

# the alchemy of learning

impact and progression  
in adult learning



Pauline Nashashibi



**adult and community learning  
quality support programme**

The transforming or sustaining power of learning is widely recognised. Its impact on individuals, groups and communities is less easy to define or measure. Learning providers need to develop strategies for capturing and maximizing impact.

How can providers find out more about the impact of learning and use that knowledge to improve provision? How can they build progression routes that really work? Illustrated by case studies and using clearly defined terms to identify different kinds of impact, this guide can help providers approach this complex topic with confidence.

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## **Terminology**

Words such as 'achievement' or 'progression' can be used in a variety of ways that reflect different contexts or philosophical positions. This section explains how some key terms are used in this publication.

### **Aim**

The overall intention and purpose of a learning programme expressed in general terms.

### **Learning objectives**

Key elements of a learning programme which contribute to the aim and are to be achieved.

### **Learning outcomes**

The results of a learning experience including new knowledge, understanding and skills gained, increased confidence and readiness to progress to further learning or take on other new challenges. These are not necessarily the same as the objectives planned at the outset.

### **Progress**

Progress in learning is an increase, improvement or deepening of knowledge, understanding or skills.

### **Achievement**

Achievement is what learners do with what they learn ; it is the outward and visible sign of progress. It may take the form of passing an examination but it is observable in the actions, products and / or behaviour of learners wherever active learning takes place.

### **Achievement of learning goal(s)**

This is a more specific use of 'achievement', which refers to overall achievement on the learning programme and contributes to data on achievements. This is achievement of learning goals. In qualification-bearing or accredited programmes it is the award. In non-accredited learning, achievement of the learning goal is achievement of the aim as expressed in agreed individual or group learning objectives.

**Progression**

Progression is movement as a result of learning. It is purposeful and takes the learner into a new context or activity. It may, for example, be movement into further learning, employment, freelance work or new voluntary roles. Progression can take place within the learning programme, however, when there are clearly defined progression milestones as, for example, in a unitised or modular programme.

**Impact**

Impact is an inclusive term covering the overall effect of learning provision on those it is designed to benefit – the learners and potential learners and the communities in which they live or work. It therefore includes the effect that the learning process has had on the learners and, through their progress or endeavours, on other people. The impact may be on the individual, group, family, community or environment.

## Introduction

How can we increase the impact of learning and build progression routes for adults that really work? What are the factors that make a difference?

All those involved in education know that engaging in learning can change lives. Adult and community learning tutors and managers usually have their stories of the person who came to join an exercise class, got talking to just the right person at the right time and is now on the second year of a degree course. This kind of impact is, of course, not the average outcome of a decision to join an exercise class, but it can happen. An improvement in physical fitness and confidence would be a more predictable outcome.

Here is another story. An elderly woman joined an exercise class based in a community centre in Oxford. When asked how she was getting on she said, 'It's marvellous. My hearing has improved so much!' Could an hour's gentle exercise a week improve someone's hearing? Was the improvement the result of increased physical confidence? Was it that she found herself among a group of people who expected to be able to converse with her and did? Was it a mixture of all three, or, could the improvement in hearing be coincidental? What is significant is that she experienced the improvement and judged it to be due to the class.

Learning is a complex process, often intricately involving mind and body. It can release a surge of energy and power and it can also deflate; it is not emotionally neutral. Learning is both instrumental, a means to an end, and a way of becoming more fully ourselves. In the process we use and challenge our mental powers, and often our physical ones too. When we achieve our goals the horizon shifts a little and new possibilities come into view. And when illness or ageing brings declining powers, learning not only helps us maintain our levels of mental and physical activity but offers new challenges to replace those we may have to set aside. This alchemy of learning works not only in individuals but also in groups, and it can bring with it new social contacts and involvements, contributing to the fabric of society in practical ways and increasing our understanding and tolerance of the values of others.

This guide is about ways in which organisations can identify, maximise and evaluate the impact of learning. This includes the impact on learners and on the communities served. Recognising the richness and complexity of learning is not incompatible with developing simple approaches to this.

In the guide, progression is considered as one form of impact. Impact is discussed under three main headings :

- progress and achievement
- progression
- the wider benefits of learning.

Progress and achievement is at the root of many forms of impact but is treated briefly here because it is the subject of a separate guide in this series (*Learning in progress: recognising achievement in adult learning*, Nashashibi 2002).

## What do we mean by impact ?

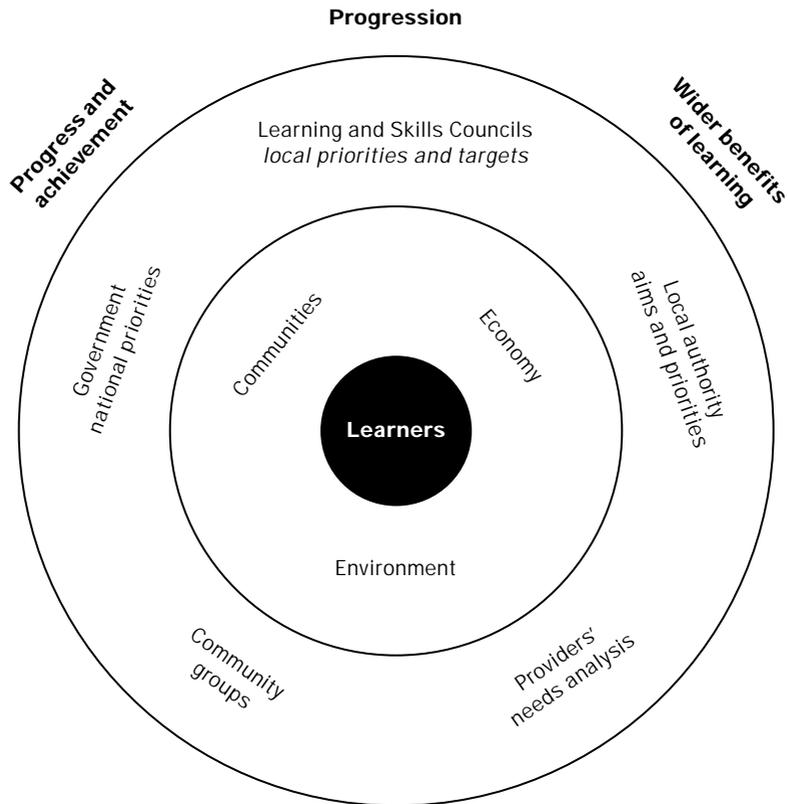
Impact is an inclusive term covering the overall effect of learning provision on those it is designed to benefit – the learners and potential learners and the communities in which they live or work. It therefore includes the effect that the learning process has had on the learners and, through their progress or endeavours, on other people. The impact may be on the individual, group, family, community or environment.

When we talk about ‘having an impact’ or ‘making a difference’ we usually mean in a positive sense although this isn’t always the case. Some initiatives backfire and learners can have off-putting experiences. More often the failure to make an impact is just that – the profile of participants remains the same, there is a lack of progression and movement among learners, and the provision doesn’t really enrich the lives of the communities it serves, or does so only in very limited ways.

But what impact do providers and tutors want to have? Who decides, and how? Aims and purposes are implicit in the desire to make an impact. They may be to meet the needs of learners, to respond to national priorities, to generate income, to fulfil the requirements of funding bodies, to get good grades in an inspection, to live up to our own values and standards relating to education, or all of the above. Sometimes aims conflict with each other, weakening impact.

This means that, whether we are thinking about the impact of the service as a whole or of a single learning programme, the process takes us back to first principles and it makes us question the logic of the steps we have taken along the way. If there are conflicting aims we need to balance and resolve them before we can decide what impact we can expect to have. For a learning provider this means building shared aims and approaches among all involved – staff, learners and partners. But it also means recognising and valuing the diversity of learners and their purposes, allowing space for the unexpected and defining aims and setting targets accordingly.

So the impact that is desired or expected is shaped by the provider’s mission and evolving aims and purposes. These, in turn, are affected by local and national priorities and targets.

**Figure 1** The circles of impact**The inner circle**

The impact of provision on learners. This can include :

- progress and achievement
  - progression
  - wider benefits of learning
- or a combination of two, or all three, 'the triple crown'.

**The middle circle**

The impact of the provision on the communities it serves. This too can include all three kinds of impact.

**The outer circle**

This includes forces and factors that influence the aims of learning providers and how they evaluate the impact of their provision. The agencies in this circle also evaluate the impact of their policies and actions.

## The national dimension

Learning is the key to greater economic prosperity, for individuals and groups, and it is widely accepted that for the UK to strengthen its economy in an increasingly competitive global environment, higher skills and qualifications are needed throughout the workforce. Learning, and the confidence, skills and social and community engagement that it fosters, is also fundamental to social and cultural well-being.

Learning, of itself, brings gifts of confidence and empowerment and benefits to health. It can increase employability and it also engages individuals and groups in social activity which contributes to social cohesion and community development. For all these reasons, widening participation and making sure that those engaged in learning have real progression opportunities are high on the national agenda. Recognition of the potential impact of high quality adult learning opportunities underlies the government's vision as set out in *Success for all*:

*Adult and Community Learning forms a vital part of the Government's drive to support social inclusion, to widen participation in learning, to build communities' self confidence and capacity and to promote good citizenship and personal development.*

DfES 2002, p25

### The impact on learners

*Learners acquire knowledge, skills and understanding which are valuable to them and which will make a noticeable difference to their lives.*

*Learners acquire knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence which enable them to play an active and constructive role in their community, their workplace, their trade union or their family.*

*Learners progress to other training or education, paid or voluntary employment, or community action, which enables them to use the knowledge, skills and understanding they have gained.*

Extracts from *Guidance for providers on the inspection of adult and community learning: interpreting the Common Inspection Framework* (ALI 2002, p8).

## Learners' progress and achievement

Learners' achievements are many and diverse and the progress they make – their increased knowledge, understanding and skills – can show itself in :

- the achievement of their planned learning objectives relating to the learning programme
- unplanned achievements
- improved learning skills
- improved basic or key skills
- increased confidence
- more active participation and the taking on of new roles.

There are learners for whom maintaining skills is a challenge and their progress and achievements against the odds can also be seen.

Supporting and extending good practice in teaching, learning and assessment is fundamental to maximising the impact of learning. One aspect of this is the integration of assessment into the learning, and involving the learners in the process. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has set out a five-staged process for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA). Providers can use this process to improve provision for learners by engaging them in dialogue about their learning and their progress. Applying the approach to provision in ways that are appropriate and systematic will also provide valuable evidence of learners' achievements. (For more details see the LSC Position Paper *Recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning*, LSC 2003a.)

The elements of the process are :

- aims
- initial assessment
- challenging objectives
- formative assessment
- summative assessment.

This is complemented by learners' involvement in the evaluation of the learning programme.

To work effectively within this framework providers need to develop creative and appropriate ways of negotiating with learners about their learning objectives and engaging them in the assessment process. They also need to celebrate achievement so that people can get the full benefit of their learning. For a practical guide with case studies see Nashashibi (2002). For discussion of learners' perspectives see Turner and Watters (2001).

Learners' achievements are both:

- evidence of impact
- causes of impact.

Recognised achievement – particularly when challenging objectives have been achieved – brings a confidence boost that opens new possibilities for the learner (more impact). When evaluating, it is helpful to distinguish between these aspects of impact even though they may not be experienced separately by the learners. For some learners, new knowledge and skills and the difference these make to their lives come together.

Research on learners' views on progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy shows how closely achievement and impact are interlinked. Learners used their skills in the practical activities of daily life and involvement in local communities. Examples included reading in church, chairing community association meetings, and using letter writing to keep in touch with family and friends, complain about local services, contact children's schools and apply for jobs.

*Learners recognised progress and achievement in relation to how they used their learning in real life. They also used self, tutor, and peer and external assessment to judge progress ... Many judged whether they had learned something by their ability to use it in the real world outside the classroom, 'I don't know till I do it'.*

## Progression

*A metaphor relating to travelling on a learning journey was used to facilitate discussion between learners and researchers...*

*...a hand-drawn map of an ocean with islands and lands ... was used with a group who related barriers to rough seas and volcanoes, progress to calm water, islands to stop and other resting places.*

Ward and Edwards 2002, p7 and p16

The researchers on this project found the idea of the 'learning journey' immensely useful in encouraging learners to reflect on and discuss their learning. It is a use we can extend to help us think about patterns of progression in adult learning. The journey is purposeful, but there may not be a specific destination in mind and the route is not always direct.

A broad range of open-access provision within which adults can gather experience of learning forms a vital part of the infrastructure for progression.

Adults need learning pathways that are accessible to them and meet their individual needs. Neither their motivations nor the mix of learning opportunities they choose may fit in with the concepts of curriculum planners or funding bodies. Boundaries between academic, adult and further education, and qualification- and non-qualification-bearing courses are frequently crossed. Findings based on learners in adult and community learning and FE colleges show that while there is a pattern of movement from non-accredited into qualification courses and some movement up in terms of level, lateral progression is also important and well-qualified learners take 'lower level' courses which provide the learning they seek (Reisenberger and Sanders 1997).

Adults newly engaged in learning through widening participation initiatives are also unlikely to progress from their first course, particularly if it is a short one, straight into one offering accreditation, or at a higher level. Their continuation in learning is a measure of success. Research on the progression of learners on new programmes which targeted particular groups of disadvantaged learners and did not offer qualifications (non-schedule 2 pilots 1999–2001) showed that :

- nearly half continued in learning
- about a third of those who continued moved into a higher level or accredited course.

A number of smaller surveys based in individual institutions and in a variety of subject areas have shown similar progression patterns (McGivney 2003).

## The link between widening participation and progression

There is an important link between widening participation and progression. The first step is to engage people in learning by making it as accessible, relevant and attractive to them as possible. *Successful participation for all* (LSC 2003b) emphasises the need to be creative about the learning opportunities we offer and to develop transition arrangements between informal learning and more structured opportunities for those who need them. Tailor-made community-based initiatives often open progression opportunities into new roles and work and into further learning, as the case study from Medway (p33) and this one from Somerset illustrate.

### Case study **Somerset Local Education Authority Adult Learning and Leisure**

#### **Skills for Self-Sufficiency**

This successful project, which ran from July 2002 to March 2003, had one key aim – to stimulate demand for learning among traditional and new age travellers. Two part-time project workers gained the trust of the community by working out of local cafes and used texting to keep in touch with the client group.

Free taster courses directly linked to alternative lifestyles were set up. These included Permaculture garden, Rhythm and drumming, Festival first aid, Herbal treatments, Circus arts to performance skills and Women's self-defence. Family learning programmes encouraged parents to get involved in their children's education.

Of the 130 learners, 95% were taking part in adult education for the first time. A total of 78% indicated their interest in undertaking further courses and in progressing to further adult education classes outside the project. Several learners gained employment after successfully completing the accredited Festival stewarding and First aid training.

The first objective in widening participation is for learners to decide to continue in learning. But, if the learning is to lead to progression, we need to make sure that learners gain confidence and a sense that new opportunities exist and really are for them. Where there is no effective progression strategy the widening participation impact of each project may not create the 'knock-on' effect of encouraging the new learners to move into other provision.

If we successfully recruit learners into basic skills we do want to see some of those learners progressing to Levels 1 and 2. If we recruit learners at Level 2 we want to see some of those learners succeeding at Level 3 and, if the provision is extensive, we would expect to see some learners moving into higher vocational courses or gaining university places. Without a matching effort to build progression routes that work for learners, widening participation can result in the creation of lots of new small ponds.

To link widening participation and progression we need to:

- plan provision that creates expectations of progression
- be alert to groups that face problems
- use learning champions and brokers
- work on latent demand – changing interest to intention and intention to participation
- make the business case for employee learning
- integrate community liaison and outreach work into mainstream provision
- develop skills in creating and supporting partnerships
- provide progression opportunities where the learners currently attend or arrange practical support to aid transition – for example, childcare, finance, transport
- plan for sustainability if projects have short-term funding.

## Partnership developments

Many of the most creative new learning opportunities which both widen participation and open progression opportunities are developed in partnership.

The North Yorkshire case study shows how learning using new technologies can form the basis of progression routes.

### Case study **North Yorkshire Community Education Service**

#### **Reclaim project**

The Reclaim project started life by providing a secure learning environment, through outreach activities and a virtual learning network, for women and their families fleeing domestic abuse. Later it was extended to a wide range of target groups.

The project provided flexible workshops in a wide variety of locations (eg homeless units). In addition, mobile ICT units were used to provide workshops with peripatetic and telematic tutor support. Learning support mentors assisted learners in rural locations. Liaison with information, advice and guidance services and other providers helped develop progression opportunities.

## Progression into further learning

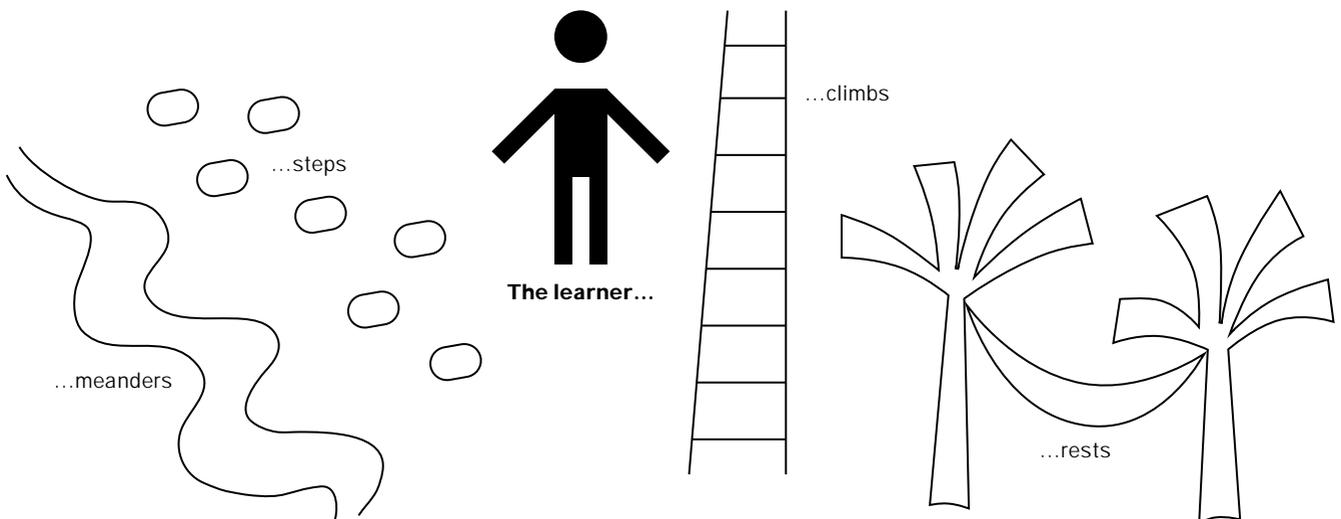
It is easier for learners to progress where there are strong links between learning programmes. This is not simply a matter of creating particular progression routes, although this is important. It also means integrating parts of the provision which may have developed separately. Adult and community learning often encompasses :

- broad open-access provision
- national priority provision, including basic skills, English language and provision designed for priority learners or target groups
- community development and capacity building.

Ways of maximising the benefits of this range of provision by making it easier for learners to move within it are discussed in Nashashibi and Watters (2003).

Where provision is integrated it is easier for learners to develop their own pathways. Learners may progress upwards from level to level on what we may think of as a progression 'ladder', but often this is not the case. Where there are strong progression links within and between provision it becomes easier to help learners making their journey transform what might seem like random accumulation into a powerful agent for change. Figure 2 illustrates ways of thinking about different stages on a learning journey.

**Figure 2** Ways of thinking about different stages on a learning journey



While it is important to plan a curriculum in which it is possible to 'climb the ladder', we need to recognise that there are other purposeful and constructive ways of planning an individual learning pathway. Taking up something new (eg learning to use a new IT package) may be more challenging than a higher level course in a familiar subject and could be important preparation for higher level learning or employment. Facing up to a basic skills difficulty and enrolling on a course to do something about it could be an outcome of a higher level learning programme. Looked at in terms of the ladder on the curriculum map on which the learner started it might not seem like progression. But looked at in relation to the learner's overall attainment it certainly is.

Learners may progress through a number of part-time courses, fitting learning around work or caring commitments, working at their own pace and having their purposes evolve over time. Where the curriculum has been developed to facilitate progression, their journeys will be supported and, perhaps, speeded with maps and shortcuts.

We can recognise at least four kinds of progression into further learning, each of which is purposeful, as follows :

- to a higher level or qualification-bearing programme
- at the same level to broaden knowledge and build competence
- to a lower level to build necessary skills or add new ones
- to something completely different as a result of confidence gained on the programme and / or guidance received.

Progression can come about :

- from a basis of general interest courses
- by taking up an opportunity linked to your current role
- by systematically moving up the levels in a chosen subject area.

Evidence about progression into something completely different comes from a study of Access to Higher Education students. Many students reached an Access course only after enrolling in a varied range of previous, often general or interest-related courses (McGivney 2003). The broad open-access provision formed part of the progression route for these learners.

The case study from Barking and Dagenham (p15) shows how a progression route can be developed by extending people's current roles. The interest and the opportunity to become classroom assistants grows out of the experience of being parents and contact with the schools.

The case study from Bournemouth shows a learner 'climbing the ladder' of levels in part-time courses in the subject of her choice.

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**Case study Bournemouth Adult Learning Service****From Level 1 in Watercolours to an HNC in Fine Art**

One young woman studying on the HNC at Salisbury College is still benefiting from the art provision in Bournemouth that set her on her path. She missed out on FE and HE opportunities in her late teens because of health problems and uncertainty about what direction to choose. After taking Levels 1 and 2 in watercolours and a life drawing course she had a portfolio which enabled her to get onto the HNC. This is a foundation course from which she can progress to an HND or degree in Art and / or Design. She still attends a Watercolour Plus Course provided by Bournemouth Adult Learning Service to extend her technique and ideas.

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## Progression into employment

Many adult learners use the skills and qualifications they acquire to help them gain employment or to further their progress at work and it is not unusual for individuals to develop freelance work using a wide range of craft skills, cake decorating or providing flowers for special occasions. However, there has been relatively little development of progression routes linked to specific forms of employment. Developments in community learning are demonstrating how volunteering and training can create links into work in community contexts and public services. This kind of progression is important at a time when there is a need for access to jobs at the lower end of the professional scale.

### Case study **The Adult College Barking and Dagenham**

#### **Classroom assistants course**

In 2003/04, 43 learners enrolled on the City and Guilds Certificate in Learning Support at the Barking and Dagenham Adult College. Of these learners (a similar number completed in the previous year), about half are already employed in local schools as classroom assistants or support assistants, the other half being parent helpers or volunteers hoping to become learning assistants. A similar course ran in 2002/03 as part of a regeneration project on the Thames View Estate in Barking, where 15 learners, many of whom were lone parents who were interested in working in schools, were given additional support such as books and transport to enable them to study for the qualification. All learners who completed successfully gained both the qualification and employment, those who were previously volunteers having been offered paid jobs in their schools.

Most of these learners began their courses with no previous qualifications, and few would have considered becoming teachers at that point.

However, 16 of the 2002/03 learners have gone on to undertake the NVQ Level 3 for teaching assistants, and a number are doing Maths and English GCSE classes. About 20 plan to begin a part-time foundation degree at a local HE college next year with a view to gaining qualified teacher status.

The National Skills Strategy launched in 2003 announced the priorities listed below for using public funds (Crown 2003).

- The introduction of an entitlement to free learning for adults without qualifications, to help them gain a full Level 2 qualification for employability. This extends the existing priority of improving adults' basic skills in literacy, language and numeracy.
- Supporting those who are developing their qualifications to a higher level in technician, advanced craft and associate professional skills, particularly where those meet sectoral and regional skills priorities.
- Supporting those who are re-skilling for new careers, and those returning to the labour market, again particularly where that meets sectoral and regional skills priorities.
- Safeguarding a varied range of learning opportunities for personal fulfilment, community development and active citizenship.

This announcement opens opportunities for development – the choice of those that a provider will decide to follow up will depend on local requirements and the nature of the service and mission – and in particular the opportunity to develop new provision at Level 2 with progression aims linked to employability. Partnerships with employers are one way of making learning opportunities accessible. Participants in an initiative in Derbyshire (see opposite) chose to take the opportunity to gain qualifications.

*A study of progression in three employment sectors – health and social care, construction, and tourism and hospitality – showed that weaknesses in partnerships, weak links with IAG services and lack of coordination of lower level provision were factors inhibiting progression. However, it found that formal partnerships (such as the Early Years Development and Childcare partnerships) can lead to the production of good quality, comprehensive information on opportunities for progression.*

LSDA 2002, p6

Partnerships with employers may provide opportunities to develop new Level 2 programmes. Access to Higher Education courses provide some of the most successful examples of provision purpose-built to help adult learners progress. They are quoted as possible models in a discussion of the adult curriculum in the LSC's *Funding adult learning technical document* (LSC 2003c, pp15–16). Access courses are tailored to learners' strengths and needs, but among the reasons for their success is the fact that Access courses are seen to be adult and different. 'It's not like A-level and GCSE' and 'you can do it in a year' are key selling points.

## Case study **Derbyshire LEA**

### **Swizzels Matlow Ltd Sweet Factory at New Mills**

At Swizzels factory 120 employees have taken part in courses as part of a Local Initiative Development Fund project. The project was set up in 2002 after an approach to Derbyshire County Council by the employer. The aims were to develop an ethos of learning in the company, encourage interest in basic skills and promote employees' personal development. This was also seen as having a positive effect on the company by contributing to job satisfaction.

A questionnaire was used to find out what people wanted to learn and the most popular subject was IT – most of the staff did not use IT at work, as they worked on the factory floor. As a result a 'learning centre' comprising a small suite of seven computers has been introduced. Not surprisingly, the biggest uptake has been in IT, with most learners opting to do qualifications, including some enrolling on Learndirect courses. Workshops in basic skills, maths and underpinning knowledge for work-related NVQs have also been popular. Although initially envisaged as a drop-in facility, most learners have opted for tutor-led sessions.

Can the 'Access recipe' provide a model for new Level 2 programmes designed to contribute to the national target for adult achievement at Level 2 and provide a 'foundation for employability'? Partnerships that are being developed, for example to take basic skills into the workplace, might also support the new kinds of development at Level 2 needed to cater for adults seeking access to jobs at the lower end of the professional scale or first-level technical jobs – jobs which offer training opportunities, such as classroom assistant, as in the Barking and Dagenham case study. These can be particularly important for people who have recently come to the UK, perhaps with qualifications and work experience from overseas which may not enable them to continue in similar work in Britain, or to do so at an equivalent level.

Provision linked to vocational development that uses adults' experience in employment, the community, or as parents, can draw on their strengths and benefit from the 'difference' factor. The following extracts from an Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspection report in Gateshead show how powerful learning based on community action can be.

## **Case study Community capacity building – Gateshead Council**

### **Community learning Grade 1**

Inspectors examined three main areas that contribute to the development of community capacity building in Gateshead. These are the involvement of local residents in local community education management committees, the development of volunteers, and a range of learning opportunities, both formal and informal, designed to develop leadership skills...

Volunteers are given a lot of encouragement and support from salaried staff. A clear progression route is available to them, with professionally accredited training at each stage of progression. From the 266 learners who have taken accredited community education worker courses over the past 15 years, 186 have taken up part-time paid work in the service and five have become full-time workers. In addition, others are working in other council departments or public sector organisations. Many of those who start as volunteers have few or no previous qualifications. Their achievements provide encouragement for others. One man sought basic skills help for himself, and then qualified as a community education worker and went on to university.

ALI inspection report Gateshead Council, 2003

And the ALI definitions of community capacity building and active citizenship (Figure 3) show how important it is to recognise the different kinds of impact that can arise from the same provision – wider benefits to individuals and the community as well as progression into learning, volunteering and employment.

**Figure 3 ALI definitions of community capacity building and active citizenship**

**Community capacity building**

The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become self-managing sustainable communities.

**Active citizenship**

The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.

Source: ALI 2002, p6

## Building progression into the curriculum

Examples of effective progression routes invite the question, how can we achieve these kinds of outcome for larger numbers of adult learners? We have a rich and growing body of good practice in engaging learners from target groups and negotiating with them to provide learning opportunities they will value. We are less good at identifying these learners when they enrol as individuals within the broad open-access curriculum. Among the thousands of enrolled learners will be many who could benefit from focused support for progression. We need to spread the good practice developed in our national priority provision and community development projects, identify learners' support needs and be alert to those who just need encouragement and specific guidance to make a step-change in their learning and expectations.

Effective teaching and learning forms the basis of progression. However, a focus on progression has particular implications for the way the curriculum is developed and for information and guidance and learning support.

### Progression within the broad open-access curriculum

Building progression opportunities throughout provision does not mean imposing a focus on ends and outcomes that does not match learners' interests and motivations. However, some of the characteristics of programmes that have been tailored to support progression can be spread more widely in adult learning. One way to approach this is to think about the curriculum in terms of the 'what', the 'how' and the 'who'. The 'what' includes subject content and skills to be developed. The 'how' covers teaching and learning strategies and programme design. The 'who' recognises the importance of the identity, experience and motivations the learners bring to the programme and the differing roles they may associate with learning and teaching. Thinking about the 'who' also highlights the ways in which social and cultural factors have shaped, and continue to shape, curriculum. It encourages practitioners to take a fresh look at the range of subject content, the 'what', and at their practice, the 'how', and develop an inclusive approach in dialogue with the group.

### **Staff development exercise for groups or individuals**

- 1** Consider the following characteristics of provision that supports progression. The curriculum :
  - is built around the interface between the subject and the learners' interests and experience
  - draws on the learners' experience as a resource
  - focuses on process as well as content
  - clearly identifies the basic / key skills learners need to benefit fully on the course and either builds them in or ensures that individuals who are recruited can get the support they need
  - incorporates information / discussion about progression possibilities including referral to named contacts
  - engages learners in reviewing their progress individually and as a group, taking account of the identity they bring to learning and how they envisage their future progression.
- 2** Add any characteristics that you think are missing.
- 3** Arrange them under the 'what', 'how' and 'who' of curriculum.  
(You may want to put some aspects under more than one heading.)
- 4** When you have done this, think about whether a focus on the 'what', 'how' and 'who' could change programmes or sessions you plan or teach. Is there a strategy you can try out with a group?

## Developing progression routes

The first requirement is good information and it is impossible to plan strategically for progression without it. Staff at all levels need to take part in planning and promoting progression. It is not unusual for staff involved in developing courses and in teaching to have a fairly limited knowledge of the learning opportunities open to adults in the area. And if it is difficult for them to see the 'big picture' it can be even more so for learners and potential learners. The following case study shows how different providers can work together to improve information across a curriculum area. It also illustrates the potential to uncover latent demand and help learners turn interest into intention.

### Case study **Redbridge Institute of Adult Education**

#### **Progression project – Health and Fitness**

The Health and Fitness department at Redbridge Institute decided to improve the information, advice and guidance to learners and increase the number of learners progressing onto both accredited and non-accredited courses. The department offers many opportunities for lateral progression but few for progression onto a higher level or an accredited course. The department worked with the information and guidance unit, tutors, learners and colleagues from local colleges to gather information about other provision.

An 'exit strategy' ensures that, at the end of their course, learners are offered the opportunity of an interview with a learning adviser and receive a 'What next?' progression leaflet giving information about related courses offered by Redbridge Institute and by other local providers.

It is too early to track progression outcomes, but the initiative has uncovered a demand. In the strategy's first year, 40 people responded and requested an interview.

Good quality information is essential for learner progression (see Appendix 1, 'Presenting a progression route'). Having a good understanding of the curriculum and how it relates to other provision in the area will make it easier to open up the best possible range of opportunities for adults.

## Curriculum mapping

When you are scanning a large territory it is useful to have a map. The term 'curriculum mapping' is often used to describe processes which establish links within and between learning programmes. The kinds of information on these 'maps' and their uses vary according to context. They may refer to the range of learning opportunities and how they relate to each other, or to the relationship between the content in different learning programmes, modules or units. In basic skills, 'curriculum mapping' means relating materials, activities, learners' targets and learning outcomes to the national curricula for literacy, numeracy or ESOL. Depending on the purpose of the 'map', creating it involves different kinds of activities. The map might represent :

- progression links between learning programmes
- progression links between different parts of your provision (eg between basic skills and mainstream courses) and between your provision and that of other providers
- the curriculum in subject areas against a framework of levels
- the curriculum in subject areas and levels against centres or geographical areas.

Contemplation of what a multidimensional map might represent shows how important it is to decide what you want to get out of the process and the level of the organisation at which it can be done.

In adult and community learning there can be a particular value in :

- mapping subjects against levels, because of the large proportion of non-accredited learning
- developing a broader concept of curriculum mapping, including :
  - the flexible and incremental way in which adults plan their learning, how they develop their generic skills and confidence and make the progression jump when they are ready
  - how adults move across the boundaries between different kinds of learning and involvement in volunteering and community action.

## Case study Gloucestershire Adult Continuing Education and Training Service (ACET)

### Curriculum mapping

ACET included curriculum mapping as a topic within their curriculum review. Here are some of the questions they asked themselves.

- In practice, what are the links between :
  - consortium-funded work
  - targeted work
  - Family Language Literacy and Numeracy, including Keeping Up with the Children, Early Start and intensive programmes, Family Learning, First Steps, School Links
  - tasters and Bite-Size work
  - project work (eg co-financing work)
  - mainstream classes
  - what is offered by ACET and other providers?
- Do we need to improve and / or catalogue the links between these activities?
- How should we do this?

Curriculum maps can be very useful for identifying gaps in provision and suggesting areas in which progression links could be developed. However, a paper progression route (and there are plenty) is quite different from one that works. So, when establishing what you want to get out of curriculum mapping and what is best explored in other ways, it is well to remember Phyllis Pearsall who walked London to create the *A to Z*. She knew about the railway line that turned a whole row of streets into dead ends because she encountered it. Modern users of the *A to Z* who don't attend to detail can still make that mistake. Listening to learners is essential if planners are to find out about the barriers which make it difficult for learners to progress to other provision, whether they are practical barriers or the kind that involve feelings and perceptions.

## Establishing levels

The Learning and Skills Council requires providers to identify provision by level. Being able to describe the level or levels of work within a learning programme is fundamental to enabling progression. Applying levels to non-accredited work in adult and community learning needs careful development because learning programmes may successfully bring together beginners and accomplished learners, and learners' levels of qualifications do not necessarily correlate with the level at which they are learning. This means that learners enrolled at different levels may be taught within the same group. However, it is important that these complexities should not discourage practitioners from developing a common understanding of levels across provision and applying it within their subject areas. Having level descriptors to work with will help them differentiate between the needs of the learners, assess their progress and achievements and describe the outcomes of the learning programme.

Being confident about the levels at which learners are working within the non-accredited curriculum makes it easier to map it against qualification-bearing and other accredited provision. This is fully compatible with assessing and recognising learners' achievements on the basis of 'distance travelled'. For a discussion of the distinction between assessing achievement in terms of level and distance travelled, with examples, see Nashashibi (2002, pp10–13). For a staff development exercise 'What level is it?' see Nashashibi and Watters (2003, p46).

There is a misleading assumption that because non-accredited learning often provides the 'first rung' on a curriculum ladder most of it is at Level 1 or 2. Non-accredited work spans the levels. Learners are often working at Level 3 in non-accredited courses. The progression route for them may be into Access to Higher Education and other accredited Level 3 courses. Moving into an accredited course at the same level is likely to bring new and different challenges. Recognising the level that learners are achieving at and not underestimating it helps them gain the confidence to move on.

The National Qualifications Framework (see Appendix 2) provides a starting point for mapping your curriculum in levels. There are resources which can help you identify the levels of non-accredited programmes. Level descriptors are useful broad-brush descriptions and provide a language that is shared across disciplines.

The National Open College Network or the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS) level descriptors can be very useful pending the establishment of a national credit framework.

The levels come to life when they are applied to curriculum areas, subjects and courses. Staff development on this is often exciting because it engages tutors at the points of their greatest interest – their subjects and their learners. Qualification documents and accredited units provide subject-related resources and tutors can use them to help define what they already do and take from them what they see as beneficial to their learners. This detailed kind of curriculum mapping highlights the potential for learner progression and exposes unrealistic progression expectations.

## Progression routes and team leadership

When your curriculum is laid out according to level you may find yourself looking at potential progression routes that run counter to the way your staff are organised in teams. If, for example, you offer qualifications in a number of subjects but the tutors are in separate teams from those who teach non-accredited programmes in the same or related subjects, then you will need development across the teams, or even to reorganise them, to make the progression route a reality for learners.

Key elements in planning for progression are :

- having a curriculum structure which tutors and learners understand
- having clear information to enable learners to plan their programmes
- promoting active learning and recognising achievement
- developing good practice in assessment and giving feedback
- offering provision at more than one level
- having flexible delivery so that learners can move on quickly when the motivation is there and not have to wait till September
- devising 'bridging' courses to facilitate the move into mainstream provision from Entry level or courses for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities
- linking related subjects
- offering qualifications within progression routes which match learners' styles
- recognising the need for breadth and consolidation of learning and skills – learners cannot always progress from a Level 2 to a Level 3 course in one step
- building working links with other learning providers and engaging in partnerships to assess, create and improve progression links
- developing contacts and compacts to ease progression to other institutions.

## Wider benefits of learning

*Learners acquire knowledge, understanding and skills which are valuable to them and make a noticeable difference to their lives.*

ALI 2002, p8

Finding out how people value their learning and the difference it makes to their lives goes beyond recognising their progress and achievements and progression. It includes :

- how learners feel about their learning and its purpose in their lives
- what it contributes to their well-being
- what they now do which they didn't do before, or what they do differently.

The wider benefits of learning include :

- gaining confidence and enhancing self-esteem
- maintaining or improving physical or mental health
- 'keeping fit for learning' – able to use it when life change requires it
- developing local social involvements and more tolerant attitudes – contributing to the fabric of society
- using new knowledge and skills to benefit the family or community
- improving the environment.

These benefits can result as much from the process of participation as from the successful completion of learning programmes. Engagement in learning is not all future oriented.

Each course is, or should be, complete in itself. To treat a course as no more than a ladder to the next course can have the effect of belittling the experience. As one tutor said, 'It's like saying that Monday is just a way of getting to Tuesday' (Adkins 1997, p135, quoted in McGivney 2002).

## **Benefits to individuals bring benefits to the community**

Learning can help individuals improve their health and well-being by bringing enjoyment and by encouraging them to engage actively with others in the community. The case study from the Isle of Wight shows how a programme that is innovative and locally relevant – in this case the Carnival Island Performance Course – can spark off further initiatives.

### **Case study Isle of Wight Local Education Authority Arts Development Unit**

#### **Carnival Island Performance Course**

In the Isle of Wight, a learner who attended the Carnival Island Performance Course was able to develop the skills, ability and confidence to become tutor and founder of a local youth-based stilt troupe.

The course, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), aimed to develop the performance skills of participants, thereby moving them towards employment. This learner had previously been part of an alternative culture. As a result of doing the course, he submitted a successful bid for funding to form the troupe. He organised taster workshops in local schools, as a result of which 15 young people were recruited; mostly, they had not performed well at school or had other personal difficulties. The troupe, which specialises in Moko Jumbie stilt walking (originating in the Caribbean island of St Kitts), has performed at a number of events and is now learning circus skills to complement their stilt walking. Feedback suggests that the young people are fitter and healthier as a result of doing the course.

The learner / tutor will continue to work with the adult and community learning service to plan future similar activities to benefit members of the community.

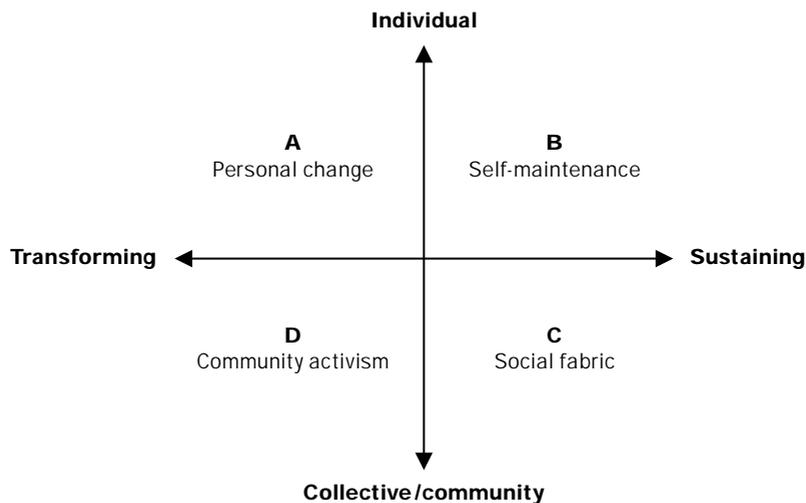
## Sustaining and transforming

Adult learners may look to learning to support them in their daily life and want learning to enrich their life rather than changing it in radical ways. Work at the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning suggests that it is helpful to think of the impact of learning as a continuum with sustaining learning at one end and transforming learning at the other, as Figure 4 illustrates. The learner success stories that brighten our evaluation reports and feature in newsletters tend to be at the transforming end of the continuum. A systematic and more comprehensive analysis of impact is likely to ground them by providing evidence of the ways in which learning helps maintain and improve the quality of life for individuals and communities.

*A very general but crucial conclusion is that the sustaining effect of education is pervasive, operates at many levels and is critical to the lives of countless individuals and communities ... Education transforms people's lives but also, less spectacularly, enables them to cope with the multifarious stresses of daily life as well as discontinuous and continuous social change and contributes to others' well-being by maintaining community and collective life.*

Schuller *et al.* 2004 [in press]

**Figure 4 Matrix classifying the effects of learning**



Source: Schuller *et al.* 2004 [in press]

The quadrants in Figure 4 may be thought about in this way:

- A Personal change** The impact of learning is seen in the most dramatic stories of learner achievement
- B Self-maintenance** The impact of learning helps individuals to continue to live fulfilling and useful lives
- C Social fabric** The sustaining effects of learning on individuals lead to understanding of each others' values and positions and enhanced communication
- D Community activism** The impact of learning leads to group and community action and active citizenship.

In discussion of quadrant B ('self-maintenance') the authors reported:

*We have many instances of individuals reporting to us that without their class they would have lapsed into depression; or were already somewhat depressed as they now realise, but were first stopped from sliding further down and then had their mental health improved.*

Schuller *et al.* 2004 [in press]

These benefits were being experienced by learners within mainstream provision. Recognition of the role that learning can play in improving mental health has led to the growth of provision which targets learners with mental health difficulties, and expertise and materials to support this are being developed. Recognising achievement is once again a theme:

*Be creative about defining the experiences which can be measured, as this will be a very individual process, eg turning up with support, or without support*

*...feeling comfortable with other learners (saying hello, sitting next to someone, smiling, joining in a small group discussion, asking a question in front of the whole group)...*

Mather and Atkinson 2003, p57

A programme in Cambridgeshire not only demonstrates this sustaining influence on individuals but shows how it can lead to active engagement with others and the taking on of voluntary roles.

## Case study **Cambridgeshire Community Education Services**

### **A partnership with Health for Life**

Now in its seventh year, the Health for Life project makes a difference to the well-being of isolated and vulnerable people. Health and social care workers see it as a way of improving the confidence, health and independence of their patients, who in turn are reducing their dependence on medicines and need for professional support.

A variety of activities, including basic skills, computing, art and craft, and exercise, are offered. Participants are supported and accompanied to sessions. As referral numbers grow, more volunteers are recruited – some of them are ex-referrals.

One woman suffering from depression and anxiety disorder had given up her job and she experienced feelings of helplessness, low self-esteem, reduced motivation and concentration. She started attending classes where she quickly made friends, enjoyed the company of others and learned new skills. Not only does she now support other learners, but her increased self-confidence and self-esteem mean that she is planning to return to work.

Family learning programmes are designed to make full use of the wider benefits of learning. At the heart of the provision is the idea that learning is contagious, that it will have a beneficial effect on relationships and that relationships will promote learning. The powerful changes which learning brings to individuals sometimes cause turbulence. Engaging in learning can take time away from the family and the changes it brings can be difficult to manage. Family learning programmes bring learning into family life in engaging and inclusive ways.

Research on family learning programmes reinforces the message that taking on new roles can lead to participation in further learning. It also stresses the need to support progression into new kinds of learning.

Some family learning programmes focus on literacy, language and numeracy while others offer a variety of activities and learning opportunities reflecting the broad curriculum of adult and community learning. They complement each other and the broader curriculum attracts parents who do not have basic skills or language needs back into learning. This can encourage a positive attitude to lifelong learning among other members of the family. There is an opportunity to build on good practice in this area which has successfully engaged men and older learners in learning.

Findings in a recent evaluation report on family learning not only confirm the importance of a wide range of learning activities as the basis for progression but also highlight the potential for role development and the importance of supporting transition.

Recommendations for future development and research include:

- recruiting 'family learning advisers' from among parents who have experienced learning and progressed
- developing mutual support networks and support for family learners moving on as groups, to make stronger links between family programmes and neighbourhood renewal
- developing practitioners' skills in supporting parent learners in transition and progression, both in their current and prospective learning activities.

The report also emphasises the shaping power of motivation.

The motivation for engagement – assisting their children's progress – can become limiting for parents. They may need encouragement to pursue interests of their own which are not of obvious and direct benefit to their children. A high level of tailored support is needed to enable parents to progress and achieve their goals (Haggart, Horne and Taylor 2003).

## Benefits to groups and to the environment

The case study from Medway shows how learning can grow within projects which have other main purposes. Activities were 'task-driven' with the aim to improve the environment. As is often the case, this project, which has led to a number of community benefits, has also been the trigger for progression to new roles and further learning for some of the participants.

### Case study **Medway Adult and Community Learning Service**

#### **White Road Community Learning project**

An environmental art and gardening project has made a big difference to the environment of a community centre. The project, which equips learners with the skills to improve the environment of a community centre, was set up in Medway in December 2000. All the learners enrolling were women, some of whom were lone parents with children.

Activities have been task-driven, developing in response to the needs and interests of participants. So far, they have painted two murals, and designed and constructed wooden play features and hard and soft landscaping for the community garden. The women have learned new skills and undertaken tasks typically associated with 'men's work' such as using power tools and mixing concrete. They have organised themselves, attend regularly, and work together as a team and in partnership with other organisations and individuals to make a difference to community life.

A number of the participants have gone on to take a City and Guilds exam course in gardening and are helping to set up new projects in other community centres, giving advice and acting as mentors. They are looking into the possibility of setting up a small community-based gardening business.

## Evaluating impact

Whether you are looking at the big picture or evaluating a course, finding out about impact means finding out about what has worked well and what hasn't. The process includes discovering why a project has not been well received or a target not met and using the information as a basis for improvement. And knowing about the impact of your provision means you can celebrate good practice and build on it.

Success in this context means achieving what was planned – there may well also be additional unplanned benefits, and the outcomes of action can lead to the modification of aims.

There are two important approaches – one that starts from the provision and examines its effects on those taking part and one that stands further back and looks at the provision in the light of its overarching mission and strategic aims. Both form part of the annual self-assessment process.

Impact can be considered in relation to :

- communities
- identified groups
- families
- individuals

and can be explored at a number of levels :

- the organisation as a whole and all its provision
- provision in centres or localities
- provision by curriculum area
- learning programmes, projects and activities.

Whatever the level you are looking at, impact is essentially about 'before' and 'after'. This means you need a reliable description of the starting point. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence contribute to this. Quantitative evidence is vital when you want to gain a picture of impact across a swathe of provision or your service as a whole. A combination of quantitative and qualitative information collected and analysed in ways that make it possible to inter-relate the two can help you create a multidimensional picture of what is happening among the learners in your service.

## **Expectations relate to the kinds of investment, kinds of provision and kinds of learners**

The kind of 'differences' learning programmes can make and are expected to make vary from person to person but it is reasonable to expect that on average they will relate to the kind of investment the learner is making as well as to the quality of the provision. Adults take up learning opportunities which are manageable within the economy of their lives. Their learning programmes are often fitted around their employment, business or caring commitments; or they are accessible – and this may mean local – and they don't make too great a claim on the household budget. In effect, there may be other responsibilities and considerations that take priority. But this doesn't mean that the learning is not valued. The very absence of other opportunities for personal development or engagement in learning or in the community can add to its importance. Often learners will say 'This is something for me'.

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration when evaluating impact. These include:

- the nature of the learning programme
- whether it has been developed in partnership, in which the partners can help evaluate impact
- the target groups, where applicable, and recruitment strategies
- how the programme is marketed – this will affect learners' expectations.

## Quantitative evidence

The information you gather to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and other funding bodies, and for the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), will not only enable you to gain an overall picture of the impact of your service to date but will help you plan for future success. For discussion on how to use information which will help you evaluate impact and be of use to the service as a whole see Merton (2003).

The use of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) will help you monitor progress in widening participation. They will link the evidence on take up of learning opportunities they gather with progression and other outcomes across learning routes by different social groups. This should help providers identify progression difficulties and disparities associated with particular groups, for example based on gender, age or ethnic grouping.

Having reliable data in line with LSC and ALI requirements can tell you a lot about your learners including:

- the proportion of adults in your area who are participating and the proportion of these who are 'new learners'
- who is participating (age, gender, ethnicity, disability)
- what they are doing
- how well learners on qualification courses are achieving.

If effective systems for recording achievements are in place, you will also have information on how well learners on non-accredited courses are doing.

By analysing your data you will know whether particular groups are more likely to participate, to complete their learning programmes and to achieve. By looking at this data in relation to areas of learning, or by centre or, indeed, by learning programme or project, you will discover patterns which will enable you to increase the impact of what you do.

Whether you are looking at participation, retention or achievement, the data raises questions you need to follow up. If, for example, your data shows you that a much higher proportion of learners achieve their learning goals in some areas of learning than in others you need to know why. Are the methods used for assessing and recording achievement sufficiently consistent and reliably implemented for the comparison to be meaningful? If not, then you have identified your improvement area. If the methods are sound then there may be good practice to be spread and poor practice to be improved.

Using a variety of methods to collect qualitative information will help you bring the quantitative evidence to life. This can include having systems for :

- collecting case studies which follow a standard format
- keeping records of exhibitions and performances
- asking the kinds of questions in evaluation forms that tell you what people are doing with what they have learned, and analysing the replies
- having record cards for tutors and learners to record progression outcomes whenever they come up
- using a range of strategies for listening to learners (see Ravenhall 2001)
- consultation with local stakeholders.

## Collecting information about progression

In this guide we use 'progression' to mean movement as a result of learning. It includes further learning, employment, freelance work or new voluntary roles. Inevitably most of this happens after the learning programme has finished. What kinds of progression data can we gather that will be meaningful and how can we go about it?

First of all it is important to be realistic. Universities spend a great deal of money contacting former students for a very partial response, and in their case many of the students have been on substantial programmes including full-time degrees. How then can providers expect to find out about the progression of large numbers of part-time learners on programmes which mostly range from 6 to 60 hours? A strategic approach is needed. In establishing your objectives you need to distinguish between:

- planned progression and actual progression
- progression within your provision and progression outside it
- progression expectations relating to different kinds of provision.

With these in mind you can decide what you most need to know and what can be learned in a cost-effective way. If you provide a large and varied portfolio of learning programmes, staff across the organisation will already be using a range of methods for gathering progression information, but you may need to consider how you can bring these together and apply them in a planned way. This is useful not only because it will help you see as much of the 'big picture' as you can, but also because it will help establish benchmarks you can use within the organisation.

## Planned progression and actual progression

Quantitative information about planned progression can be fairly comprehensive and gathered near the end of the learning programme while the learners are still there. This can be recorded under categories on the back of each class register. You might want to define your own categories, for example:

- continuing on the same course
- continuing on another course
- continuing on another course at a higher level
- continuing at another provider
- not decided yet
- we don't know.

For an example linked more closely to the individualised learner record (ILR) see Appendix 3 'Recording students' intended progression'.

Kensington and Chelsea College has developed a learning postcard which becomes a record of achievement for learners on short courses and this concludes with the question, 'Now I want to:...' (see Appendix 4). This can provide both qualitative and quantitative information. The value of the postcard is seen to be as much, or more, about the dialogue it can trigger between the learner and the tutor than about the data it produces on learners' pathways, but it does provide some information on these.

Finding out about actual progression inside the institution depends on developing tracking systems and this will become easier in the future when data systems come to include a unique learner identifier. It is important to make the data you have available to team leaders and others who have an interest in finding out about their own learners' progression and will use it in their reports.

Ways of finding out about progression to other providers or into new employment, freelance work or roles include:

- contacting learners after they have finished their courses – usually on a sampling basis or to answer particular research questions or through 'keep in touch' events
- working retrospectively – asking current learners what they did before the course they are now on.

Finding and using evidence about progression to best advantage requires the input of staff who manage information and of staff who will interrogate it more closely and make sense of it in depth, such as curriculum leaders or widening participation coordinators. In that way quantitative and qualitative information can enrich each other.

## Looking forwards

Projecting your visions and trying to bring them to fruition in practice; finding out how close you are to achieving them – what's going well and what isn't – is part of the daily round of tutors and managers.

There are many elements in the alchemy of learning and there is usually something unexpected when the outcomes are reviewed. The unexpected bit can be the crowning achievement. It can be transforming – and it can bring the realisation that there is a lot more work to do. Evaluating the impact of provision is a formative process and can be powerful. It brings clarity to improvement planning and contributes to the continuing process of development and change. This formative aspect is something to welcome, and welcoming it warmly chimes with our respect for the choices and the autonomy of adult learners, and their role in making the judgements and shaping the future.

## Appendix 1 Presenting a progression route

### Languages at Morley College

At Morley College we offer a wide-ranging foreign languages programme. We can help you achieve your goal whether you learn for pleasure, work, or to obtain a qualification. We look forward to your comments on our programme and how we can further meet your needs.

### Which stage should I join ?

**Stage 1** This is divided into three units :

1A is for absolute beginners with no previous knowledge. Courses at this level aim for social survival in various everyday situations.

1B is for those who have attended the previous term or have the equivalent of 20 to 26 hours of study.

1C is for those who have attended two previous terms or have the equivalent of 40 to 52 hours of study.

**Stage 2** For those with the equivalent of one year's tuition (60 to 80 hours) .

**Stage 3** This level is comparable to GCSE and NVQ Level 2. Learners will have had the equivalent of two years' tuition (120 to 160 hours) .

**Stage 4** This level is between GCSE and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level can provide the groundwork for GCE AS /A2 level study.

**Stage 5** This level is comparable to AS /A2 level, NVQ Level 3.

**Stage 6** This is very advanced post-A2 level work comparable to NVQ Level 4. Learners can prepare for Institute of Linguists' Intermediate and Final Diplomas. Entry for the exam will be as external candidates.

### Examinations/Certification :

We offer a variety of exams to learners at all levels – London Open College Network (LOCN) Entry level, GCSE, GCE AS /A2 level. For Certification in French, German, Italian, and Spanish at stage 4 and for the Institute of Linguists' Certificates and Diplomas at stages 5 and 6 you can register as external candidates. Your tutor will discuss exam possibilities and additional registration fees at the first meeting.

## Appendix 2 The National Qualifications Framework

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is currently undertaking a review of the National Qualifications Framework. An update on the framework is available on the QCA website ([www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)).

Level of qualification	General		Vocationally related	Occupational
5	Higher-level qualifications BTEC Higher Nationals			Level 5 NVQ
4				Level 4 NVQ
3 (advanced)	A-level	Free-standing mathematics units Level 3	Vocational A-level (Advanced GNVQ)	Level 3 NVQ
2 (intermediate)	GCSE grade A*–C	Free-standing mathematics units Level 2	Intermediate GNVQ	Level 2 NVQ
1 (foundation)	GCSE grade D–G	Free-standing mathematics units Level 1	Foundation GNVQ	Level 1 NVQ
Entry level	Entry level certificate			

## Appendix 3 Recording students' intended progression

At Richmond Adult Community College staff are required to collect information about what each learner intends to do next, at the end of the course. This information is entered on the back of the class register using the following codes :

### **Student destinations**

- 1 Continuing with this course next year
- 2 New course / level of study at RACC
- 3 Further education (not RACC)
- 4 Higher education
- 15 Employment, new or changed, with formal training programme
- 16 Employment, new or changed, with no formal training programme
- 17 Continuing employment with formal training programme
- 18 Continuing employment with no formal training programme
- 19 Other training programme – no employment
- 98 Other



## References, further reading and websites

### Note

Back-up material for this booklet and others in the series can be found on [www.qualityACL.org.uk](http://www.qualityACL.org.uk)

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### **Useful websites**

[www.ali.gov.uk](http://www.ali.gov.uk)

[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

[www.LSDA.org.uk](http://www.LSDA.org.uk)

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

[www.nicats.ac.uk](http://www.nicats.ac.uk)

[www.qualityACL.org.uk](http://www.qualityACL.org.uk)

[www.s4s.org.uk](http://www.s4s.org.uk)

## **adult and community learning quality support programme**

The Adult and Community Learning Quality Support Programme is a 3-year programme to support ACL providers to meet quality requirements of inspection and funding agencies and improve their provision. It is run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) in partnership with the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Details of the programme, extra copies of this guide and back-up materials are available on the website [www.qualityACL.org.uk](http://www.qualityACL.org.uk)

These guides are currently available :

- *Curriculum leadership in adult learning*
- *Equality and diversity in adult and community learning: a guide for managers*
- *Fit for purpose: self-assessment for small providers*
- *Involving tutors and support staff in the adult and community learning quality agenda*
- *Learning in progress: recognising achievement in adult learning*
- *Listening to learners*
- *Making a difference: leading and managing for quality improvement in adult and community learning*
- *Managing staff development in adult and community learning: reflection to practice*
- *Mind the gap: making health and safety manageable in adult and community learning*
- *Need to know: making sense of information needs in adult and community learning*
- *Observation of teaching and learning in adult education: how to prepare for it, how to do it and how to manage it*
- *Self-assessment and development planning for adult and community learning providers*
- *Sink or swim? Guidance and support in adult and community learning*
- *Using quality schemes in adult and community learning: a guide for managers.*

