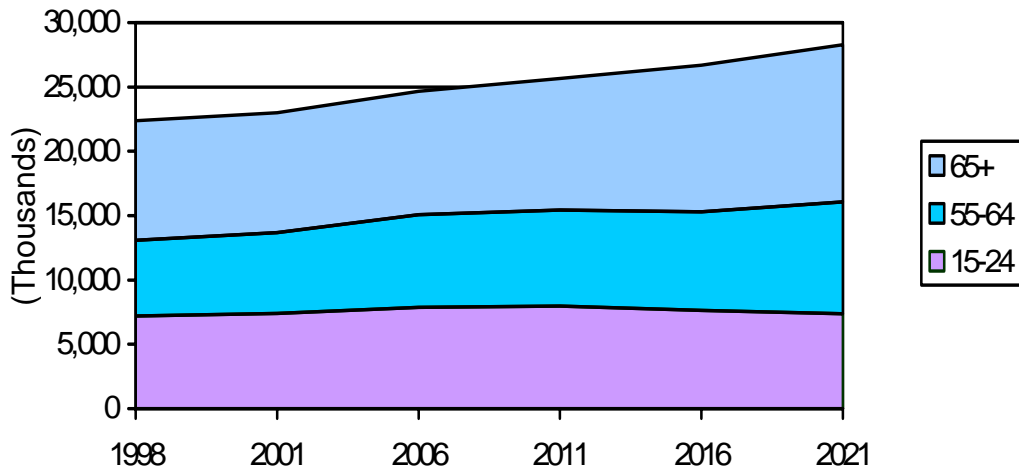


Table 2: UK Population changes 1998-2021 by age cohort. Derived from Office of National Statistics, 2001

The changes in the UK’s demographic profile mean that only one in three new or replacement jobs over the next ten years can be filled by first-time entrants to the labour market. There are simply not enough children. This means that employers will need to attract adults to jobs – and these will either be older people delaying full retirement from the labour market, women (particularly from certain minority ethnic communities); by people moving from welfare benefits into work and by migrants. But if the UK is to meet the Department of Work and Pensions’ goal of an employment rate of 80%, there is a real challenge ahead to ensure that the adult population has the right skills for the jobs that will be replaced or created. In general, older people are not as highly skilled as younger people. (see table 3).

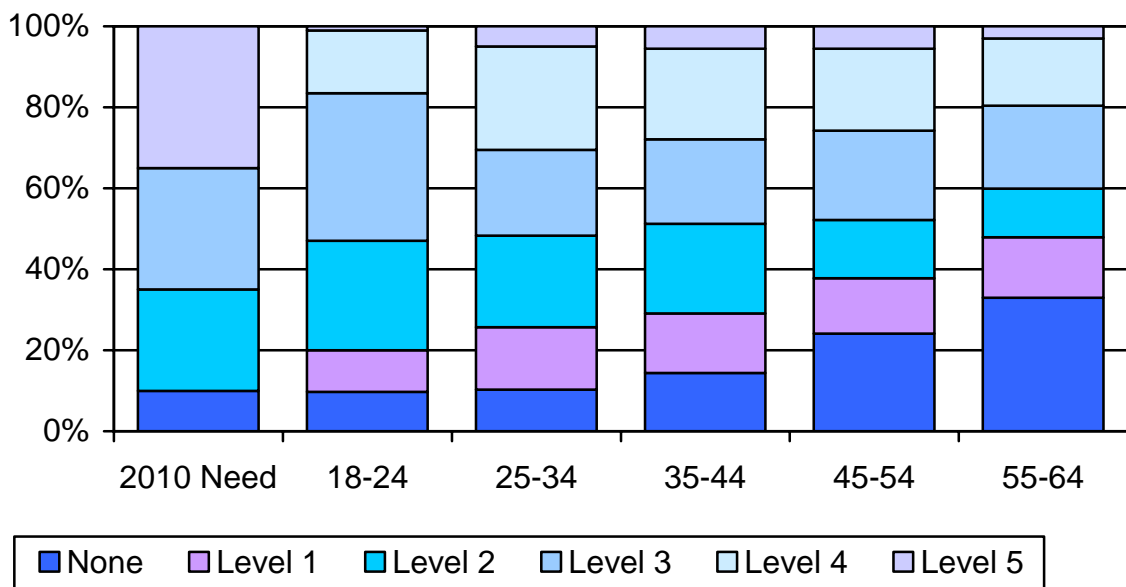


Table 3: Distribution of qualifications within different age cohorts by level. Derived from XXXXX

Furthermore, the participation of adults in publicly funded provision declines steadily beyond the age of 40 (see the illustration in Table 4). This leads NIACE to recommend that the allocation of funding between initial and recurrent education or training should be examined by the Review if the UK’s labour needs are to be met. It is of course necessary to better prepare new entrants to the labour force and

reap the rewards in future decades – but it is not sufficient. The Review must consider how to develop today’s workforce as well as tomorrow’s. This is important for reasons of economic necessity but with also generate quantifiable social benefits in other policy territories such as crime reduction and health.

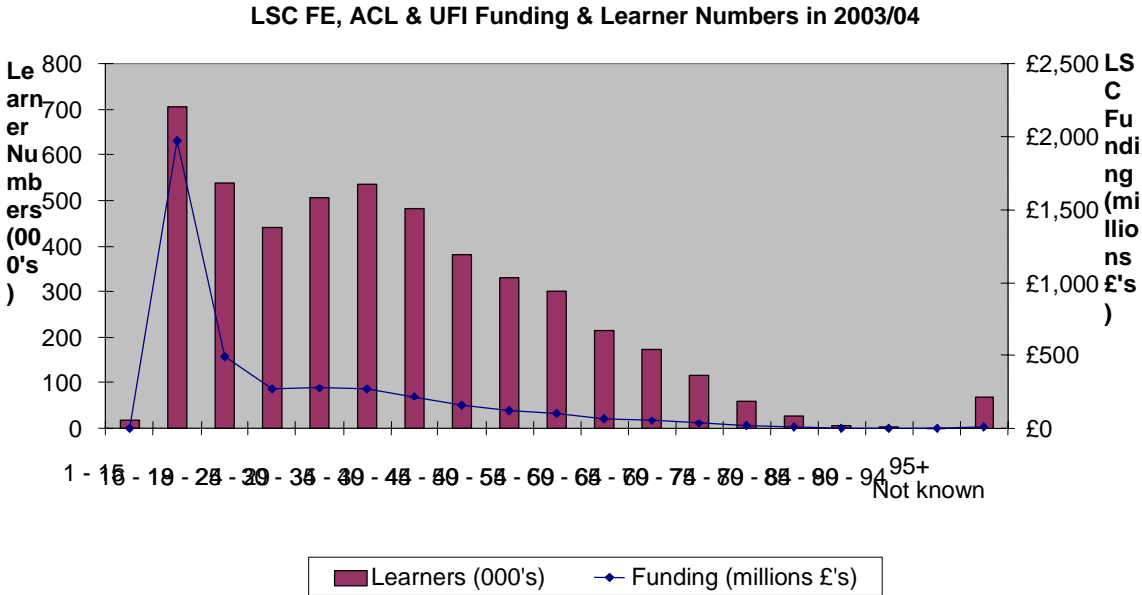


Table 4: Learner numbers for Learning and Skills Council FE, adult and community learning and Ufi provision by age cohort (2003/04)

As a member of the national Skills Alliance delivery partnership, NIACE fully endorses the Government view that economic productivity and competitiveness must go hand in hand with greater social justice and cohesion. We also support the view that employment is the most effective anti-poverty strategy.

Leading on from this, we believe that any assessment of the adequacy of the UK skills profile must follow from a clear articulation of the purposes for which skills are developed. Whilst their contribution to improved national productivity is paramount, it is important to recognise that skills are acquired and used in contexts beyond the workplace and for purposes besides the narrowly economic (promoting citizenship, culture and family and also contesting disadvantage for example). In addition, skills are not the sole determinant of national competitive advantage. There are also social capital factors including such things as social cohesion, networks of trust, economic stability and the fiscal climate for investment plus creative and cultural factors including attitudes towards research, risk and innovation.

As the tables above illustrate, most of the jobs of tomorrow cannot not be filled by young labour market entrants so skills training will need to anticipate people who will be more diverse in terms of background and experience - at whatever level but who are less likely to be as well qualified as younger people. The skills they need to have and the ways in which these are acquired are likely to be similarly diverse.

In assessing the skills profile, the Review team will need to consider the sort of society to which we aspire as well as to the sort of economy upon which it will be built. This implies a need to consider the sort of work-life balance expected in a modern Britain, parts of which have a ‘long-hours’ culture. It will need also to look

at changing career patterns (for example numbers of job changes in an average working lifetime, part-time and freelance working, home working, delayed retirement). The national skills profile that is required depends upon the overarching policy priorities of the government. In the words of the former US Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, “we can affirm that our life’s worth isn’t synonymous with our net worth [and] that the quality of our society is different from our gross national product”.

A review of skills in the UK should acknowledge that what is good for consumers, producers and investors may not be so good for the same people in their roles as parents, spouses and citizens. Skills are necessary and valuable for both economic and non-economic reasons.

In our analysis, the current skills profile is inadequate to meet the needs and expectations of both UK society and the UK economy now and in the future. Indeed, it is unlikely that there will ever be a time when we sit back, comfortable in the knowledge that the UK has achieved an “adequate” skills profile since this is not measured against a fixed yardstick. The standard is constantly rising as a result of technological change and judgements about adequacy will often be made in relative rather than absolute terms – considered against the position of other national economies and the well being of other societies whether within the EU or globally. There will always be room for improvement.

The reasons why the UK skills profile gives cause for concern are many and complex but NIACE draws the attention of the review team to the following four points:

1: The skills profile is inequitable

Once it is accepted that the national interest is not confined to matters of competitiveness and productivity but may legitimately include social cohesion and stability, the removal of barriers to opportunity and the welfare of the whole nation (including its most vulnerable groups and regions) and not only those in the waged labour market, then it is apparent that the inequitable distribution of skills throughout the population fails to work to the common good. This is particularly the case when it comes to the age distribution of the beneficiaries of public investment in skills. Although the population is ageing, the public purse favours, for historical reasons, people in the first quarter of their lifespan (see the Learning and Skills Act 2000, sections 2 and 3, 31 and 32).

The government cannot rely on market forces to ensure that opportunities to acquire skills are available across the whole UK. Certain parts of the country have particular needs for regeneration as a result of industrial change whilst a skills profile that allows isolated communities to maintain a self-sustaining local economy may require a different economic justification than those of a more prosperous region. Any progressive Government will accept a duty to promote social inclusion and opportunity across the whole UK through skills policies.

2: The supply of skills is inflexible

The supply side of the skills profile needs to be improved so that it can respond more rapidly to new needs. Technological change and markets are not always predictable and skill needs are likely to require continual fine-tuning. In general, the

publicly funded system remains less flexible than it needs to be – with lengthy lead times, over-rigid study modes and a lack of trust in providers that is expressed in a bureaucratic audit-driven culture which discourages innovation. Further evidence of inflexibility in supply is illustrated by the difficulties faced by migrants in gaining recognition of qualifications obtained overseas.

3. Insufficient attention has been paid to stimulating demand both from individual and employers

Too many UK employers are locked into a low-skill, low productivity, low wage equilibrium. Too many UK adults have been taught at school “if at first you don’t succeed, you don’t succeed”. Overall there is a widespread poverty of aspiration. In such conditions, Government and others need to support clear and consistent long-term programmes to change the prevailing culture. In this respect, a distinction needs to be made between the power of universal entitlements, which can help overcome the feeling (both corporate and individual) that “acquiring extra skills isn’t for the likes of us” and over-generous levels of public subsidy or incentives (whether shopping vouchers or I-pods for teenagers or free workforce training for large employers). These suggest to beneficiaries either that learning has no intrinsic value of its own (‘they can’t even give it away’) or there is so much funding available that their own investment is unnecessary. A new settlement between individuals, employers and the state needs to be negotiated. NIACE draws the Review’s attention to the important role of promotional campaigns in the mass media (especially broadcasting) have had in promoting learning – from campaigns such as *On the Move* in the 1970s through to today’s *Gremlins* and encompassing celebrations of education and training such as the UK’s annual Adult Learners’ Week.

4. Post-compulsory education and training is based on a distorted scale that over-values certain competences, behaviours and knowledge while under-valuing others

In her 1997 report to the Further Education Funding Council for England, Baroness Helena Kennedy QC noted that ‘learning for work and learning for life are inseparable’. This message has been echoed since in policy rhetoric but distorted by the actions of agencies charged with the allocation of public funds. Such bodies as the Learning and Skills Council in England, too often seem to value only that learning intended to lead to certain qualifications which count towards their public service agreement targets. In one sense this is responsible stewardship of public funds but, as was recognised during the recent election campaign (in the case of GP appointment scheduling), well-meant targets can be applied in ways that lead to perverse outcomes. In the case of skills, an over-emphasis on qualifications rather than learning means that the proxy mutates into the goal.

Nowhere is this distortion more apparent than in the range and volume of opportunities offered to older people. This group plays a disproportionate role in maintaining the fabric of civil society – as volunteers and unpaid carers whose work has economic value even though not part of the waged economy. The opportunities that this group has of updating and refreshing their skill levels rather than allowing them to become degraded and obsolete will be a crucial test of the inclusiveness of any recommendations proposed by the Review.

QUESTION 1B

What impact does the current skills profile have and what do you consider to be the relative importance of the issues that you have identified?

For generations, the UK has neglected the potential of many people within both its actual and potential labour force and in particular the older workforce and those disaffected with their initial education. Such neglect impacts on economic performance and also upon social mobility. Of the issues identified in (1a) above, NIACE observes:

- That demographic trends form the strongest imperative for a review of how and to whom opportunities for skills development are promoted. Regardless of a government's political persuasion, the facts of an ageing population and of a society attractive to economic migrants are indisputable. In the case of older people some holistic thinking is essential – the boundaries between learning for paid employment, unwaged contributions to civil society and for personal development and pleasure are malleable (something not recognised in the Government's Skills Strategy). Training older people for caring responsibilities undertaken voluntarily brings quantifiable social benefits that far outweigh the costs – and were such caring responsibilities to migrate to the waged economy the potential costs to the public purse would be considerable.
- Of lesser importance, but still significant is the need to ensure replacement of workers retiring from craft and technician occupations (see distinction between the bars in table 5 (below)). Although the government's target to get 50% of people aged 18-30 into higher education is understandable, a similar target (without age barriers) is needed to highlight the importance of ensuring a flow of young and mature entrants to such jobs.

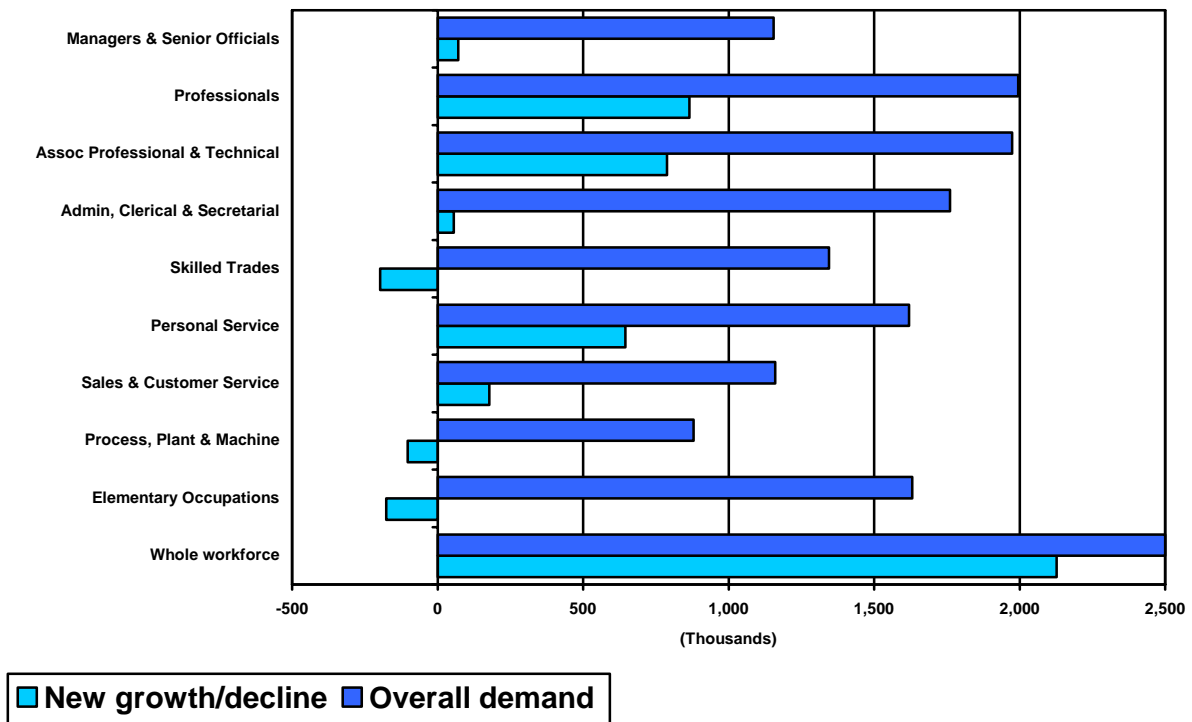


Table 5: Projected growth/decline and overall demand for jobs to 2010 by type. Derived from Projections of Occupations and Qualifications, Institute of employment research March 2001

- The knowledge of government, businesses, providers of education and training – and other stakeholders about skill needs is often imperfect or incomplete. In particular the elision between qualification levels (easy to measure) and skill levels (often ‘soft’ as well as ‘hard’) may distort understanding. Some apparent gains are simply the result of certificating levels of skills already present rather than raising them.
- The Review team should, we believe, acknowledge that the competence threshold of many jobs is rising – not least in respect of IT skills in generic office applications. Employers routinely expect graduates for jobs where, in the past they would not have. This is not the result of ‘qualification inflation’; many jobs (for example nursing) are becoming increasingly highly skilled.
- The skills that individual enterprises (and the people in them) need to survive and thrive are not always the same as the longer-term needs of the economy and society as a whole. A rational decision about training for a company or worker may not be rational for the nation. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In particular the state should take responsibility for overcoming market failure in science education and in languages.
- The state should also ensure that there are ladders of opportunity to enable people to achieve social mobility through what Ivan Lewis has described as “the dignity of self-improvement” – individually-motivated career and employment development to parallel employer-directed training and development. In considering how such ladders might be provided, the Review may wish to consider

how moves towards a more unified system of tertiary education (such as that emerging in Scotland and more advanced in New Zealand and Canada) can reduce barriers to progression.

QUESTION 2A

What do you consider to be the primary drivers changing the skills needed in the UK economy over the next 15 years?

NIACE believes that the following factors will have a large effect on the demand for skills in the UK, some may be seen as positives, others neutrally and some as less desirable.

- **Demography**

Although there will be a bulge in the number of 16-19 year olds for the next three years, there is a longer-term trend towards an ageing population. The majority of the new and replacement jobs in the next 10 years will not be filled by first-time entrants to the labour market but by older people delaying their full retirement (whether through choice or necessity), by people coming off welfare benefits, by women returning to the labour market and by inward migration. Adults will need to update and extend their skills on a recurrent basis rather than relying on their initial education and training seeing them through. This is likely to require a shift in public spending away from “front-loading” formal education and training into the first quarter of the lifespan.

- **Pensions**

If adults are to take greater responsibility for contributing to their retirement pension, there is a significant question whether they can also be persuaded to invest in their own education and training in ways that current government policies anticipate. There is the possibility of a market failure in individual demand for training.

- **Technology**

Whilst information and communication technologies are uniquely ‘permeative’ into all areas of life, other technological developments in biosciences are likely to create new specialisms and new economic opportunities which may not be predictable.

- **Global competition**

The UK’s partners and competitors will not be standing still in the period ahead and there is an important role for international benchmarking (for example in levels of literacy through the population). At present the social and economic models to be followed by the European Union are being contested but whatever the framework, the UK government is expected to argue for policies which encourage flexibility, enterprise, innovation and creativity. The UK should seek to regain its position as the primary focus for inward investment into Europe. London particularly will wish to at least maintain its relative position in global financial markets and, to do so, will expect high levels of economic stability and social cohesion. In the arena of higher education certain institutions operate in a global market and new forms of higher education (analogous to products) are being developed by Phoenix University in the USA and Massey University in Australia.

- **Sustainable development and environmental stewardship**

An increased recognition of the significance of these factors will impact on the skill sets expected in a range of occupations.

QUESTION 2B

What do you expect the impact of these pressures to be on the types of skills that will be required?

There is a consensus among forecasters that the shape of the labour market is changing. Whilst the trend towards more jobs at professional and associate professional is well-documented, less emphasis has been given to an equally pressing concern to replace large numbers of jobs in sectors that are shrinking – but shrinking from a large base. If it is to avoid skill shortages, the UK still needs to educate and train a high volume of people at craft and technician level as well as at graduate level.

Alternatively (or more probably in parallel) the UK should establish more visible and accessible mechanisms to recognise qualifications obtained elsewhere in the world.

As well as technical competences, many employers recognise the importance of skills of communication and personal effectiveness and, above all, the centrality of **learning to learn** as the fundamental meta-skill in an economy and society in which communications are increasingly instant and technological change rapid. This skill can be learned in the workplace as well as in colleges and training centres but cannot reliably be acquired by the traditional process of “sitting next to Nelly”. In this respect, we draw the review team’s attention to initiatives such as the Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP) run by the Ford motor company and its unions. This well-established scheme which is in addition to the company’s training operation offers financial support to employees wishing to learn non-job related subjects in their own time. The reason why a hard-headed manufacturer in a highly competitive global business allows its workforce to learn languages and musical instruments (for example) is because the company recognises that learning is a meta-skill and that learning “leaks”. Just as a salesperson who attends a course in ‘dealing with difficult customers’ can transfer the skills learned to their domestic life, so too can a production line worker transfer the skills of critical reflection and problem solving learned in a local history course into their work environment.

As is apparent from our response to question 1a, NIACE argues for a broad definition of valuable skills. This leads us to argue that the Review might usefully consider whether there might be some skills besides current “basic skills” (literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages and IT) that are of such value to society that they should be a resource priority regardless of their immediate measurable value?

As strong case might be made for modern foreign languages (with Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish likely to be of greater value in selling UK goods and services to emerging markets than the more traditional French and German). Other cases might be made, for example, for developing skills in civic literacy, parenting,

entrepreneurship or financial literacy. Whilst these may appear fanciful, it is important to note that a concept such as 'media literacy' is recognised in law (the Broadcasting Act) with a regulatory body (OFCOM) having a statutory duty to promote the concept.

QUESTION 3

If education and training continues on its current course in the UK, are these future requirements for skills likely to be met? Please explain why/ why not and give details of the likely economic and social implications.

NIACE believes that the current mix of market forces and state intervention is not adequate to deliver the range, mix and volume of skills required at a satisfactory rate, given the pace of change. The central reasons for this are:

Overall investment in skills, from private and public sources is inadequate

As stated on page (1), compared with many other OECD, EU and Anglophone countries, total UK investment in tertiary education and skills from both private and public sources is too low. A primary policy goal should be to increase employer and individual contributions to learning to match increases in public spending.

Public investment in skills and learning has been dominated, for generations, by initial schooling and by higher education.

The skills and knowledge associated with and valued by these forms of learning have overshadowed other skills learning and knowledge – whether acquired in further education, in the workplace or in the community. Vocational learning remains undervalued and under funded and, despite the analysis of the Skills Task Force and two iterations of the Skills Strategy, problems remain. Matters have not been helped either by the Government's response to the Tomlinson proposals (and equally by the education sector's failure to win the Tomlinson argument in the media and in wider society) or by an uncritical attitude towards proposals to expand school sixth forms, when the incipient shrinkage in the 16-18 cohort after 2009 risks widespread and wasteful surplus capacity at a time when colleges will continue to face demand pressures.

ESF risks

In addition the Review will wish to call for evidence about how the UK Government proposes to cope with the consequences of the ending of the European Social Fund programmes in their present form after 2006. It is estimated that this could jeopardise some 280,000 training places across the UK and destabilise many providers, not least those in the voluntary and community sector. This is on top of budget cuts to adult learning in 2005-2006 which may result in more than 200,000 places in England alone. The picture for 2006-2007 is likely to be even worse.

Private investment is too narrowly focussed

Private investment in learning – whether from individuals or employers organisations is, understandably, focussed on those skills and those individuals which are most likely to give the best returns on investment. What make sense for an individual employer or person cannot be assumed to deliver what is best for society. Government and others such as Sector Skills Councils, professional

associations and Regional Development Agencies need to have a stronger influence in shaping and planning supply and in stimulating demand. NIACE believes that part of the way forward will include the development of stricter “licence to practice” arrangements that encourage investment in education and training. There is good evidence from both the construction and care sectors that this enhances business value rather than inhibiting growth.

A lifelong learning perspective is not embedded in education and skills policy

The dominant model of publicly-funded learning is one where, for most people, public funding for education and training is front-loaded into the first quarter of the lifespan with formal opportunities for learning beyond a period of initial education limited to smaller proportions of the population as age rises. Although this may have been an adequate arrangement for the first half of the 20th century, it appears to be increasingly unsatisfactory for the 21st century. Nowadays the UK can no longer afford the consequences of not investing in significant proportions of the population after the age of 16, 19 or even 21. In addition, technological change and mounting pressure on older adults to defer full retirement from the waged labour market mean that a central challenge will be to ensure mature workers are able to refresh and extend the currency of their skills. This requires a shift to a lifelong learning perspective in which recurrent training and education (which will, almost invariably, be part-time and of short duration) are seen as the norm.

The pace of change is insufficiently urgent

The pace of change in publicly funded education and training is too slow compared to change in industry. Many cutting-edge organisations cannot predict the skill sets they will need in three years time with any precision and will require training that is devised and delivered in a rapid turnaround time. The time taken to devise curricula and accreditation arrangements and then put learners through one or two year courses in colleges and universities is increasingly unsatisfactory – especially if they must negotiate the planning agendas of such bodies as the LSC or RDAs. E learning can overcome some problems here but to succeed it requires confident and motivated learners – and many adults need support to become ready to learn.

QUESTION 4

What changes in the population’s skills would have the greatest effect on improving the UK’s productivity in 2020?

NIACE proposes five changes that we believe could help to transform UK productivity within a ten-year period. They are:

1. A ‘light-touch’ regulatory framework. Although out of step with the voluntarist (now ‘post-voluntarist’) approach of governments over the last more than 25 years, NIACE continues to see merit in the introduction of a requirement that all employers should be obliged to establish Workplace Learning Committees – as proposed by the 1997 NAGCELL report *‘Learning for the Twenty-First Century’*. Such a duty should be balanced by tax incentives for employers to invest in learning.

2. A more inclusive approach to re-skilling that no longer privileges new young entrants from full-time education to the labour market but which considers the whole adult population (not simply those in the waged economy), including for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities who could, with sufficient support as well as training, hold down productive jobs; for labour market returners; for new migrants to the UK and for mature workers.
3. An entitlement to Paid Educational Leave. NIACE has long championed the case for introducing statutory Paid Educational Leave made by David Miliband in his paper *'Learning by right: an entitlement to paid education and training'* (1990, London, Institute for Public Policy Research) and by the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning in *'Learning for the Twenty-first century'* (1997, London, NAGCELL).
4. The re-introduction of Individual Learning Accounts in England. Although the original ILA scheme was withdrawn in England, it has been successfully reintroduced in Wales and Scotland and similar initiatives continue in the Armed Forces and within the NHS.
5. Equitable treatment for part-time students in both further and higher education and progress towards 'mode neutral' funding which ceases to privilege of full-time study in terms of access to financial support.

QUESTION 5

Is it necessary and possible to stimulate demand from individuals for improving their own skills? Please give details.

The National Institute's own research and development work into adult participation in learning convinces us that it is both possible and necessary to stimulate individual demand for learning that will improve skill levels. Although governments and employers establish the framework within which productivity gains may be realised, it is individuals' actions in factories, offices, shops and elsewhere that add value to manufacturing or service occupations. If employees do not know enough nor care enough to make a difference then the plans of government and employers will fail. For adult learners, motivation is a central part of any curriculum and helps to raise aspirations and nurture confidence – linked to this, we also believe that people need to be given opportunities to practice the skills they acquire to that they are reinforced.

Overall, NIACE suggests that any post-compulsory system should be designed from **the start** to meet the needs of part-time learners and part-time earners. If this is the case they will also suit full-time students/trainees and full-time workers. Most adults learn episodically and any system needs to play into adults' rhythms of life and work rather than being discrete and bolt-on

We would like to draw the attention of the Review to the following highly successful illustrations of how this can be done and would be happy to supply further information on request:

1. Employee Development Programmes (such as the Employee Development and Assistance Programme that has been run by the Ford Motor Company for more than a decade. This offers all employees access to opportunities for 'life wide' learning to supplement company training and managed as a partnership between the company and its recognised unions).
2. The success of projects supported by the Union Learning Fund and Union Learning Representatives in switching workers on to learning. The proposed Union Academy has the potential to build on these foundations.
3. Adult Learners' Week, co-ordinated since its inception in 1992 by NIACE and now copied in more than 50 countries worldwide.
4. The national information and advice helpline run by Ufl/learndirect which grew out of the Adult Learners' Week helpline and which handles some 5 million calls per year.
5. Broadcasting campaigns that have considerable reach and which successfully destigmatise concerns about engaging with learning (for example the BBC '*Computers don't bite*' and '*Second Chance*' campaigns))

To these examples might be added the potential that Individual Learning Accounts have demonstrated in the NHS as well as in Scotland and Wales. It is important to acknowledge that although individually-driven learning of all kinds is important in its own right – but it can also be a derived demand as people acquire skills in order to maintain or improve their position in the labour market – and even subjects such as floristry and cake decoration have an economic value.

Finally, NIACE believes that there is insufficient evidence available of the extent and nature of decision-making processes concerned with individuals' investment in learning and skills outside higher education– whether or not this is linked to publicly subsidised provision. The Review might usefully investigate this in more depth whilst also tracking the Government's review of adult information, advice and guidance which is due to begin in September 2005. A further area of enquiry might be the potential of statutory paid educational leave (see response to question 4 above) to stimulate demand.

QUESTION 6

Is it necessary and possible to stimulate demand from employers for skill improvements in the country/their workforce? Please give details.

Overall NIACE agrees that it is both necessary and possible to stimulate employer demand but questions whether the balance of carrots and sticks followed adopted over the past 25 years has been as effective as it should have been.

While a voluntarist and post-voluntarist approach may work in some cases, it is a single-lever approach. We believe that Government should recognise that that

there is a wide spectrum of employer behaviours. Different mixes of incentives and sanctions may be needed between sectors (with some and regional flexibility too).

Our discussions suggest that a number of Sector Skills Council would welcome a light touch regulatory approach based on a 'licence to practice' as a means of gaining reach – especially among large numbers of small firms operating in low skills: low pay equilibria. Without this, or a similar initiative, it is possible that large numbers of employers and larger numbers of employees will simply remain outside the reach of voluntary agreements.

Government has a responsibility not simply to respond to voices within society but also to offer leadership. In this respect, it should consider establishing a modest entitlement to learn since only in this way can workers in all firms be reached.

NIACE's response to question 5 noted an evidence gap in respect of individual investment in learning and skills. A similar albeit smaller gap exists also in the case of employer investment. Although an employer contribution in the order of £23.5 billion per year is frequently cited we believe that this figure should be subjected to critical review. The largest single element within the figure given is the notional opportunity cost of releasing staff from their normal duties so that they are able to undertake training. The phenomenon of employers paying for staff to learn in their own time is insufficiently researched. In addition, even if the figures cited are accurate, it is still the case that the UK's total national spend on skills from all sources is lower than that of many other OECD nations.

In some sense the Government has been perceived as giving mixed messages about skills to employers. In some documents published by the Treasury and by the Department for Trade and Industry, skills are seen as a distinctive contributor, in their own right, to national productivity. In the Cabinet Office's document on workforce development however, skills are seen primarily as a derived demand.

QUESTION 7A

How do you think that the UK's future skill needs can be best met? In particular, through the skills provided by (i) schools (ii) colleges (iii) universities (iv) training providers and (v) employers?

NIACE believes that a massive increase in investment in education and training from both private and public sources will be required if the UK's future skill needs are to be met.

i) Schools

Whilst the focus of compulsory education should be upon the broad development of children rather than preparing them for the labour market, there is a strong case that government policy should do more to value vocational pathways as well as academic ones.

With the development of a policy focus on the 14-19 phase of education, there is a need for sustained investment in careers education to help all young people and their parents make informed choices at an earlier age than in the past about their entry into the labour market. An enhanced place for careers education within the national curriculum and the re-establishment of a freestanding careers service within Childrens' Trusts merits further consideration. In a similar vein, a review of the place of meaningful work experience placements within the school curriculum is worth recommending.

ii) Colleges

Higher levels of resource and greater autonomy for the college sector would represent a long-term investment in the public system. Unlike private training providers whose interest ends when an activity is no longer profitable, colleges are civic institutions, firmly embedded within the communities they serve. Treating them simply as contractors for the delivery of education and training offers undervalues their past history and future potential. The college sector is perhaps the most flexible and versatile part of the public education system, offering cost-effective provision at multiple levels (from basic literacy and numeracy through to degrees) to diverse student groups (from children to retired people).

iii) Universities

Higher education institutions will continue to have a critical role in meeting skill needs – particularly in areas of science and technology that are of national strategic significance and which cannot be met by simply allowing the operation of market forces. As the UK has moved towards a mass system of higher education, the first half of this decade has seen Government focussing attention upon the achievement of a 50% participation rate in higher education for people under the age of 30. The time is now right to drop the age-specific focus and encourage more older entrants to HE for the demographic reasons outlined in responses to earlier questions. Since many older learners will wish to study part-time, the Review should address the inequalities that remain in the treatment of such students (who comprise more than 40% of all home undergraduates) in comparison to privileged full-time students.

iv) Training Providers

It is important to recognise that not all training providers are private businesses – the sector also includes not-for-profit voluntary and community sector associations and certain professional associations. The Review will also wish to distinguish between training providers supplying services to employers or individuals (essentially a private transaction – although significant in terms of volume) and training providers commissioned from public funds. While training providers have an important role to play in delivering flexible opportunities tailored to the needs of their customers, public spending on such provision does not give the same level of lasting social benefit as would be obtained by routing the funding through a college of further education or a local authority adult education service.

v) Employers

Employers are at the heart of the skills agenda. It is a necessary precondition for a more highly skilled country, that individuals and employers should want to improve their performance. Many employers are ready to support the extension of skills among their workforce by providing education and training themselves or securing its provision from public and private suppliers. NIACE urges the Review to consider recommending a new legislative framework which includes statutory workplace

learning committees, entitlements for all workers, fiscal incentives that encourage employers to train and further 'licence to practice' arrangements to stimulate demand.

QUESTION 7B

Do you think that organisations providing education and training should respond to the needs of the labour market? Please explain and give details of how this could be facilitated.

NIACE agrees that the needs of the labour market should figure large on the agendas of providers of post-compulsory education and training – but these needs must be balanced by other social needs for opportunity and access and also by a need to support individuals' personal development. We urge the Review to re-affirm the vision of lifelong learning set out by David Blunkett in the foreword to *The Learning Age* green paper in the Government's first term:

“As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps us fulfil our potential and opens doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as for the equality of opportunity it brings.”

As has been noted elsewhere, the “needs” of the labour market may not always be perfectly understood and articulated. Not all labour market information is useful – it may be partial or dated and be highly contested and contestable. In addition there is an inherent problem between meeting existing needs and interpreting emerging need. Employers do not have a monopoly of wisdom in this field – and neither do academics nor trade unions.

If organisations providing education and training are to be exhorted to become more flexible and innovative in their approach to meeting labour market need, it follows that they need to be freed-up from the bureaucracy and targets which squeeze out space for creative development work and reduce the provider to the status of a delivery contractor rather than a partner. One example of the inflexibility within the English system is the Learning and Skills Council's reluctance to allow local education authorities to provide work based learning. Given that local government is a major and diverse employer in every community, such reluctance is perverse. In the background papers prepared for Sir Andrew Foster's review of further education, NIACE has proposed an 80:20 funding split whereby 80% of funding is focussed on agreed national targets but the remainder allocated as a block grant for public-sector providers to meet their wider responsibilities to the needs of local businesses and communities appears through outreach, employer engagement and curriculum innovation.

QUESTION 8

What are the three things that you think would have the greatest effect on the UK's ability to provide the skills required to benefit society and the economy in 2020? Please give details and reasons for prioritising the issues identified.

In an increasingly design-rich global marketplace, where creativity and innovation are at a premium, it will not be a sufficient strategy only to prepare workers for today's and yesterday's jobs – and since no one can be sure where and how new economies will develop, a commitment to strengthening the skill of learning, whatever the content, must be a bedrock of a future industrial strategy.

We are far from realising that approach currently, and the Government will need to arrive at a new settlement for adult learning as a first step to achieving it. As we have outlined above, elements of that settlement will need to include:

- Rebalancing post-school investment between the needs of young people and adults to take account of a rapidly changing demographic structure in the UK labour force
- Developing a strategy to secure increased investment by individuals and firms, backing policy with practical measures to secure desired outcomes (including qualifying access to the level 2 entitlement to those employers matching the state's investment with their own)
- Setting a medium term date by which all workers can expect to be covered by sectoral agreements equivalent to a licence to practice through industry led initiatives, or by government imposition.

QUESTION 9

Are there any domestic or international examples of good practice that you would like to bring to the reviews attention? Please give details.

We would like to draw the attention of the Review team to interesting practice in the following countries:

Singapore

Provides an illustration of how a national economy can be transformed through a sustained commitment to investment in education and training at all levels. As part of this it is noteworthy that this commitment was demonstrated not limited to support of functional and vocational skills. In 2001, for example, the Singapore government, as part of its festival of adult learning used techniques included laughter workshops and symphony orchestras to explore co-operation, aesthetics, innovation and creativity. This was done in order to respond to a changing external economic environment and highlighted the interconnectedness of vocational and life-wide learning, demonstrating that learning, like creativity will leak.

Denmark

Denmark has a long commitment to using education and training to promote social inclusion as well as economic prosperity. The job rotation training programmes it

has developed being but one example. In addition – and along with the other Nordic Council nations, it supports relatively high levels of support for non-formal learning in ways that encourage its population to respond positively and flexibly to changing economic circumstances. In addition it has a tradition of trusting its education and training providers which demonstrates an alternative to the UK's increasingly audit-driven approach.

United States of America

The USA education and training system nurtures a pluralist culture of innovation and enterprise that, in the field of e-learning, has given rise to innovative commercial provision online (such as Phoenix University) and also public philanthropy (evidenced by the decision of MIT to work towards placing all its course materials on the web, making them accessible free of charge).

Cuba

Provides an example of how a sustained investment in basic education can transform a society and also how a relatively poor country can use education to bring about improvements in public health through investment in skills

Dubai

Provides an example of a country that bases its skills strategy around ICT and e learning in ways that start to realise the potential of making global knowledge accessible to a population wishing to raise its skill levels.

Brazil

Provides illustrations of the potential that exists for bringing together agendas for growth, productivity and citizenship through the use of mass-participation seminars. The dialogue that characterises such an approach to popular economic planning is educative for ordinary citizens, for politicians and for economists.

South Korea.

Provides a warning of the dangers of getting planning wrong. It appears that the supply of graduate-level skills appears to have run ahead of Korea's ability to utilise them. As a result, and despite an inevitable substitution effect in respect of less advanced skills, graduate unemployment has risen to levels in excess of other skill levels. This demonstrates that higher skills levels are not always an unalloyed good if supply runs ahead of the pace at which society can absorb the change and the economy adapt.

QUESTION 10

How would you like to see the Review building on the existing evidence base? Please give details.

There has been no shortage of analysis about skills policy in recent years and it is probably that the Review team will, as a matter of course, wish to revisit the following:

- *'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work'* (Cm 6483)(2005) TSO.
- *'21st Century Skills – Realising our Potential'* (Cm 5810) (2003) TSO.

- *'In demand: adult skills in the 21st century'* (A performance and innovation unit report)(December 2001) Cabinet Office.
- *Skills for all Proposals for a National Skills Agenda'* (Final report of the National Skills Task Force). (2000) Department for Education and Employment. (also earlier reports)
- *'The Learning Age – a renaissance for a new Britain'* (Cm 3790) 1998.
- *'Learning for the Twenty-First Century'* (First report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (1997).
- *'Learning Works'* (the Kennedy committee report) (1997) Further Education Funding Council.

There are however, other pieces of evidence which may be less familiar to the team and NIACE draws the team's attention to the body of academic research assembled the Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning. This centre, based at the University of London Institute of Education, was established by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 1999 to investigate the full range of benefits that learning brings both to the individual learner and society as a whole. It aims to produce and apply models for measuring and analysing the contribution that learning makes to wide ranging social and private goals. In addition it works to devise and apply improved methods for measuring the value of various forms of learning, such as community-based adult learning, where there may be fewer outcomes such as formal qualifications. The Review team may find the following of particular interest:

- Brassett-Grundy, A.; Bynner J.; Hammond, C.; Preston J.; and Schuller, T. *The Benefits of Learning* (2004) London: Routledge.
- Report No. 11 (*'Adult Education and Attitude Change'* by Preston, J. and Feinstein, L. (2004). |(downloadable from website. <http://www.learningbenefits.net/>).

Finally, NIACE draws attention to its own research, undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Labour Market Studies at the University of Leicester:

- Aldridge. F. and Tuckett, A. *Business as usual? The NIACE survey on adult participation in learning* (2004), Leicester: NIACE.
- Felstead, A., Fuller, A., Unwin, L., Ashton, D, Butler, P and Lee, T. (2004) *Better learning, better performance: Evidence from the 2004 Learning at Work Survey*, (2004) Leicester: NIACE.

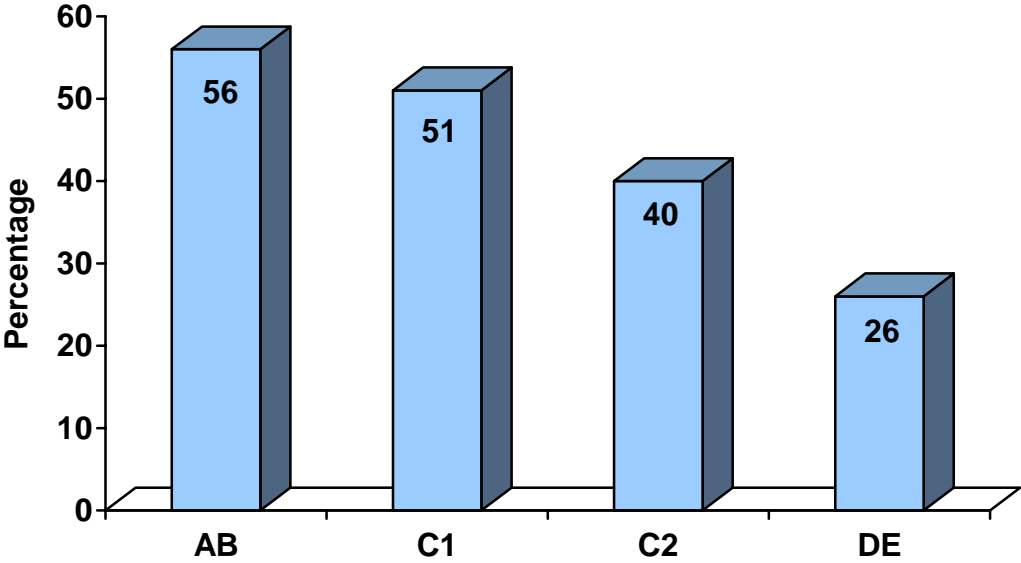
Concluding remarks

NIACE is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this review and is ready to meet with members of the Review team and supply further information about any of all of the matters covered in this paper. Please contact the Director in the first instance (alan.tuckett@niace.org.uk) .

Appendix: Data from NIACE Research

Appendix A: Current/recent participation in adult learning, by social class

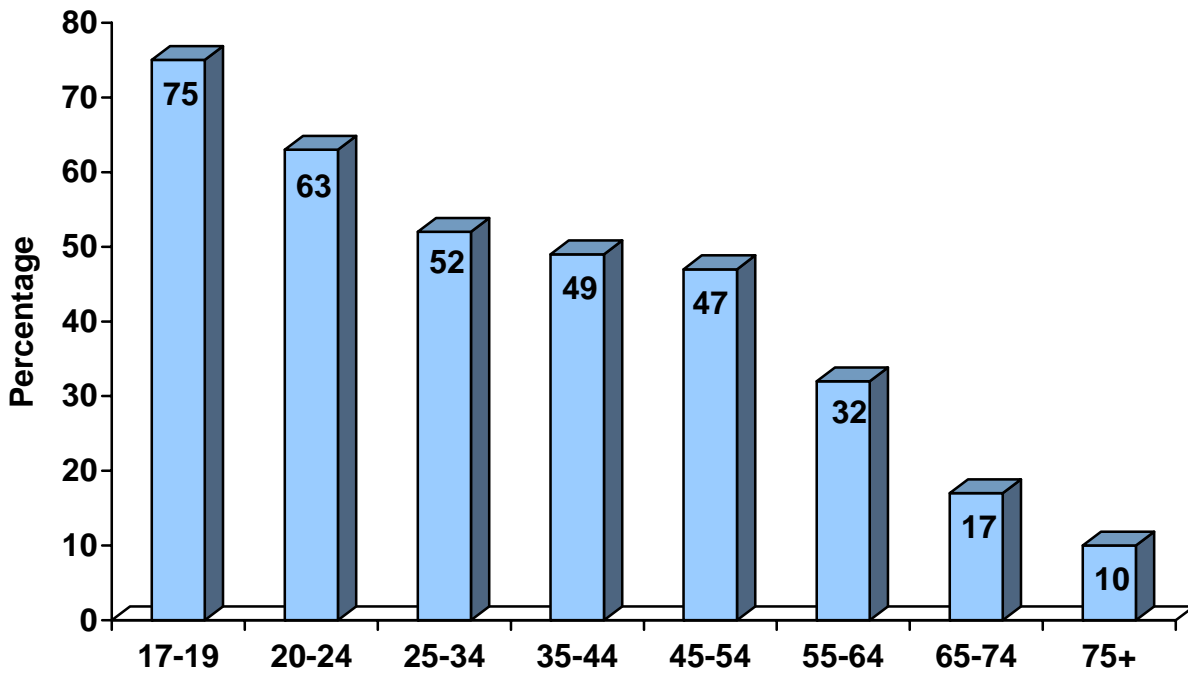
The data for this graph is taken from page 7 of *'Better news this time? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2005'*, by Fiona Aldridge and Alan Tuckett. The survey was undertaken for NIACE by RSGB, using a weighted sample of 5,053 adults aged 17 and over in the UK, across the period 16th February – 6th March 2005.



Source: *'Better news this time? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning'* (NIACE 2005)

Appendix B: Current/recent participation by age

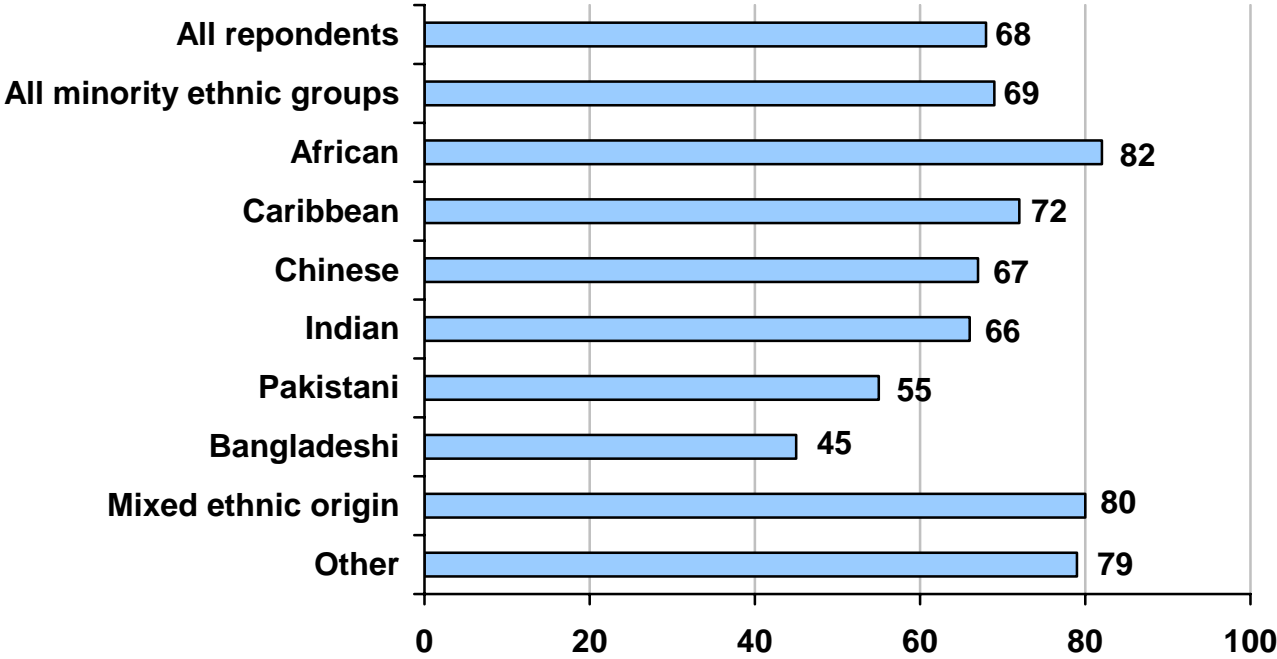
This figure is taken from page 11 of *'Better news this time? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2005'*, by Fiona Aldridge and Alan Tuckett. The survey was undertaken for NIACE by RSGB, using a weighted sample of 5,053 adults aged 17 and over in the UK, across the period 16th February – 6th March 2005.



Source: *'Better news this time? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning'* (NIACE 2005)

Appendix C: Participation in learning: minority ethnic groups (all aged 16+)

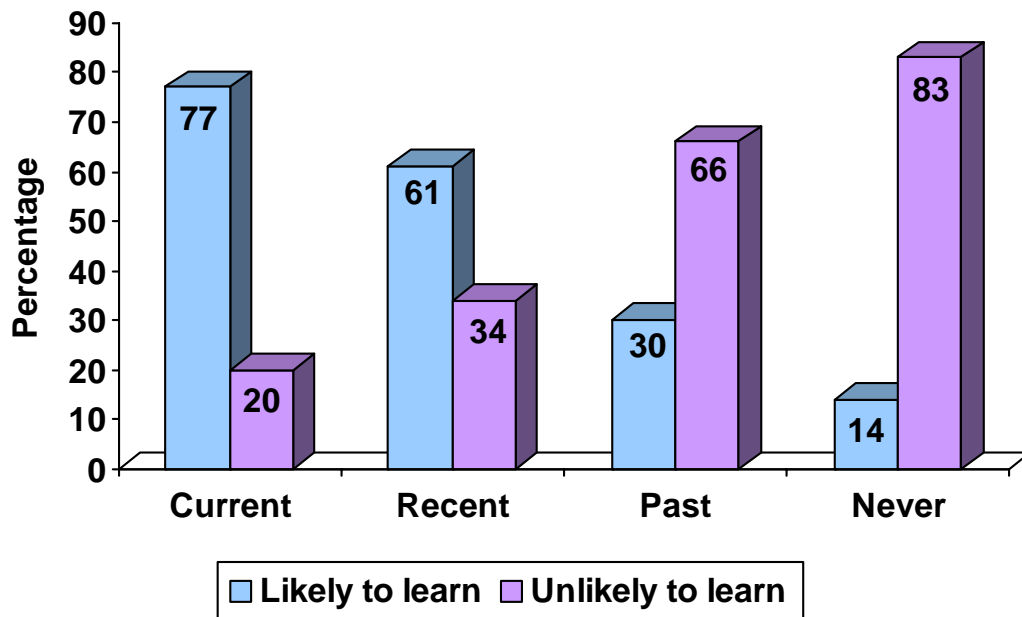
This figure is taken from page 3 of *‘Light and Shade: A NIACE briefing on participation in adult learning by minority ethnic adults’* (NIACE 2003). The briefing, by Fiona Aldridge and Alan Tuckett, is produced by NIACE, working with the Department for Education and Skills. The data is taken from the Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey 2001/2002.



Source: *‘Light and Shade: A NIACE briefing on participation in adult learning by minority ethnic adults’* (NIACE 2003)

Appendix D: Future intentions to learn by learning status

This figure is taken from page 15 of *'Better news this time? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2005'*, by Fiona Aldridge and Alan Tuckett. The survey was undertaken for NIACE by RSGB, using a weighted sample of 5,053 adults aged 17 and over in the UK, across the period 16th February – 6th March 2005.



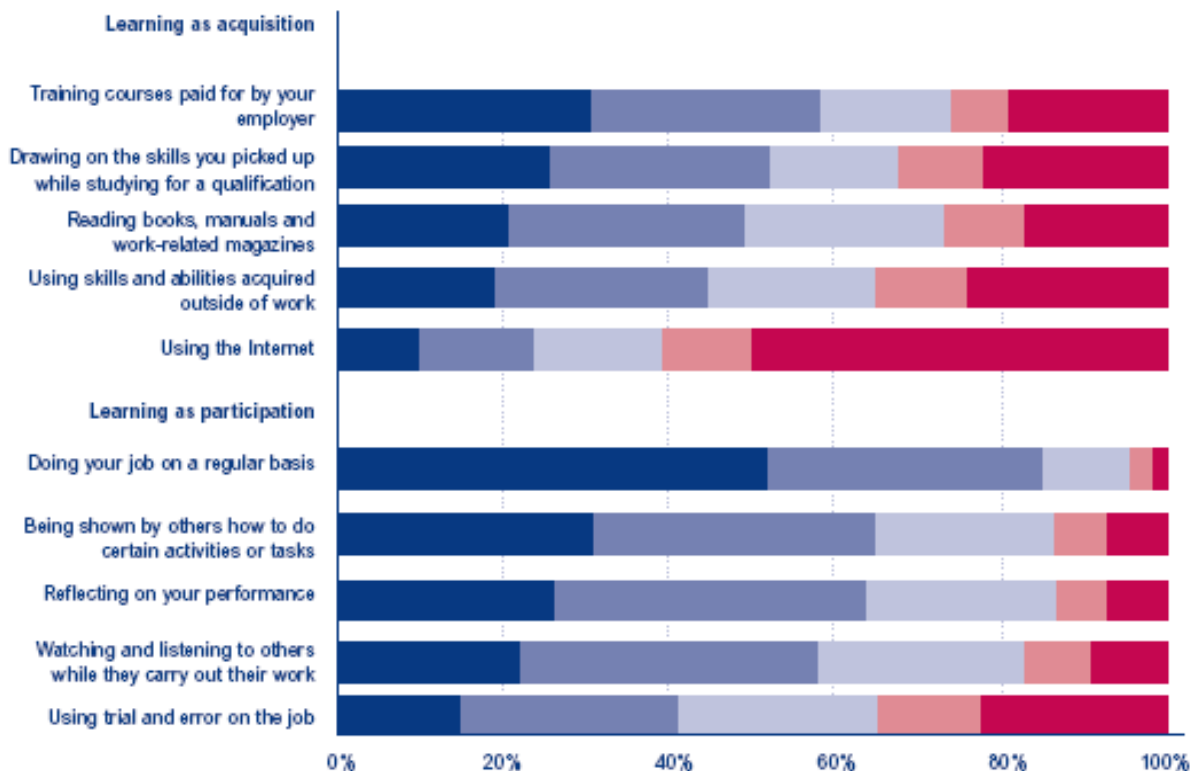
Source: *'Better news this time? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning'* (NIACE 2005)

Appendix E: Learning sources for improved job performance, rating spread

This figure is taken from page 9 of *'Better learning, better performance: Evidence from the 2004 Learning at Work Survey'* (NIACE 2004) a collaboration between the Centre for Labour Market Studies at the University of Leicester and NIACE with support from the ESRC. It is drawn from a survey of 1,943 employees about their jobs. The figure is based on responses to a question asking respondents to gauge the extent to which various activities has helped them *learn to do their job* better, using a five point scale.

It shows that despite the emphasis placed on training course attendance and the acquisition of qualification, both were lowly-rated by respondents in terms of their helpfulness for improved work performance in comparison with activities more closely associated with the workplace.

It is included here as an illustration of the dangers of allowing qualifications to be the only proxy for skills.



Source: *'Better learning, better performance: Evidence from the 2004 Learning at Work Survey'* (NIACE 2004)