

Chapter 5: Test different delivery methods

Summary

Young people enjoy and benefit more from career-related learning activities that are fun, active, rooted in experience, coherent and treated seriously.

Over-reliance on a few delivery methods switches learners off. Effective delivery requires the use of a wide range of approaches.

Making improvements is easier when co-ordinators know what they are trying to achieve, take on the role of curriculum leader and use the autonomy they have over curriculum content and delivery methods to ensure that provision and practice are responsive to learner needs.

Getting the ideal programme takes time. In the short term it is possible to achieve a lot by maximising the advantages and minimising the disadvantages of current models and systems.

Questions to ask yourself

- How do you take account of what young people say when you are selecting delivery methods?
- How wide is the range of teaching and learning approaches used in your careers programme?
- How well do your delivery methods and curriculum models support individual progression in career learning?

What are we talking about?

Careers education demands the use of a wide range of delivery methods. The art of better practice is choosing those that are 'fit for purpose' and knowing how to use them. This chapter explores how different approaches to teaching, learning and curriculum organisation facilitate career-related learning.

What do young people say?

Studies suggest that young people have mixed feelings about their experience of career-related learning activities. When thinking about how best to deliver these activities, bear in mind the following points drawn from recent research findings:

- **Keep it fun** – young people enjoy well-paced sessions with a variety of activities. Many like an element of competition built into the activity or event (e.g. a careers game or team challenge). All like written materials (e.g. worksheets and information sheets) to be attractive and accessible.
- **Make it active** – young people prefer active and participative learning opportunities, especially those involving small group work. They are critical of intermittently relevant 'one size fits all' sessions with a lot of passive listening. They enjoy careers sessions that give them the chance to discuss issues.
- **Root it in experience** – young people value first-hand experience of the world of work (e.g. work experience) and of the places where they might train or study (e.g. taster activities and visits). They especially welcome contact with experienced and approachable older peers and adults who have 'insider knowledge'.
- **Frame it and connect it** – young people find it difficult to make sense of disjointed activities ('jigsaw pieces'). They need the 'picture on the box'; activities that flow from an explicit model of career learning and development in which the different elements have good timing, sequencing and progression. Repetitive self-assessment activities with tick-boxes are a particular turn-off, especially when they do not contribute to personal career planning. Information and guidance resources (including electronic materials) have greater impact when interested experts mediate their use.
- **Give it the right ethos** – young people want to feel that the careers education they receive is objective and even-handed, treated seriously, delivered by experts and that it respects their sensitivities (e.g. when it comes to disclosing personal information in front of others).

Information

Find out more

- Read *Talking about 'Careers' – Young People's Views of Careers Education and Guidance at School*, DfEE, 1998.
- Talk to external IAG providers (e.g. Connexions) about their work in identifying how young people like to learn about careers.
- Read Chapter 4, *Motivate and Interest learners*.

What approaches to teaching and learning work best?

Over-reliance on a few approaches reduces the impact of career learning. Effective practice uses a combination of approaches that actively involve young people in the learning process. When designing career learning activities, there are eight main approaches to choose from. These are outlined below.

1. Portfolio-based learning

Career portfolios engage young people in the plan-do-review cycle and are powerful learning tools. Using them involves four basic processes:

- **Recording** – this ensures that young people have evidence (e.g. statements of career beliefs and values, career interest profiles, certificates, awards and photographs) to help them keep track of their ideas, experiences, achievements and progress. Record keeping has greater impact on career-related learning when it has a clear purpose (e.g. to build self-esteem and motivation, celebrate achievement, facilitate self-presentation or make sense of an unfolding story). Mixed purposes can set up ambiguities that undermine career learning - are portfolios primarily to support self-exploration and development, for example, or to provide management information?
- **Planning** – setting goals and targets and working out how to achieve them gives direction and purpose to young people's career planning (e.g. devising an individual learning plan). Planning is a complex process that takes time. It has greatest impact when young people have a clear purpose in mind and access to support to help them work through the process.
- **Reflecting** – reflection provides insights into progress (distance travelled), achievement (value-added) and relevant next goals (performance and standards). Tutors, advisers, mentors, employers and family can all facilitate reflection.
- **Telling** – career portfolios help young people to tell their stories and show what they have learned; an important element of assessment for learning. They are a vital tool for self-advocacy (e.g. for assessing options, for making applications, for use at annual reviews, for 'conferencing' at parents' evenings, academic tutoring and progress review days).

Tools to support the use of career portfolios

Progress File

DCSF produced a basic model. Archived materials can be downloaded from www.dfes.gov.uk/progressfile. Materials based on this model and suitable for use with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are available on [cegnet](http://www.cegnet.org).

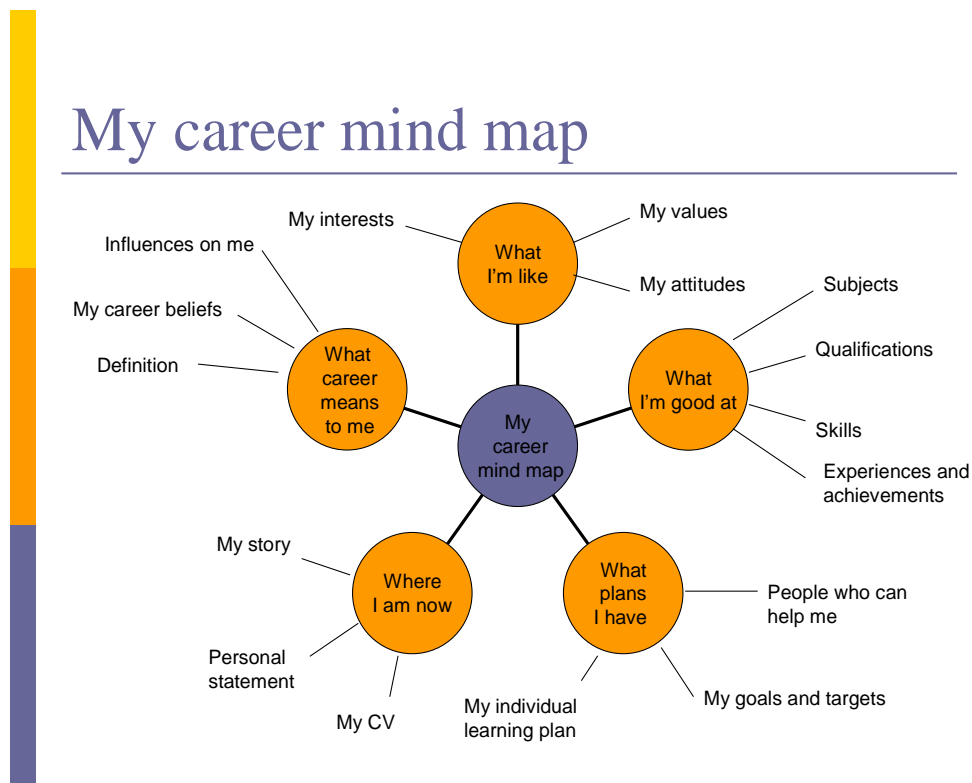
Examples of e-portfolios

- Progress File (www.myprogressfile.com)
- Careers Wales Online (www.careerswales.com/progressfile/default.asp)
- My Webfolio (<http://webfolio.manchester14-19.co.uk/mywebfolio.asp>)
- Plan-it (<http://planit.s-cool.co.uk/brochure/>)
- City and Guilds i-portfolio (<http://cityandguilds.i-portfolio.co.uk/iportfolio/landing-decision/initialise.jsessionid=28AEA44135AB88925E8931B193E43F33>)
- Islington e-portfolio (www.islington-efolio.co.uk)
- Plymouth ILP (<https://secure.wbisystems.com/plymouthilp/login.asp>)
- Pebble pad (<http://www.pebblelearning.co.uk/>)
- My-iPlan (www.my-iplan.com)
- Vitaelity (<http://www.vitaelity.co.uk/progressfile/default.asp?conid=1162>)

Using mind maps to build career portfolios

An international school in the Middle East uses mind-mapping as the core of its 10 week careers course for 14 to 15 year olds. A mind map is a diagram used to represent concepts, ideas, tasks or other items linked to a central theme. The central theme in a mind map is often illustrated with a graphical image. Ideas related to the main theme radiate in a clockwise direction from the central image as 'branches'. Topics and ideas of lesser importance are represented as 'sub-branches'. Mind maps encourage learners to 'think about their own thinking'.

The teacher helps learners to create their mind maps by providing suitable self-assessment instruments (e.g. interest questionnaires) and investigative tasks (e.g. job studies). The end product is an individual, laminated personal mind map summarising young people's ideas about their future which they can discuss with their families, personal advisers and others. The illustration below shows the result of a UK teacher's 'brainstorm' with learners about what they could include on their mind maps.



2. Co-operative learning

Learning is a social activity and co-operative learning helps young people to appreciate the importance of teamwork and team-based learning in the workplace and other settings. Many skills that lend themselves to being developed through co-operative learning (e.g. assertiveness, negotiation, networking and interpersonal skills) are fundamental to employability. Helping young people to develop their co-operative learning skills requires good classroom management and a 'spiral curriculum' – one that enables learners to revisit and build on ideas and skills over time.

Techniques for co-operative learning

The ideas below come from Spencer Kagan and his associates (www.kaganonline.com). An internet search on 'co-operative learning' will reveal many other useful websites.

- Round Robin – working in teams, learners take it in turns to share oral information.
- Round Table – working in teams, learners take it in turns to share information by recording it on a single sheet of paper.
- Talking Chips – learners receive a given number of chips and surrender one each time they talk. All learners must use their chips and stop talking when they run out.
- Paired Discussion – two learners share their ideas.
- Paired Interviews – partners interview each other.
- Three-Step Interviews – partners interview each other then share what they have learned with their team.
- Line Ups – learners respond to prompts by positioning themselves in a line. Either they justify their positions to their neighbours, or a sample justifies its position to the whole line.
- Think-Pair-Share – after time for individual reflection, learners form pairs and share their thoughts.

3. Learning through classroom talk (dialogic teaching)

Careers education is sometimes over-concerned with 'procedural' knowledge (e.g. how to make option choices and fill out CVs and application forms) despite the fact that future career wellbeing involves deep thinking and learning about:

- personal career development processes
- personal career values, beliefs and happiness
- the patterns and structures of career opportunities
- complex and controversial career issues (e.g. equality of opportunity, employment rights and responsibilities, child labour, ethical practices).

Effective careers education harnesses the power of 'classroom talk' to add to young people's cultural capital, extend their thinking and advance their learning and understanding. Discussion and dialogue lie at the heart of 'classroom talk' or 'dialogic teaching'. Other forms of talking for learning – drilling, questioning for recall and telling – are important, but it is expertly-conducted discussion and dialogue that equips young people for lifelong learning and career development. Dialogic teaching also strengthens the active learner voice, assessment for learning and the personalisation of learning.

Find out more

For further information on the research evidence that supports dialogic teaching and guidance on developing the skills to provide dialogic teaching read *Towards dialogic teaching – Rethinking classroom talk* by Robin Alexander, Thirsk: Dialogos, 2006
www.robinalexander.org.uk/docs/TDTform.pdf

4. Active learning

Active learning is a practical and participative approach to learning that requires skilled facilitation. Its underpinning principles are that individuals are active agents in their own learning, that process is important, and that outcomes can be open-ended. Active learning approaches include case study learning, role-plays, simulations, games, negotiation and design-and-make tasks. Many benefit from business people's involvement in their design and delivery.

Find out more

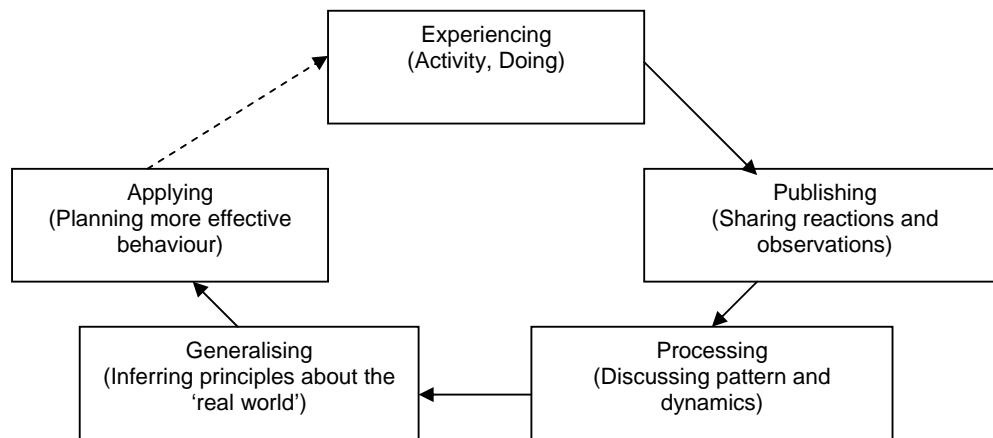
For more information on how to design active learning sessions download or order *Reality Check – Citizenship through simulation* by Andrew Miller (2006) from the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) www.lsneducation.org.uk/pubs/Pages/052326.aspx

5. Experiential learning

Experiential learning is the raw, intensive and transformative learning that happens when young people have direct and first-hand experience of something (e.g. work, a theatrical performance, a residential trip, community service). Experiential learning activities require good facilitation and practitioner experience suggests that they are enhanced by:

- structured opportunities to prepare for an ‘experience’ – e.g. teaching young people customer care and teamwork skills in preparation for a retail work placement
- opportunities for structured reflection during and after the experience – e.g. inviting learners to answer questions such as ‘What was I expected to do?’, ‘What went well?’, ‘What will I do differently or better next time?’, ‘What will I do next?’, ‘Who or what can help me?’
- helping young people to recognise the cyclical nature of experiential learning – enabling them to carry forward their learning from past experiences into new ones.

David Kolb’s four stage model of the experiential learning cycle is probably the best known model but others exist. Below is a model produced by Jones and Pfeiffer¹ designed for use by group facilitators.



- Experiencing – doing or having the activity
- Publishing – making individual experiences available to the group
- Processing – using the publishing stage to talk through the patterns and interactions of the activity
- Generalising – abstracting principles from the processing stage that could be relevant in other settings (e.g. in everyday life)
- Applying – helping participants to apply ‘generalisations’ to actual situations in which they are involved.

¹ The 1973 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, J.E. Jones & J.W. Pfeiffer, San Diego CA: University Associates, 1973

6. Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning means giving learners a problem to solve and is most successful when young people work in pairs or groups. Taking on the role of agony aunts and uncles and solving career-related problems, for example, gives them insights into how to manage their own careers. Problem-based learning helps young people to:

- improve their self-efficacy – their belief in their ability to accomplish tasks they set themselves
- apply their learning (e.g. to themselves and their situations)
- develop transferable skills (e.g. learning how to use an acquired skill in a different or non-routine situation).

7. Learning by educating others

Experience suggests that sharing their learning with others enhances young people's career learning. For example:

- creating an exhibition or display (e.g. of photographs, about a career role model)
- producing a video or podcast
- developing a website, blog or wiki
- writing a newsletter
- giving a presentation
- peer mentoring.

8. Learning through didactic approaches

Didactic teaching involves transmitting information using techniques such as 'listen and tell' or 'question and answer'. These work reasonably well with straightforward learning tasks that focus on gaining procedural knowledge (e.g. how to make applications), but even here they may be insufficient to stimulate higher order learning about topics (e.g. synthesising and evaluating information). Effective careers work requires the use of a wide range of approaches of which didactic teaching is only one.

Information

Find out more

- *Pedagogy and Practice: Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools*. (DfES, 2004)
- *Effective Teaching Methods*, G.D. Borich. (Prentice Hall, 2000)
- *Careers Helpers and Careers Hinderers: A qualitative study exploring the role of others in shaping individual's careers*, S. Bosley (PhD thesis) (University of Loughborough, 2004)
- *Learning: a sense-maker's guide*, C. Watkins. (Association of Teaching and Learning, 2003) – members can download this publication for free.

What are the curriculum issues?

Part of a co-ordinator's role as a curriculum leader is to advise senior leaders, managers and others on the best way to organise career-related learning in the curriculum. Given the rollout of the 14-19 reforms and the introduction of new programmes of study for economic wellbeing and financial capability at key stages 3 and 4, co-ordinators may wish to review existing arrangements to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and support progression in career learning.

Review how well delivery models support progression in career learning

Planning for continuity, sequencing and progression 11-19 is essential to ensure that delivery models support progression in career learning. This is the only way to make sure that young people gain new understanding rather than recycle existing knowledge – something that is associated with programmes that rely on a series of punctuated inputs at key decision and transition points (e.g. at age 14, 16 and 18).

Find out how well delivery methods support progression in career learning

Use the career learning outcomes presented in schemes of work, lesson, session and activity plans to get an overview of the intended progression in learning 11-19 and review how well existing delivery methods support their achievement.

1. Create a list of intended learning outcomes 11-19 and number or code each learning outcome for easy identification.
2. Audit the types of delivery methods used to achieve each learning outcome:
 - active learning
 - co-operative learning
 - dialogic teaching (classroom talk)
 - didactic teaching
 - experiential learning
 - learning by educating others
 - portfolio-based learning
 - problem-based learning.
3. Look at the resulting pattern:
 - What does it show about how you deliver the careers programme across different key stages, phases and learning settings?
 - Do existing arrangements support joint working on delivery with colleagues and with external partners (e.g. other learning providers, employers, voluntary and community agencies, and external IAG providers such as Connexions)?
 - Do existing arrangements accommodate different learning needs and styles?
 - How could you improve the pattern to secure better progression in career learning for all young people?
4. Identify and discuss proposals for change with colleagues, young people and other interested parties.

Review how well curriculum models support effective career learning

Identifying the main characteristics of the curriculum models used in your school or college makes it easier both to determine how well they support effective career learning and to identify desirable changes. Use the tool below to identify the main characteristics of your delivery models. Review each of them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and work out possibilities for change. You may find that the ideas on the possible pros and cons of the four main approaches help with this. However, it is important to bear in mind that even seemingly weak approaches can work well with the right people in place to organise and deliver them.

Tool	Identify the main characteristics of your curriculum model(s)
	<p>You can identify the main characteristics of your curriculum model(s) by ticking the relevant words in each spectrum. You may want to mark them in different ways to reflect variations in their use (e.g. ✓✓ = mostly in this way, ✓ = some in this way.) The model you describe may be different for each year group or key stage.</p>
	<p>‘Subject’ boundaries</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>specialist – themed – extended</i></p> <p>‘Specialist’ means the separate or discrete delivery of careers education regardless of the curriculum setting, e.g. tutor periods, careers or PSHE or citizenship lessons. ‘Themed’ means careers education is integrated with other subjects or aspects of personal development to form a coherent scheme of work, e.g. thematic learning days/weeks. ‘Extended’ means that taught provision is enhanced by additional activities such as suspended timetable events (e.g. work experience) and extra-curricular activities (e.g. after-school careers club).</p>
	<p>Timetable arrangements</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>timetabled lessons – flexible blocks – suspended timetable – virtual timetable</i></p> <p>You will need to record the length, frequency and overall number of timetable sessions in order to see if the model is effective. Flexible block timetabling gives you access to varying spans of time. Suspended timetable activities are often used for one-off events such as competitions, enterprise days and work experience. E-learning is not dependent on timetabled time, hence the ‘virtual timetable’.</p>
	<p>Delivery team</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>specialists – semi-specialists – non-specialists</i></p> <p>Specialists may be teachers, advisers or para-professionals who are recognised as experts in relation to careers work. Semi-specialists include staff with experience of teaching careers education who have built up some expertise over time. Non-specialists do not claim to be experts in the area.</p>
	<p>Grouping strategy</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>mixed ability – grouped according to specific criteria</i></p> <p>Mixed ability applies to groups that have a spread of ability within them. Specific selection criteria include gender, ability, age, subjects/courses studied.</p>
	<p>Learning settings</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>learning provider – workplace</i></p> <p>Learning provider includes all classroom settings. Workplace includes business and community settings.</p>
<p>Learning mode</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>formal learning – informal learning</i></p> <p>Formal learning is accessed through professional teaching and/or instruction. Informal learning is acquired through everyday interactions and experiences in and out of school, college and work based learning. The ‘hidden’ curriculum is partly accessed in this way.</p>	

Ideas	Advantages and disadvantages of different curriculum models for career learning		
	Model	Pros	Cons
<p>Specialist provision Discrete careers sessions or modules in tutor periods, careers, PSHE, citizenship and other learning programmes (includes carousel arrangements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what has been done • Learners know it is 'careers' • Provides good support at decision and transition points • Gets the urgent (e.g. applications, options choices) out of the way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves few staff • Does not benefit from inputs from other curriculum areas • Sequencing and timing of activities can be a problem 	
<p>Themed provision Careers education is integrated with other aspects of the academic and personal development curriculum to form a coherent scheme of work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates progression, continuity and comprehensive coverage of the careers 'curriculum' • Supports a holistic approach and provides good support for using self and opportunity awareness • Supports the use of the full range of teaching and learning approaches • Facilitates the involvement of colleagues and external partners • Reinforces the relevance of career learning and breaks down compartmentalisation • Supports in-depth study of some aspects of career learning • Helps to manage competing curriculum priorities and timetable pressures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires sophisticated curriculum leadership, planning and development • Learners may find it hard to see the totality of the careers programme • Difficult to manage and maintain • Difficult to gain staff commitment unless career learning is a required element in the programme (e.g. Science at KS3, 14-19 Diplomas) • Staff and learners may feel that career learning should be done elsewhere • Difficult to prove that career learning is taking place • 	
<p>Extended provision Taught sessions are supplemented by suspended timetable activities and extra-curricular events, which can include supported use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to use active and experiential learning activities • Supports good retention of learning • Extends thinking and reflection about learning • Motivates and engages learners • Helps to manage competing curriculum priorities and timetable pressures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be disjointed • Usually resource intensive • Where the emphasis is on extended provision rather than taught sessions, it can be difficult to maintain progression and momentum in learning – if learners are absent they may miss significant elements of their programme 	

Make and implement a plan for change

Curriculum development is easier when there is a clear vision of what careers work is trying to achieve. The traditional vision of a co-ordinator managing young people’s career learning at a distance by photocopying ‘one size fits all’ worksheets for tutors to deliver is no longer viable. The new vision is that of a curriculum leader; someone who is part of a wider curriculum team, who leads the design of effective learning activities and who negotiates effective curriculum arrangements. The ideal programme may take a long time to attain but in the meantime, a lot can be achieved by maximising the advantages and minimising the disadvantages of current models or systems. There are four types of action that make such changes easier to achieve and manage. These are:

- a) **Creating a development plan** – this gives an overview of proposed changes to improve teaching and learning, modify curriculum and related organisational arrangements and build staff capacity.
- b) **Making an action plan** – this focuses on specifics and says precisely how each development objective will be achieved. Action points indicate who will take the action and when they will complete it.
- c) **Making the case for change** – most suggestions for change get a mixed reaction. Thinking about the reasons for different reactions can make it easier to identify persuasive arguments to support the case for change. The ideas below may help with this.

Ideas	Changing the programme	
	<p>People support change because they think it::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a natural development • makes the curriculum more relevant, interesting or useful • facilitates personalisation, raises standards and improves achievement and progression • fits with national policies • fits with organisational priorities 	<p>People oppose change because they think it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is an inappropriate use of time • does not resolve the issues
	Changing the organisation	
	<p>People support change because they think it::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a good or better use of time and/or resources • supports national and organisational priorities • fits with development plans, work programmes, etc. • will help learners 	<p>People oppose change because they think it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a waste of time and/or resources • is a low priority • will create extra work • will not help learners
	Developing staff	
	<p>People support change because they think it::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is necessary and relevant • enhances professional development and career prospects • will help learners 	<p>People oppose change because they think it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is irrelevant • could be deferred until later • is of little personal relevance • will not necessarily help learners

- d) **Deciding who to involve** – change is a partnership activity and is often easier to achieve when the partnership involves the ‘right’ people. It is worth spending some time thinking about who to involve in each aspect of change and how they might contribute.