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BUILD A BETTER BACCALAUREATE

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SCHOOLSWEEK

Schools Week is a newspaper dedicated reporting on news, analysis, jobs and fun in the further education sector.

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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

LAURA MCINERNEY
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The Conservative party this week said it would make the subjects in the English Baccalaureate compulsory up to GCSE. The Labour party want to make English and maths compulsory to age 18. Both signal a political will for pupils to have a "broad entitlement" to certain subjects.

For schools, this can be a pain. Who has enough maths and English teachers to make this happen? What if students don't want to do a foreign language?

And, more importantly, where is the entitlement to other things – to drama club, or helping others, or trips to a museum, or the opportunity to explore a question you're interested in?

One of the saddest phrases I ever saw, though sadly I can't remember where, said: "You might be the greatest ice sculptor in the world – but you'll never know if you always live in the desert."

If schools are not careful, and they solely focus on academic subjects, they can unwittingly become that desert.

Hence, some of the best minds across England have been discussing tentative steps towards a "National Baccalaureate" framework. Many of those people feature in this supplement.

They want a curriculum that is rigorous, and involves academic subjects, but also values many other things – arts, dance, volunteering your time, climbing mountains.

In these pages you'll see ideas for how a better "Bacc" could therefore be built. Ideas include the principles on which change could happen plus thoughts on the subjects and activities that should be included. as well as ideas for how it could be funded.

But mostly, we hope this supplement inspires you to think about the opportunities your school offers. And to consider whether your children are likely to become the great ice sculptors that they could be.

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MICHELLE NORTH

HEAD OF ENGLISH

View from OCR

Advertorial

It is no surprise subjects which have been classified as contributing to the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) have seen an increase in uptake. There is the old adage that you get more of what you measure and so the introduction of the EBacc has seen a resurgence of numbers to certain subjects, particularly languages.

However, the EBacc is a performance measure; it is not a qualification and it is not mandatory for all school students. The true impact of students taking these subjects in greater numbers will likely not be known for some time, despite the introduction of "destination" measures for Key Stage 4 performance tables. It is probably the impact on medium to long term transitions and career outcomes that would be more interesting, though more challenging to quantify.

But I would like to focus on English in particular. There are a series of questions that we as a team of English specialists have been discussing both internally and in our conversations with teachers. These are:

Will new progress measures improve the breadth and quality of the English curriculum at GCSE?

An interesting question! Although this is clearly the desired impact, whether this will be realised has recently been put into question by the increasingly vocal debate about whether performance tables are the only consideration in curriculum construction. We have noticed schools making their own decisions about the ways they construct the curriculum for their students, regardless of the impact this may have on their league table position.

Should all students study both English language and English literature?

I absolutely believe in the value of both areas of study to all students. Yet with the changes to the English GCSEs, and the demise of the combined "English" qualification, schools could well be back to the same old choice of whether to offer only English language to some students – and English literature in addition to a select group. Will English literature become the provision of the elite? Do the progress 8 measures guard against that? The government certainly seem to think so.

While I am not convinced league tables or progress measures are the best way of ensuring that students get a broad curriculum, I do believe that, were teachers relieved of the pressure of having their every move weighed, measured, evaluated and graded, they would have the space to engage in enriching students' lives. After all, how many teachers entered the profession because they believed their life needed more judgement?

We have been told what the study of English literature should look like at GCSE – and it is no great surprise that aspects of the set text lists for all awarding bodies are drawn from a common pool of texts, especially when it comes to Shakespeare or pre-19th century texts. After all, there are only so many texts from the 1800s which one can realistically expect 16 year olds to be able to engage meaningfully with – especially with the demise of tiering.

Are we helping students to develop a love of reading – or even a love of learning?

Well, to be fair, I would hope that teachers, parents, librarians, Hollywood (did I really just say that?!), students themselves, and their friends, would be able to work that particular piece of magic. Certainly subject content from the Department for Education, and set texts from any awarding body are not going to achieve that aim, however much we might want them to.

I would love to be able to create a specification that will inspire and engage every student. If anyone has a clear idea of how this might be achieved, I would love to hear about it! The reality is that GCSEs are not designed to test engagement or enjoyment. Perhaps that is what the EBacc, or Progress 8 measures are missing.

Do we need an Extended Project (EPQ) for GCSE students; an opportunity to demonstrate real engagement and independence?

Ultimately, are we asking the wrong questions when trying to measure a school's quality, value or success when we use GCSE results as the standard against which they are measured?

Education needs to be broader than just the exam syllabus, so our judgments of a school's quality and success should be based on a broader set of indicators.

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A history of baccalaureates and diplomas

SAM BAARS | RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT LKMCO

Although their history stretches back more than two centuries in some European countries, baccalaureates are a relatively recent innovation within the English education system. Our attempts to move away from separate "academic" and "vocational" routes to a single, broad-based curriculum can be traced back at least thirty years. Yet, three substantial reviews of post-16 qualifications later and our own fledgling "baccs" are still far from achieving this aim.

Baccalaureates and diplomas are single qualifications that bring together a range of subjects and skills, often spanning the traditional academic/vocational divide. Generally structured around a "core" and a set of "options", they are designed to ensure that all students develop a common set of skills whilst being able to specialise in an area of their choice.

On the continent the baccalaureate approach goes back as far as the 18th century. In England, the first steps towards this system were not taken until economic reality, and youth unemployment, forced the government's hand. So in the early 80s governments and employers became fixated on overhauling post-16 education around the concepts of "basic standards" and "common entitlement".

Vocational education was reformed first. The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) was established in 1982, tasked with improving vocational education. It created the GNVQ – introduced in 1991 – which incorporated mandatory "key skills". However, the new key skills were not made a requirement of GCSEs and A levels, and so did not form a "common entitlement" for all post-16 students.

The 1996 Dearing Review revived the notion of key skills and argued they should be offered universally. Within four years, "Curriculum 2000" introduced Key Skills qualification in Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology. These were offered to students on all 16-19 courses but they were not mandatory.

Unified qualifications between academic and vocational qualifications were also still missing. A second big review of 14-19 education would be required to set this in motion.

The Tomlinson Report of October 2004 proposed the wholesale replacement of GCSEs, A levels and vocational qualifications with a single diploma, containing a common core of key skills.

In response, the Labour government said it would introduce the first 14-19 Diploma in England in 2008. However, in a major departure from Tomlinson's proposals, the 14-19 Diploma would merely be a new set of vocational qualifications, alongside GCSEs and A levels. Diplomas were offered on 14 vocational "lines" and merely replaced GNVQs.

In 2007, a move was made to give diplomas a new destiny with a rebrand from "Specialised Diplomas" to "Diplomas", including science, languages and the humanities. In reality, the end of the 14-19 Diploma was nigh. The newly elected government in 2010 ended the qualification.

Since 2010, the principles of basic standards and a common entitlement have been interpreted more narrowly through the introduction of the "baccs".

The academic EBacc, introduced in 2010, requires 14 to 16 year olds to study a given "basket" of subjects: English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) certificate, which was mooted to replace GCSEs by 2017, was abandoned in early 2013. The EBacc is therefore not a qualification, nor is it compulsory, but it at the core of new performance is measures through which secondary schools will be judged.

In 2014 a new vocational TechBacc was introduced as an alternative to A levels. The TechBacc has three components: a "high quality" level 3 vocational qualification; an extended project (a familiar element from Tomlinson's proposals a decade earlier), and a level 3 "core maths" qualification.

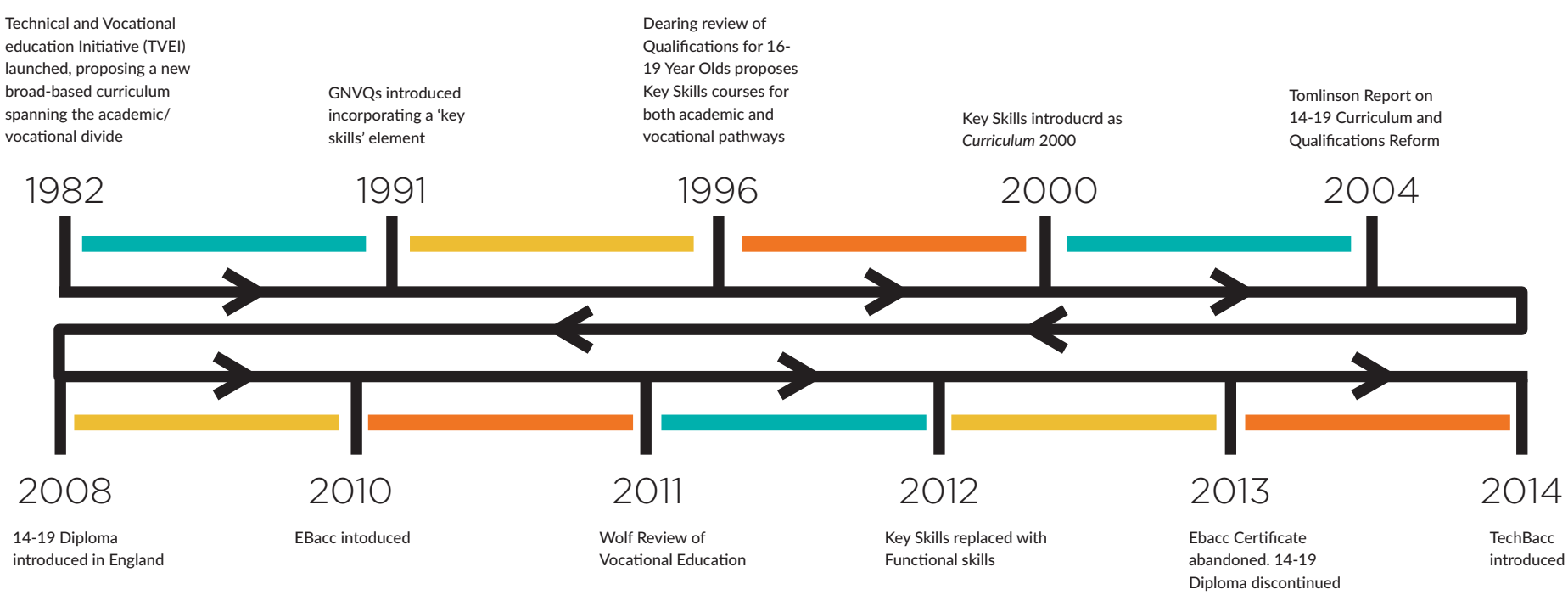
While these baccalaureates are new, pupils in England have been sitting the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB) since 1971. Established in 1968 and delivered at 153 schools in the UK, it as a niche but increasingly popular alternative to A levels. Alongside the IB Diploma is the IB Career-Related Certificate (IBCC) which combines two subjects drawn from the more academic IB Diploma with career-related study – bridging the vocational/academic divide.

Since 2003, the Welsh education system has also offered its own baccalaureate, which includes key skills, community participation and an individual investigation. The Welsh Baccalaureate is available at three levels, with the Advanced Diploma equivalent to an A grade at A level.

Given the range of reviews, reforms and new qualifications introduced during the last three decades, the current system of GCSEs, A levels and vocational qualifications is still surprisingly similar to the education system of the 1980s. We are some way from a comprehensive "basic standard" and "comprehensive entitlement". But perhaps the next baccalaureate chapter will be penned by the profession. Plans by the Headteachers' Roundtable and the National Baccalaureate Trust suggest schools might create their own "plug-in and play" baccalaureate, based on a "comprehensive entitlement" framework.

Only time will tell if this approach might finally work.

TIMELINE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIPLOMAS AND BACCALAUREATES IN ENGLAND



What happened at the Natio

KEN SPOURS

Developing 14-19 baccalaureates in an English context – what can we learn from our past?

Among developed systems, the English upper secondary education system (14-19 phase) could be seen as internationally deviant insofar as most young people elect to take single subjects - about 8-10 at GCSE and 3-4 at A level.

England is an exception in two respects. The most striking feature is the reduction in the number of subjects post-16 compared to other systems that remain broad up to the age of 18/19.

And linked to this is the absence of a broad curriculum that encourages not only the continuation of broad and balanced subject knowledge, but also the wider skills required for the 21st century. It is only in vocational education that students take something remotely resembling a baccalaureate (e.g. BTEC National Diplomas).

Nevertheless, baccalaureate ideas and developments have been on the English landscape for decades, starting with the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the early 1970s and followed in the last 25 years by numerous proposals for unified frameworks that embrace both general and vocational education.

There are also several small-scale developments in operation. In 2015 students, as well as the IB, can take the AQA Bac, the Pre-U qualification and locally-designed Modbac or Sixth Form Bac. In Wales all 14-19 year olds are now taking the Welsh Bac. Despite a rich curriculum history, in England baccalaureates have always remained largely below the radar. GCSEs and A levels continue to dominate.

All that now is changing and there may be the makings of a broad political consensus for reform. Due to pressures from the raising of the participation age, globalisation and the need for 21st century competences, all parties now agree on the need for mathematics until 19 and for pupils to complete a research project. In effect, they all agree that elective single subjects are not enough for either university or working life.

However, while a baccalaureate era is dawning in England, not everyone will agree about its precise form or how the system should be reformed. So what can we learn from our recent past to help craft a consensus?

First, we must recognise that the academic/vocational divide does not work. It has left academic programmes very narrow by forgoing broader skills and has impoverished vocational learning by not developing broader knowledge.

The current economy demands we close this gap, not widen it. Here lies the case for a unified framework combining the best of academic and vocational learning so that all young people are equipped to think, as well as do.

Second, we should understand why government-sponsored broad qualifications – such as GNVQs and the 14-19 Diplomas – have not endured. The main reason is they were added onto an already crowded qualifications marketplace to compete with A levels and BTECs. Any new baccalaureate should not be an additional qualification, but a comprehensive curriculum framework that embraces, enhances and rationalises existing qualifications.

Third, and linked to this, we should be clear that government-led reform, imposed from above and implemented too quickly, can kill a good idea. That is why a new baccalaureate framework must harness existing good baccalaureate and curriculum practices already in existence. Good practice cannot be rushed, reform has to be gradual, winning consensus and bottom-up support at every stage.

Looking back over the last 25 years (starting in 1990 with IPPRs "A British Baccalaureate", then the Tomlinson Diploma in 2004, and now in 2015 with the proposal for a "National Baccalaureate") we can see that ambitious curriculum and qualification proposals will not go away.

But if the time of the baccalaureate is to arrive and become permanent we have to create not only the best possible design, but the right kind of conditions for its success, particularly at the level of the school, college and workplace where it will be implemented.

Governments can provide the message that it will happen this time and fund what will be an expanded curriculum (something that will not be easy).

But above all, what a new government should do is to sit down with the practitioners and researchers who understand both the past and the present educational landscape, to ensure we can apply the lessons of the past before we move slowly to make what will be possibly the most important curriculum and qualification change in England since the early 1950s.

Guests at the National Baccalaureate Summit held at Highbury Grove School in November 2014

Tom Sherring

Over the last two years I have been working with colleagues from the Headteachers' Roundtable and Whole Education to devise a workable 14-19 baccalaureate model using existing qualifications.

Our driving motivation has always been to create a framework that a) gives value to all the learning and personal development that happens outside the confines of examinations; b) is challenging and aspirational at every level and c) is fully inclusive, offering paths to success for all learners in our schools.

Our feeling was that a wider movement would be necessary to give our baccalaureate model the credibility students deserve.

Over the last few months, we have held two summit meetings involving the significant players from across the system – all those we could think of with an interest in developing a National Baccalaureate for England. Representatives came from all the

nal Baccalaureate Summit?

LAURA MCINERNEY

Watching the National Baccalaureate Summit unfold at Highbury Grove, I am reminded of the day in 2010 when a Department for Education policy advisor said the Coalition would be stopping "the Diploma". I sunk my head onto the table, and mimicked bashing it.

It was not just the time teachers had put into creating the "Diploma" qualification. It was that its wide focus made such a difference to the pupils who completed it.

Unlike GCSEs and A levels, where pupils shuffle from lesson to lesson, knowing that memory and writing skill is all they must master, Diploma students did all manner of things. They interviewed people working in their area of interest. They did "functional skills" problems. A key requirement of was a "project" of the pupils' choosing. One of mine investigated whether it was more expensive to have a horse or a car as your main form of transport in Hackney. (Short answer: car).

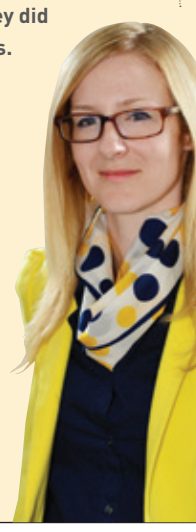
By contrast, the "English Baccalaureate", put in place by the Coalition, is simply a set of traditionally examined allegedly "academic" subjects.

But what the National Baccalaureate gathering proves is that, in doing so, the Coalition missed a trick.

Why can a diploma not bring together the academic qualification of GCSEs with an entitlement to all the other important activities?

Mike Hatcher, head of the Welsh Baccalaureate, explained how this was the aim for children in Wales. Peter Fidczuk described how young people the world over developed a plethora of skills in the International Baccalaureate.

Around the room like-minded headteachers who also want their students to have a broader education nodded along.



But how to win over staff and parents who have seen this kind of reform before and watched it fail?

Tom Sherrington's missionary zeal about the matter will help. As will his penchant for collaboration. He describes throughout how he wants school leaders to build the framework, but develop their own way of implementing it.

It is an honourable mission. The only question is whether or not it can be achieved.

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major examination boards, Ofqual, UCAS, the Department for Education, and a wealth of organisations committed to delivering the baccalaureate. Several schools and colleges have also been involved.

The summits were productive with strong agreement on the key principles. There is a clear consensus that a new "National Baccalaureate" would be a significantly positive development.

It would break down the technical-academic divide. It would provide a level of coherence to a highly fragmented system and provide a process by which personal development (including the nebulous notion of character-building) can be given explicit value alongside examination outcomes.

There was also consensus that, at this stage, we only need a very broad structure to define a baccalaureate. The emerging model from our discussions suggests four things are needed:

Core Learning: A levels, BTECs, TechBac, Pre-Us or any other major examinations – at the appropriate level. (Level 3 for the Advanced Baccalaureate, Level 2 for the Intermediate and so on).

Personal Project: an accredited project or essay such as the Extended Project Qualification or the Pre-U GPR course.

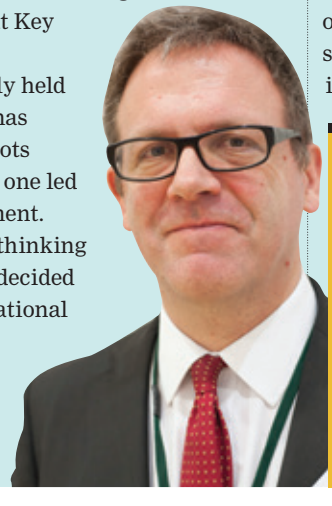
Personal Development Programme: a programme of learning experiences which might include requirements to feature physical, creative, cultural and community service elements, amounting to, for example, 100-150 hours of activity over two years.

Common Transcript: a record of all the baccalaureate components in a common format providing coherent information for universities and employers.

Within this structure, there is massive scope for different providers to devise their own models so that, over time, we arrive at a shared understanding of what is possible within prevailing funding constraints and what excellence might look like in different contexts – for example, an academic sixth form or a work-based technical qualification.

There is scope to develop a National Baccalaureate from Entry Level to Advanced. This is the key to the principle of inclusivity. Students at a special school would be aiming to complete their National Baccalaureate at the highest level and could attain just like their peers taking A levels.

Their learning would have common features – a personal development programme and a personal project, even if the core learning is radically different. Several colleagues are also interested in developing a parallel National Primary Baccalaureate, creating a framework for giving value to the learning beyond SATS at Key Stage 2.



It is a strongly held view that this has to be a grass-roots movement, not one led by the government. So, to turn the thinking into action we decided to create the National Baccalaureate Trust which comes into existence in the next few weeks.

The trust's main task is to build the alliance needed to get the National Baccalaureate for England off the ground. We need providers, educational bodies and member organisations of all kinds to become affiliated to the trust, to start developing and sharing bacc models.

A secondary function will be to lend official credibility to the emerging baccalaureate models that students undertake.

At my own school, Highbury Grove, we have already announced that we are offering the National Baccalaureate in the sixth form from September. It is real for us; it could be for you too.

If you are interested in joining this movement, please contact me (NatBaccTrust@gmail.com) and register to attend our National Baccalaureate Convention at Highbury Grove on June 25th where the National Baccalaureate Trust will be officially launched. We think the movement is unstoppable; the time is right and the demand is clear. Please join us and help to shape it.

We asked: What would b

LISA PETTIFER

English teacher | @Lisa7Pettifer

There is no such thing as the perfect system. Curriculum design is no exception to this. A baccalaureate needs to contrive an integrated blend of valued past learning, present cultural capacity and future personal and social needs, along with a provision for success and accomplishment for all children.

At their hearts, subjects are pure but their edges are blurred and they are friendly little critters, straying into each other's territories, taking on the flavour of the neighbour's domain and subsuming new spoils into their ever-changing profiles. Educational development has brought new specialisms, all clamouring to have their truths disseminated among the young – batons are ready to be passed, and co-ordination of that handover is crucial.

A baccalaureate, culminating in a single final score, enables comparison of students as well as allowing subject specific and cross-curricular study. Devising an English Baccalaureate as a full suite of subjects and learning opportunities needs to take account of various factors.

At 14+, the four to five year baccalaureate needs to offer breadth, depth, challenge and support. Students need to be able to emphasise their aptitudes and aspirations while still developing areas where they are not so proficient. Core aims and accomplishments need to be declared within a spectrum of success criteria. Non-negotiables are language/literature, maths and scientific knowledge; other areas of study include a range of optional units from computing and technology; performance – art, dance, drama, music, sport and health; humanities and foreign languages.

Different institutions could offer different elements at different times. Groupings could change termly, as schools and colleges could offer more of a "credits-based" model. Some students will be able to accumulate points more quickly in some areas; others may take more time to consolidate the essentials – points are for achievement: no passes or fails.

Some "world of work" considerations need to be acknowledged – work experience portfolio, a study of an industry or particular business or public sector problem enables youngsters to dip their toes into the waters of adult efficacy.

Provision of cross-curricular options also enable students to explore the interplay between subjects and ensures they do not "drop" skills that may be of future use. Projects in culture – arts or theatre, perhaps; service – a charity, sporting commitment, community endeavour or an environmental assignment, can enrich and stretch while also offering real world opportunities.

A baccalaureate is an opportunity to choose and shape a qualification that reflects each student's knowledge, skills and aspirations.

DAVID CROSSLEY

Executive Director of the Whole Education Network

My ideal baccalaureate is one that is values-led and designed around a set of key principles focused on meeting the needs of each and every young person.

These include:

- Enabling every young person to achieve their potential and more than they first thought
- Recognising and enabling each individual to develop their personal talents
- Being real, relevant and engaging
- Offering real choices and flexibility in terms of content, delivery and in ways it assesses outcomes
- Fostering, nurturing and assessing both conventional academic skills and outcomes but also wider skills and attributes too

This, to me, is embodied in the notion of a baccalaureate designed to offer of an entitlement to a "whole education". A commitment to this often forms a key part of the mission and aims of most schools, so what better way to realise these goals than to offer a baccalaureate designed deliver it to?

Simply focusing on improving mathematics and English and other exam results, while important, is not enough. We need to support the development of wider skills and attributes too if we are to really increase the life chances of all our young people and truly narrow the gap.

Approaches to assessment, to me, lies at the heart of a successful baccalaureate, as it determines what young people have to do to be successful. My ideal baccalaureate needs a more balanced approach to assessment.

What exactly are we assessing in a three-hour handwritten terminal examination, and are these the things we really value? Why not include moderated teacher assessment? Teachers see students' work every day and can formally assess a far wider range of skills than is currently asked of them.

When combined with an examination element, would we not get a better and more balanced assessment and a more professional profession too? We live in a digital age: high levels of competence in oracy, presentation, problem-solving, creativity, interpersonal engagement and teamwork are now expectations rather than desirables. Surely it is time to move forward from just assessing what students can write in a test?

So, in summary my ideal baccalaureate is one that encourages educators to be bold, unleashes their and their students' creativity, offers meaningful choices and measures and values a wide range of skills and attributes.

HELEN ROGERSON

Head of Science at Westonbirt School | @hrogerson

My perfect baccalaureate would have to offer flexibility and I would also like to see it help young people develop into adults, not only be about the end grades; a lot of schools and colleges do get this right currently.

My thoughts reflect how I felt as a teenager – desperate to "drop" subjects involving essays – and reflecting on this now I feel I was naïve. I also wished I had been able to keep up my French, as I just started to make progress at the end of year 11. My thoughts also take into account the breadth of opportunities in my current school and the desires of my own students to have breadth in their post-16 studies, in order to develop a range of skills for their future lives.

I prefer the A level format of three or four main subjects, which are free choices, rather than the International Baccalaureate (IB) format of six subjects across the spread of disciplines. The idea of doing the IB would have horrified me at 16 so I would not want students to have exams in areas they are not committed to. And, as a science teacher, I would want to ensure students are able to study more than two science subjects (or indeed more than one art subject) to maximise their degree choices.

The rest of the baccalaureate would be equally as flexible, but with the purpose of building experiences and filling skills and knowledge gaps left by their subject choices.

I appreciate this could be complicated, but would hope the school would develop a system that suited their conditions and students.

I would like all students to take part in a group activity or complete an individual open-ended project in an academic area or part of an industrial placement. I feel it is important that mathematics and language continue to be developed if the young person has not chosen this as one of their academic subjects.

I would like to see students involved in something related to health or fitness, like learning to cook or taking part in regular physical activities. I think there are already sufficient extra-curricular schemes to support this and these activities could overlap; the physical activity and the team experience could be playing netball for your school or club, being the financial director on a Young Enterprise team would form part of a team and the mathematical requirements.

I would ask schools to use pre-established point scores for previously recognised schemes and give them the flexibility to award scores as they see fit to other activities. The points acquired by the student would denote if they passed with merit or distinction.

My baccalaureate would be more about ensuring the entitlement of a deep academic education post-16 and giving young people a range of experiences that broaden their horizons.

pe in your perfect bacc?

JUDE ENRIGHT

Deputy headteacher | @judeenright

Options are rich for students with the grades and ambition to go to university, but over many years of teaching BTEC, GNVQ, key skills and functional skills and working on Diplomas, I have experienced the much documented failure in England to provide suitable vocational options for 16-18 year olds. Last year I was really impressed by the Hair and Beauty courses at Uxbridge College. It was the perfect blend of employer connections, the design of a professional working environment alongside classrooms, and academic offer to build skills from Foundation to Level 3, including high-quality learning support for students with special needs.

Aspirations for the students are sky high, and employment rates are better than those of most universities.

This was what the Diploma was trying to achieve, but employers were rarely represented at meetings I used to attend to plan for Diplomas. When we started discussing the "academic" Diploma for geography I knew the policy was doomed to fail.

GCSE results day 2014 taught me that things have not improved – vulnerable students with special educational needs can no longer stay into our sixth form to take Level 2 BTEC in business, as they used to do. The maths in the finance exam is really tough, and students have to pass it to achieve the qualification. This is not a suitable vocational alternative for some of our cohort.

The Technical Baccalaureate could model successful existing courses and Centres of Excellence could be established, with strong employer links, to develop the curriculum for other colleges and set standards.

Maths and English would also be studied to age 18. We need to accept schools cannot afford proper facilities for technical courses, so we should invest properly in colleges to ensure they do. Employer apprenticeship schemes need to be linked with these courses, and expanded.

England should have national standards at A level rather than norm referencing for results. Exams should be sat in April so that universities get results by June to make offers for September.

Then we should insist on national community service for all 18 year olds between May to August of year 13, however rich or poor their home backgrounds, and whether they were "NEET" or not. I am thinking of The Challenge here - the best achievement of the coalition government. This programme should be universal for all 18 year olds.

It would be good if achievements in those months, rather than a list of grades, become what define a young person. A "life ready" exam, if that is how you prefer to think, but no one would "fail" - all would develop their strengths and learn to work with their fellow citizens.

MICHAEL FORDHAM

Senior Teaching Associate, Cambridge University | @mfordhamhistory

In the 19th and 20th centuries the curriculum one received was, generally speaking, tied to one's social class. Children who would grow up to be factory workers, agricultural labourers or housewives did not need to know about the movement of the planets, the conjugation of foreign verbs or the causes of the collapse of the Roman Empire. By the end of the 19th century it was generally considered a good thing for all children to be able to read, write and do basic sums, before learning a trade: an academic education was understood not to be necessary for the majority of children. Basic skills and vocational training were the order of the day.

Fast-forward to the 21st century, and what has changed? It is now generally accepted that one's social class ought not to determine the kind of education one receives: legions of educators now march to the pipes of meritocracy and the drums of a "growth mindset". In spite of this, it is still remarkable that some resist the idea that an academic education ought to be an entitlement for all children: pupils are put into "pathways" from a young age that focus on "basic skills" and "vocational education". Remind you of anything?

This is not to say basic skills and vocational education are not important. Basic skills are central to primary education, while vocational education is vital for the 16-21 curriculum. I would argue, however, that secondary school is one of the few times a person can dedicate themselves to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

So what would I have in an 11-16 baccalaureate? I would certainly have children studying languages, including English grammar and a foreign language. Maths, physics, chemistry and biology are the principal academic disciplines needed to make sense of the natural world and I would be tempted to provide options in related disciplines such as astronomy, geology and psychology.

To understand the world, the obvious starting points are history, geography, literature, religion and philosophy: again, options could be offered in subjects such as sociology, economics and politics. The arts are a central component of being human and I would expect all children up to the age of 16, to be studying art, drama and music. In addition, I probably would insist that they all follow the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which provides recognition for regular commitments to sport and community service.

Access to knowledge of the world in which we live should not be linked to social class or prior attainment, as it typically was in the 19th and 20th centuries: instead it should be the entitlement of all children. This would be a truly 21st century curriculum model.

ALEX BECKEY

Education blogger

A new bacc needs to move away from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) concept as a system of measuring performance and more to the International Baccalaureate (IB) system, which values breadth of education and realises this happens not just in school, but outside as well.

As a teacher of PE, I would fully support a broad, balanced and well-rounded education that focuses on the whole of the child and I feel school should provide that. Focusing on imparting deep knowledge first and foremost in key subject areas but also providing opportunities to deepen learning in more than just maths, science and English. I worry with funding cuts at sixth form, and the EBacc and Progress 8 measurements, the creative arts, languages and my subject are being marginalised. Any baccalaureate system needs to address, and prevent, that.

The IB, which I have taught in schools here and abroad as a Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) co-ordinator, would be a good starting model. However, students I have taught have felt it has not been as flexible as they initially hoped. Allowing more choice in subject combinations, including vocational and liberal arts subjects, would be a step in improving the current model. Any programme should allow choice in subjects, even if students want to focus on maths and science, but still ensure breadth as part of their school experience.

The extended essay and the Theory of Knowledge are worthwhile additions to any system as obviously is the CAS element. However, I would make a few changes to this core component. The Action segment in my mind needs to be less flexible and require three hours of timetabled physical activity a week for all students, which is the recommendation from UNESCO in their Quality PE Guidelines.

I would prefer the Service component to become work-based learning in an area that supports deeper understanding of one of the student's main subjects or their area of interest for university or career. I would also want students to take "leadership" qualifications and then use them within the school community, be that running house competitions, junior sports teams or other extra-curricular provision.

However, rather than asking what a preferred baccalaureate might look like, what we should be asking is what is the ultimate purpose of schooling with regards to a child's education? Only once we have this answer can we then build a system that meets and supports this purpose.

Supporting a curriculum f

The UK is the world leader in the creative industries. It is worth £76.9bn to the UK economy which equates to a staggering £8.8m every hour. This number has increased three years in a row and is predicted to rise again in next year's report. The creative industries account for 5.6% of UK jobs, a number which has increased yearly since 1997. Our creative industry is above average in every economic measure reported.

Yet the reality in education is that the creative subjects have been sidelined; relegated to the 'other' and 'what else' or 'fun subject' category. The creative subjects need to be studied, explored, and challenged by students to ensure the industry will keep growing and we retain our position as world leaders in the field.

The Warwick Commission published its report on 'the Future of Cultural Value' earlier this year. This report highlights the impact of recent rhetoric and policy changes on the creative subjects. Between 2003 and 2013 there has been a 23% drop in the GCSE numbers for Drama. Between 2007 and 2013 there has been a 25% drop in other craft-related GCSEs. In England there are 8% fewer Drama teachers and 4% fewer teaching hours for Drama in schools than in 2010. There are 4% fewer Art and Design teachers and 6% fewer teaching hours. The report also raises concerns about access to extracurricular activities by low income families.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The report sets out goals for education in England. Their third goal: 'A world-class creative and cultural education for all to ensure the wellbeing and creativity of the population as well as the future success of the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem.'

As we work on the reform of GCSEs and GCEs, this is also our goal; to create world-class qualifications for the next generation of students.

To produce reformed GCSEs, AS and A Levels which inspire creativity in the classroom, to ensure the next generation can keep the creative industries thriving.

We are at a unique point in time, with an opportunity to have a lasting impact on the Creative Arts in the classroom and beyond. So where do we go from here? The report makes a number of recommendations for education.

Number one is:

"A national vision for England's cultural and creative education ambitions needs to be proposed jointly by DfE and DCMS to match those produced for Wales and Scotland."

And number two:

"An arts or media subject must be included in the English Baccalaureate, improving the visibility of the arts and increasing incentives for young people to combine science and arts subjects at Key Stage 4."

There appears to be a simple starter for 10 here. Ensure all students are able to study arts qualifications on an equal playing field to the rest of the curriculum.

This fits with the new performance measures too. Essentially, the curriculum is split into three categories. English and Maths being category one, the second being EBacc subjects and the third being others.

When the EBacc subjects were announced, there was uproar that Arts were not included. The EBacc has promoted certain subjects, as has the Russell Group's 'facilitating subjects' list at A Level. It has also perpetuated the myth that some subjects are harder, or more worthwhile than others. In the new measures there is a real opportunity for Arts to be included as a valued part of the curriculum. But this will depend on the approach schools, academies and colleges take.

Arts qualifications have an intrinsic value enabling students to learn about themselves. Particular attributes developed through study are worthwhile for life, including:

- Confidence through independent learning
- Team work
- Communication
- Personal development
- Critical thinking skills
- Lateral thinking
- Creating and then solving problems
- Receiving and giving constructive criticism.

Creative subjects enable students to envisage a 'destination' and then work out how to get there, creating something new as well as responding to things that already exist. Creativity exists in any field. Where do people learn to exercise their creative mind?

At OCR we have a dedicated team of Subject Specialists in the Creative Arts. We are developing new qualifications in a range of creative subjects and working hard on championing the Arts as a valuable part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This is an exciting time for education and we aim to support teachers through this time of change, providing excellent qualifications for teachers to deliver. And importantly, qualifications that students enjoy studying, where they can achieve not only the grades they deserve, but skills they will use for the rest of their lives, wherever their career paths take them. On the right, they share their thoughts on their particular areas of expertise.

DRAMA

Karen Latto

OCR Subject Specialist, Performing Arts

How many times have you arrived at a job interview and been asked to sit in silence, in a room with all the other applicants, and write everything you know about the job you are applying for and why they should give it to you? Me neither. So how many times have you had to stand up and talk confidently to one or more complete strangers and communicate with them, not just through talking, but also through more subtle non-verbal cues?

One of the many skills Drama qualifications develop is the ability to perform to an audience. Whether that is taking a leading role in a Tennessee Williams play or convincing an interview panel you are the best person for the job, these skills are developed studying Drama. Understanding how to use non-verbal communication and how to communicate meaning to the audience is a key part of the new Drama qualifications. Drama is about more than just playing a part in the school play. It develops confident young adults ready to thrive in the world beyond the classroom.

As the saying goes, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression..."

A musical education develops s
that are invaluable in the world
gives us the ability to refine and
evaluative skills and the courag
reflection.

And the benefits spread beyond
industry. The skills acquired by
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fit for the 21st Century.

The problem is that the three other slots in the measure can also be filled with EBacc subjects so that if students struggle with one EBacc subject, they have a second bite of the cherry. But this is not providing a broad, balanced curriculum and therefore is not in the best interest of the students. Progress measures are a measure of school performance – they are not a measure of the individual student. In fact, the DfE's own guidelines state "Progress 8 will be calculated for individual pupils solely in order to calculate a school's Progress 8 score, and there will be no need for schools to share individual Progress 8 scores with their pupils."[1] So students will study English, Maths, Science and two other EBacc subjects – but if you assume, as is currently the case, that most students will study English Literature and a minimum of two sciences, then this actually fills 7/8 subject slots. This is more than enough coverage of the EBacc for progress measures – so how can this new measure achieve its stated aim, "to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4." [2]

A broad and balanced curriculum needs to contain the arts – and not simply to ensure a range of subjects are taught, or for the future of the creative industries. The notion of 'character education' is a hot topic in education policy and the press, and who wouldn't agree that we need to produce adults ready to enter the workplace? This is where the creative subjects really come into their own. The Creative Arts subjects support learning from mistakes, risk and reward, peer and self-review and develop project-based learning, to name but a few. Employers are crying out for students to have a well-rounded education and develop transferable skills they can utilise in employment – and these subjects excel in these critical areas.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406785/Progress_8_school_performance_measure.pdf

[2] ibid

Data taken from:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/394668/Creative_Industries_Economic_Estimates_-_January_2015.pdf

Warwick commission:
www.2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_report_2015.pdf

Department fact sheet:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/285990/P8_factsheet.pdf

MUSIC

Marie Jones

OCR Subject Specialist, Music

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rket.

MEDIA

Rob Carlton
Tony Fahy

OCR Subject Specialists, Media and Film Studies

Do you have a smartphone? Do you use it to find out 'what's happening'? Do you contribute to social media debates? Do you use Netflix and YouTube to watch films and TV programmes that you would never see otherwise? Do you use a social media platform? What sort of identity do you think you have created on it? Do you think that the internet and media should ever be 'censored' – and if you do, who should do the censoring?

These are the sort of questions that Media Studies students are encouraged to explore. It's a 21st century subject that deals with 21st century issues. OCR Media Studies requires students to look at and critically analyse these issues and also demonstrate their creative skills in a range of media forms. Not only does this require a variety of skills, but produces a flexibility of approach and an ability to envisage what the end product should and would look like – integral skills for any successful HE student or modern business person. And a modern media student would never write this – they would use a vine, a snapchat, a tweet or whisper it – "Britain needs Media Studies".

ART & DESIGN

Jane Beagrie

OCR Subject Specialist, Art and Design

The new OCR Art and Design qualifications do things differently and give teachers and students room to breathe! We value the exciting opportunities art offers, to be different, to not go with the flow and not overburden students with a focus on assessment. We're much more interested in students being able to explore and stretch their creativity, concentrating on the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to use both traditional and digital media, building critical understanding and students' transferable skills. Art and Design is one of the broadest qualifications on offer, allowing students to explore their creativity and expertise in a variety of media, from oil paintings to digital photography. The ability to express layers of meaning without writing reams and reams is a truly 21st century skill. It's true what they say; a picture paints 1000 words.

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Comparing current ba

SOPHIE SCOTT

Senior reporter for *Schools Week*

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) differs from other baccalaureates mentioned over these two pages, in that it is not a qualification – but a performance measure.

Introduced in 2010, by the coalition government, it is a set of "preferred" subjects for pupils to take at GCSE level.

Secondary schools are judged by how many, and how well, pupils do in the EBacc subjects. The measure shows where pupils have secured a grade C or above across a core of academic subjects at key stage 4. This can then be used by Ofsted, parents and the Department for Education (DfE) to judge "how well" a school is doing academically.

After last summer's results, the DfE said the proportion of students that had achieved the EBacc had increased this year by 1.1 percentage points to 23.9 per cent.

The EBacc is made up of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language, and education secretary Nicky Morgan has said how these "high-quality" subjects will "prepare young people for life in modern Britain".

Former education secretary Michael Gove was forced to make a, quite humiliating, backtrack on plans to scrap GCSEs in favour of an EBacc qualification, in 2013.

Mr Gove told MPs in the House of Commons in February 2013: "Last September [2012] we outlined plans for changes to GCSE qualifications designed to address the grade inflation, dumbing down and loss of rigour in those examinations.

"We have consulted on those proposals and there is now a consensus that the system needs to change.

"But one of the proposals I put forward was a bridge too far."

This has led to the reform of the GCSE curriculum, beginning from this September. Under Mr Gove's original plan, pupils would have started to be taught the new certificate this year for examination in 2017.

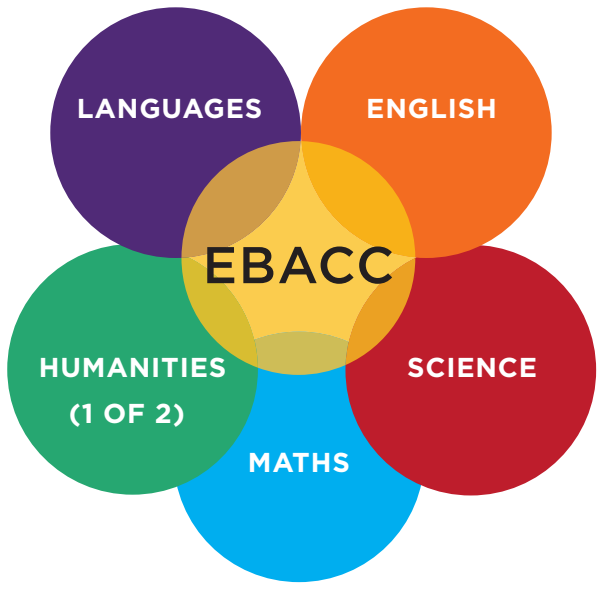
The cross-party education select committee criticised these plans, saying it would lead to the downgrading of subjects such as PE and the arts and could undermine less able pupils.

The MPs said the changes would mean "too much, too fast" and could threaten exam quality.

The EBacc measurement is to be used much more widely with the introduction on the Progress 8 measurements, which will be used fully in performance tables from next year.

Progress 8 aims to capture the progress pupils make from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school. It will replace the current five A*-C GCSE grades, including English and maths, league table measure and will be one of the main ways schools' performance will be compared from 2016.

THE EBACC SUBJECTS



PETER FIDCZUK

UK Development and Recognition Manager, IB

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) was introduced in 1968 and has been followed by three other programmes: the Primary Years (PYP), Middle Years (MYP) and Career-related Programmes (CP). IB programmes are taught in almost 4,000 schools in 147 countries. This focuses on the two 16-19 baccalaureate programmes, the DP and the CP.

Diploma programme

The DP provides a broad and balanced educational experience for students aged 16-19. Students study six subjects and a core concurrently over two years. The programme is designed to equip students with the key academic skills needed for university study, further education and their profession, as well as developing the values and life skills needed for lifelong learning. It is a "prescribed" baccalaureate, meaning specific subjects must be studied to pass the qualification. Students study English, a second language, "individuals and societies", science and maths. A sixth subject is chosen from the arts, or a second subject from languages, individuals and societies, science or maths.

Three subjects are studied at higher level, broadly equivalent to A level, and three at standard level. Students are expected to make connections between subjects and not to study them in isolation. Three "core" elements support this aim and that of developing the whole person. Firstly, Theory of Knowledge provides a forum for discussion and instruction that develops interdisciplinary understanding by questioning the basis of knowledge in the key subject groups. Secondly, students complete a 4,000-word research project, the Extended Essay, which develops inquiry, research, extended writing, argument construction, analysis and citation. Lastly the Creativity, Action and Service programme provides an opportunity for experiential learning and allows personal and civic action.

Career-related programme

The CP is a "wrap around" qualification that brings together a career-related study, e.g. BTEC, OCR National, IB academic subjects and a skills-based core. Originally designed to lead to a career, it has proven to be a pathway to raise students' aspirations and the majority of students following the CP in England have progressed to higher education, often after initially showing no interest in study after leaving school.

Students take at least two DP courses, a core consisting of four components including a reflective project and career-related study. The DP courses provide the theoretical underpinning and academic rigour of the programme; the career-related study supports academic strength and provides practical, real-world approaches to learning; and the CP core helps students develop the skills necessary for lifelong learning.

IB PROGRAMMES

ccalaureate models

ANDREW CHUBB

Principal of Archbishop Sentamu Academy

I can still remember the sense of dismay I felt on hearing the announcement of the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) around four years ago. The measure itself seemed to be based on a highly arbitrary choice of subjects, linked to one particular view as to what constitutes a "good education".

As head of a then-recently sponsored academy, serving one of the most highly deprived communities in the country, I could not see a push on those specific GSCEs as being beneficial to our students at that point; we were very busy improving basic standards of English and maths; as a Church of England academy we were focusing on RE as a humanity, and we had a history of success with a number of BTEC qualifications which gave our student access to sixth form and subsequently to university.

Beyond my initial practical concerns however lay a broader objection to the EBacc – why choose those particular subjects in the first place? Who is to say history is of more importance or value than music? Is geography a more "rigorous" subject than design technology or engineering? What did the EBacc say about those students whose interests and passions did not lie in those subjects or, indeed, methods of examination? What about our duty to ensure that our students are resilient, community-orientated and work-ready?

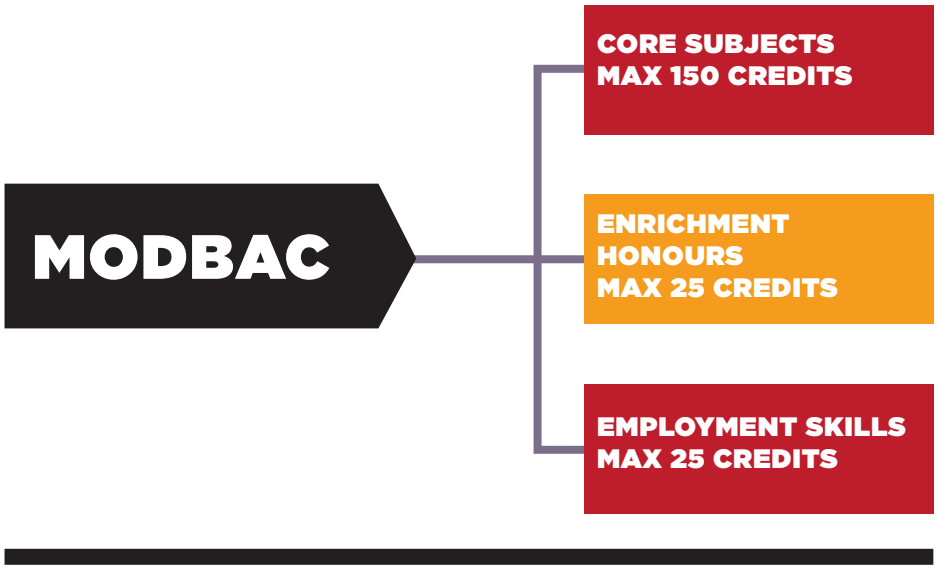
And last, but by no means least, what about the need to equip our students with good financial skills so they can avoid the misery inflicted by loan sharks?

It was these considerations that gave us the impetus to introduce our own baccalaureate, which we named the Modern Baccalaureate, or "Modbac". In designing the Modbac, we were aiming to ensure students were accredited for a range of achievements, including academic success, resilience, reliability, service to others, personal skills and other broader interests. To achieve this, we grouped awards into three main areas – an academic "core", a section we named "honours", and final a "skills" section.

We were encouraged that our model made good educational sense as we discussed it with Mick Waters, long an advocate of this type of educational vision, and Professor Ken Spours at the Institute of Education.

More recently, it has been heartening to see the support for a baccalaureate model of education by the Headteachers' Roundtable and Tom Sherrington's work. Indeed, it is particularly encouraging that two models – Mr Sherrington's and the Modbac – have been developed by leaders of schools that are in many ways so different; Mr Sherrington's National Baccalaureate was developed while he was head of a grammar school.

With such agreement on broad principles across the whole spectrum of schools, it might therefore be hoped that buy-in for a national model could be relatively easily obtained.



PATRICK CRAVEN

City & Guilds Director of Assessment Policy, Research and Compliance

It is no secret employers believe education is not really working. We have all seen business leaders and politicians discussing skills shortages and the fact learners simply are not work ready when they leave full-time education.

So, what is the problem? Quite simply, the workplace has changed unrecognisably over the last 20 years and the curriculum has not kept up. As a result learners are not getting the skills, attitudes and behaviours that businesses tell us they need today.

This is something we have sought to address with the City & Guilds TechBac®, a new curriculum approach for professional and technical 14-19 pathways, where learners are actively prepared for the workplace alongside their core learning. The course builds attitudes and behaviours to help them land a job, developing those much lauded "soft skills" that can turn learners into valuable employees.

The TechBac® was developed with employers to ensure it meets their needs. It also enables learners to develop, recognise and showcase the technical and professional skills and behaviours they need to progress to higher apprenticeships, into university or straight into the jobs market.

So how does it work? Put simply the TechBac® brings the world of work into the classroom. At the core are robust technical qualifications designed to meet the new Department for Education 14-19 performance measure, attracting UCAS points where appropriate, which enable progression from small technical awards at Key Stage 4 through to full level three two-year programmes.

To enhance learners' technical skills are a blended learner enrichment and employability experience that will develop the wider core skills employers tell us are missing. It includes a project, practical and relevant work experience, national team challenge and links to employers.

Learners develop knowledge to support these skills and behaviours on our online social learning portal "Skills Zone". These are demonstrated through practical application and rewarded with badges brought to life in an online CV.

Crucially, our TechBac can also help learners progress to higher education. All of the level 3 technical qualifications have been submitted for UCAS tariff recognition and the level 3 project qualification currently attracts points on the old tariff, as well as being recognised by universities nationwide for promoting independent study skills.

When the City & Guilds TechBac is completed alongside a Level 3 maths qualification, it counts fully towards the government's TechBacc, but it will also give learners additional competitive edge through extra workplace skills recognition.

We believe we have created a genuine alternative to traditional academic qualifications and hope it begins to change the perception of vocational education among parents, learners and the education sector.

The TechBacc

EXPERTS

Beyond academics: What else should

JOHN TAYLOR

Director, Philosophy in Education project and head of philosophy, Rugby School

Benefits of 'the Project'

The Project Qualification has been in diplomas suggested by all political parties since the mid-2000s. Chief Examiner John Taylor explains their value.

I have always found that some of the most enjoyable and valuable moments in the classroom occur when we venture away from the syllabus. I can more or less guarantee that a lively discussion will ensue if the question of what came before the Big Bang arises during a physics lesson, or when, in maths, the question of whether infinity is real comes up.

Part of the fascination of these deeper, philosophical issues is that we simply do not know the answers. For me, the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) was born out of the desire to provide curriculum space for the questions that lie just below the surface of everything we teach to become starting points for a journey of inquiry.

Socrates once said all he knew was that he knew nothing. Ideas which we confidently use all the time, like justice, beauty, God, truth, meaning and knowledge turn out to contain whole worlds of mystery. Once we see this, inquiry becomes a journey towards deeper understanding.

In my experience, the most rewarding EPQs involve making just such a Socratic journey into the unknown.

One of my students decided to write about whether we are humanely treating children who kill. This question led into an in-depth discussion of the history of the tragic cases of child-killers, and a comparison of judicial systems, more or less humane, for addressing this sensitive issue. This project also involved an investigation of the nature of personal identity: are we born with a "fixed" character, or is character something which varies with context? No easy answers were found, of course, but realising that there are no easy answers is part of the process.

Several of my students have plunged into the mysterious depths found at the meeting point of physics and philosophy. What is the best interpretation of quantum mechanics? Is there scientific evidence for multiple realities? Is reality something created by the conscious observer? This topic is not just one for the uber-physics-geek; I have seen it well-explored from a humanities perspective using the work of playwright Michael Frayn as a point of departure.

Given the philosophical nature of these projects, it is not surprising that supervisions often turn into Socratic dialogues. "I want to write about whether we should conserve endangered species". "Why should we care about that?" "I don't know." "Well, is it because the natural world is valuable in and of itself or do we care for it because of what it offers us?" "Um..." Off we go, on the Socratic journey that does not lead towards simple solutions but a deeper understanding. Some of the most rewarding projects become genuine journeys of personal discovery, as students blend objective academic reflection with their own subjective personal experience of matters such as coping with behavioural disorder, the life opportunities of a sibling with special needs or their own questioning of religious belief. For such students, writing an EPQ is part of the process of growing in self-knowledge.

By no means all projects travel into the territory of philosophical speculation or self-discovery. Some remain thoroughly practical. I have had students synthesizing aspirin and even, in one case, creating a new anaesthetic.

Yet, here too, the open-ended reflective element can fruitfully be incorporated, for example exploring if aspirin deserves its reputation as a "wonder-drug".

For me, the value of the EPQ lies in the way it embodies crucial elements of the Socratic method: the importance of not taking ideas for granted, the essentially ethical character of education, as an attempt to answer the question of how we should live, and the need to go on inquiring, even when inquiry leads in the direction of further questions and uncertainty.

The process is not without its frustrations – though thankfully none yet severe enough to lead to hemlock being slipped into my coffee.

What students gain, aside from a toolkit of valuable academic skills, is a glimpse of what it is like to have that rewarding sense of ownership of a small corner of the intellectual terrain – to feel there is something you have found out; something you can call your own.

FRANCESCA REED

Member of Youth Parliament for Poole

Bring politics into schools

Pupils can sometimes seem apathetic towards politics. Activities such as the Youth Parliament, undertaken as part of an extra-curricular element of the baccalaureate, could change that. Francesca Reed spoke to *Schools Week* about what the opportunity meant for her.

One chance meeting got 18-year-old Francesca Reed on the path to politics.

Studying at Parkstone Grammar School she has now been involved in Youth Parliament for three years, and being elected has seen her re-evaluate what she wants to do in her life.

Elected as deputy member of youth parliament when she was 16, this year she became the member of youth parliament (MYP) for the town.

She said: "I went to a forum in Poole with my friend, and they have meetings a couple of times a month, and at one Youth Parliament was mentioned.

"I thought it would be a great way to get involved. I didn't know anything about politics when I first thought about it – I think I knew the name of the prime minister and that's it."

Any young person aged 11-18 can stand or vote, and in the past two years one million young people have voted in UK Youth Parliament elections.

Miss Reed added: "The opportunities I have had since I have done this have been amazing. I got to speak at the Despatch Box in the House of Commons this year on the issue of mental health.

"We have five subjects which we discuss in the Annual Sitting [the yearly gathering of all MYPs in the House of Commons]. The list of those issues is put together using the views of 865,000 young people, nationally.

"I don't know if I would have chosen politics had I not been doing this. It has completely developed me as a person. I was quite shy before and it has given me the confidence and the opportunity to speak about mental health issues, which is quite a personal subject to me.

"Young people today feel so much pressure on having to go to university and take a particular path and I think it has had such a detrimental effect on wellbeing."

Each local authority in England can have at least one MYP, dependant on its size, and the number of MYPs is determined by the numbers of young people in that area (more young people, more MYPs).

Once elected, the MYPs can run campaigns and organise events which matter most to young people in their area. Youth Parliament is a non-party political organisation.

Miss Reed worked on a project with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), teachers and young people in Poole and secured funding and support to give produce almost 12,000 voucher booklets for young people in the town, giving them access to activities such as free swimming classes.

Miss Reed said Youth Parliament is more representative than the current parliament: "Unlike in Parliament, which is mainly male and privately educated, more than half of MYPs are female, 34 per cent are ethnic minorities, and a large majority are state educated.

> **"I was quite shy before and it has given me the confidence and the opportunity to speak about mental health issues**

"We all come from completely different backgrounds, which is what makes it completely amazing. It is not just for people who might be better academically, there really are people from every possible background involved and you meet so many different people.

"I would recommend it to anyone. It gives you so much experience, confidence, chances to meet interesting people, and it looks so good on your CV. It has completely changed my attitude."

The teenager, who is doing politics, philosophy and maths at A level, has been offered a place to study theology at Cambridge University for September.

Miss Reed said she is now considering a career in politics or human rights law – stating her experience at the Despatch Box has influenced her plans for her future.

be in the baccalaureate?

PETER WESTGARTH

The alternative 'DfE'

The Duke of Edinburgh award is well-known for getting young people out into the wilds. But CEO Peter Westgarth explains how the award can provide students with a variety of experiences.

Almost 60 years ago, the Duke of Edinburgh founded an award scheme under his namesake (DofE) for young people, which still flourishes to this day.

The aim of the scheme – in which young people work towards either a bronze, silver or gold level – is for participants to develop and progress with their individual skills.

Each person has to complete four sections to achieve the bronze or silver awards – volunteering, physical, skills and expedition. Each develop their own set of achievements aimed to broaden the young person's horizons.

The gold level – the highest – adds an extra category for the young person to complete. They must go on a week-long residential course where they undertake a task or project, away from home, and with a mix of different people.

The expedition chunk is probably what most people associate with the DofE, an overnight trip of at least two days, said chief executive Peter Westgarth.

He said: "The reason for that spread of activity is that it broadens their horizons and experience. If someone is interested in football, or playing violin, they can progress with that, but also broaden their horizons away from just that. It inspires them to do better and to go further, and show commitment to something.

"A growing number of employers are recognising and recruiting the people knowing what skills the DofE gives participants."

Every year 300,000 young people take part in one of the DofE levels. They come from more than 4,500 schools across the country – 3,679 from state-maintained secondaries, 1,037 academies, 678 independent schools and 470 special schools. Clubs such as the Guides, Scouts and Army Cadets put young people forward, as well as Young Offender Institutions and pupil referral units.

As the level progress to gold, the expectations of what the participant will achieve grows, as does the time they need to put into the award.

Mr Westgarth said the DofE is something which can especially benefit the disadvantaged young people in society.

He said: "While we are predominantly in schools, we do have a presence in young offender institutions and PRUs.

"Our research shows that those who get the most from the DofE are those who come from a disadvantaged position – their horizons are broadened and it has a greater impact on them in the long run."

He added: "We know it gives young people a renewed sense of focus and enthusiasm for learning."

But, Mr Westgarth argues, it is not just the young people who benefit from taking part in DofE. Teachers who are assigned as the lead for each school's DofE scheme are able to develop professionally.

He said: "The teacher starts to develop into someone who is managing a range of colleagues to deliver the awards and it encourages them to develop as a leader."

With 60 years of history, it is a scheme which has lasted the test of time, and the constant changing political landscape. Mr Westgarth said: "The structure of the programme – it is one of those very rare things that they got right the first time. I have been chief executive for 10 years and normally when you come into an organisation you have a desire to change it and make things better. But that didn't need doing here.

"We have changed the language and added activities and skills – things like computing wasn't on the agenda 60 years ago! But those four basic elements are still the same."

Mr Westgarth believes the scheme, which is funded by charitable donations and joining fees, has lasted as long as it has because it is separate from government policy and decision-making, and the recognition of the Royal Family's involvement keeps people coming back.

He said: "We are not whim to political decisions and while I think decisions about the recent Character Awards are fantastic, and shows what great things schools are doing, creating a new initiative all the time is not necessarily the best way to go about things."

LAURA GIBBON

School and College Engagement Lead, National Citizens Service Trust

Volunteering gives to all involved

Having pupils volunteer time in their local community helps build critical life skills. Laura Gibbons speaks to *Schools Week* about the things young people learn via the National Citizens Service.

Set up in 2011 under the coalition government, the National Citizens Service (NCS) is open to all young people between the ages of 15 to 17.

The NCS has been given backing by both the Conservatives and Labour parties in their manifestos ahead of next month's election, so the scheme is likely to continue no matter what the outcome at the polls is.

Laura Gibbon explains how young people can benefit from taking part in NCS.

She said: "The NCS aims to create a more cohesive society, change attitudes, bring people together from different backgrounds to expand social networks and build trust.

"It gives young people a sense of belonging in their local communities and young people feel more empowered to influence and make changes in their community. We also know it increases their likelihood of voting."

To complete the course, young people must partake in various activities over a three-week period. Due to the time and commitment needed to the projects, the activities are predominantly held over the summer holidays, at the end of year 11.

A youngster must be 16 to go on the course, but for summer-born children there are sessions held later in the summer holidays, and some in the autumn or spring, so they can partake.

Ms Gibbon said: "The first week of any course is a residential in groups of between 12 to 15. It is entirely based on postcode, so you are immediately mixing with someone who might live in the next street, but who you do not know.

"It is absolutely critical we get that mix in the team. There are only allowed to be a certain – low - number of people from each school in a team. We make it so there is a mix of backgrounds – economically, culturally, religious – so we break down barriers.

"This first week is a five-night residential course that is challenging, and makes the young people push themselves, and learn to trust each other, and it is about building their confidence – a so-called "soft" skill, but one of key importance.

"They have mentoring at the end of day to talk through what went well, what didn't and how they feel. It is reflective."

The groups are taken at least two hours away from home – which Ms Gibbons says, for some, is the furthest they will have ever been.

> **It gives young people a sense of belonging in their local communities**

Ms Gibbon said: "They go home, but we take them away almost straight away. By this point the group will know each other very well. They bond extremely quickly. They will stay more in their local area, this time, though."

The young people tend to stay in university accommodation for the second week and they are taken into the local community, and do things such as spend time with the local police, at the magistrates' courts and meet local stakeholders.

For the final week, the group is asked to do something for their local community – come up with an idea as a group and raise money for an organisation, for example.

Ms Gibbon said: "What we find is that a lot of the time the organisations they end up helping are those with a personal connection to someone in the group – so mental health groups, cancer or Alzheimer's groups.

"It builds really critical skills for life. The young people have to do things like pick up the phone and ask businesses to contribute, or donate items for them, or put together flyers. We are very strict in that we do not want them just going out into the street with a bucket and asking for money.

"This means they have to do something creative and it gives them skills for the workplace that, when they are plonked in a corner during work experience placements, they do not get."

By the end of this year, 300,000 young people will have taken part in the NCS, growing from just 8,500 in 2011 to an expected 80-90,000 young people this year.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH TOM SHERRINGTON

HEADTEACHER OF HIGHBURY GROVE SCHOOL

HOW CAN WE AFFORD TO RUN A BACCALAUREATE?

The additional costs involved in running a baccalaureate curriculum will depend on the range of activities that are provided for Personal Development and the specific model used to deliver an Extended Project programme.

At the low-cost end, Extended Project can be delivered with minimal tuition and a system of student mentoring spread across the teaching staff.

It is arguably very good value for money. Personal Development programmes can be constructed around activities that students undertake outside their school or college as well as the activities delivered internally.

The scale and range of activities that are required for baccalaureate completion will be a major cost factor.

In the early stages of development, the simple process of logging what students already do and filling in the gaps with a few well-chosen enrichment activities would go a long way.

Some schemes such as the National Citizen Service represent excellent value for money and students can engage in sport, arts activities and community service at very low cost.

As more schools and colleges take up the baccalaureate challenge, we should see numerous high quality cost-efficient models emerging.

WOULD UNIVERSITIES AND EMPLOYERS REALLY CARE ABOUT IT?

UCAS representatives have contributed to the National Baccalaureate discussions and they are certainly keeping a close eye on developments. It is early days but already the dialogue is underway.

Leaders of the Confederation of British Industry and various universities have called for more character development and a broader baccalaureate-style curriculum.

Even if more qualifications still carry the greatest weight, a baccalaureate framework will ensure that students gain a broad, rounded education with opportunities to achieve success beyond the confines of examinations; this is what universities and employers want.

The truth is that the more rigorous the baccalaureate models are, the more highly regarded they will become. It needs to be driven in that direction.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS AND TRACK IT?

The baccalaureate is assessed on the basis of completing the various components at the required standard.

The formal qualifications components – A levels, BTECs and EPQ, for example - are assessed in the standard way by exam boards with grades and component scores.

The main centre-assessed components would be the elements of a Personal Development Programme.

Some baccalaureate providers have developed their own online tracking systems; some schools have developed in-house logging systems with personal diaries and online spaces for recording activities and personal reflections. Some baccalaureate models have a central recording system that allows all qualifications and activities to be pulled into one document to provide an overview or a printed transcript.

Ultimately, it would be good for a standard national format for transcripts to emerge to allow universities and employers to compare candidates simply and easily.

HOW WOULD A SCHOOL DECIDE WHAT TO INCLUDE?

The common features of all baccalaureate models are the core learning, whether academic or technical, a project of some kind and a programme for personal development.

Designing a baccalaureate model with those components gives plenty of scope. It is sensible to build on the resources available in the school or college and the local community.

Some providers may have excellent sport provision, certain specific community service opportunities and easy access to an outdoor education residential centre.

Others may have strong music backgrounds, a history of students engaging in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and embedded peer mentoring systems.

All of these opportunities form strong elements of a baccalaureate curriculum.

It may be helpful to include minimum grades in maths and English GCSE in addition to, say, three A levels or BTECs, to meet the requirements for an Advanced Baccalaureate. Over time, a stronger consensus will emerge about the standards and common components people will expect.

Bacc to the future with the three leading parties

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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Ed Miliband | Matt Dunham/AP/Press Association Images

We may be well into the short election campaign now, but "baccalaureate" has been an education policy buzzword for the largest three parties for some time.

While the English Bacc (EBacc) - a grouping of subjects that now appears in school performance league tables - is regularly held up by the Conservatives as one of their big education successes, their differing approach compared with Labour to the TechBacc remains a bone of contention, as does the brand itself.

In 2012, then shadow education secretary Stephen Twigg even accused the Tories of "stealing" the TechBacc idea. First proposed by Labour veteran, Lord Andrew Adonis, the opposition has been trying to make up for lost ground on the issue ever since.

For Labour, the future focus in terms of baccalaureates seems to be purely vocational. A proposed "gold standard" technical baccalaureate is a key part of the party's education manifesto. It is considered a "high quality vocational route through education" and will be accredited by employers.

Addressing his party's education manifesto launch in London earlier this month, leader Ed Miliband said: "For too long, education has separated opportunities for our children according to whether they're interested in academic or vocational routes. Putting them on to two different paths, two divergent paths, held, frankly, at different levels of esteem, leaves so many young people without the real choices that they deserve.

"Our plan will finally end this great educational divide, creating a gold-standard vocational route through education, a world-class technical baccalaureate: maths and English to 18, proper work experience and, crucially, a guaranteed apprenticeship place for every young person who gets the grades."

Labour has previously pledged to scrap the EBacc, and Mr Miliband again alluded to this at the manifesto launch.

He said: "I worry [the coalition] has been narrowing horizons in schools when we should be widening them. Stifling creativity, not encouraging it."

However, Labour has not said it would remove the EBacc measures from league tables, nor that it would change the weighting of those subjects in the planned "Progress 8" accountability measure for schools. Under the new measure, pupil achievement will be rated across eight subjects, but at least five must be EBacc subjects.

Labour has also been largely silent on other curriculum innovations, although it has said it would retain citizenship and introduce compulsory sex and relationship education.

No plans have been put forward for the "diploma" approach first suggested by Mike Tomlinson in the early 2000s, and extensively trialled by Labour until its eventual scrapping by the coalition.

The Conservatives, meanwhile, are keen to point to the numbers of pupils sitting exams in EBacc subjects, which they claim demonstrates its success. The party says that 71 per cent more pupils are taking the EBacc's "key subjects" compared to when Labour left office, and that the number of pupils taking history and geography has increased by a third in four years.

It was therefore unsurprising that the Conservative manifesto has pledged to require all pupils to take GCSEs in the EBacc subjects.

Further to that, any school 'refusing' to offter the full set of Eacc subjects would be prevented from receiving an Ofsted 'outstanding' rating.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, schools minister Nick Gibb couldn't resist a pop at Labour about the matter.

"Under Labour too many children were let down by poor standards in the education system.

"There was a drift away from core academic subjects, exam grades were inflated and many vocational qualifications were so poorly designed that employers were despairing at the lack of skilled school-leavers.

"But our commitment to high-quality courses across the secondary school sector has reversed Labour's culture of low aspiration and is beginning to transform young people's life chances.

Nick Gibb

The Liberal Democrats have been a partner in the EBacc programme, with education one of the areas in which leader Nick Clegg seemed most keen to intervene.

A party spokesperson told *Schools Week*: "We don't plan any changes to the EBacc or TechBacc.

"Schools should be judged on the progress made by all children – which is why the Liberal Democrats have abolished Labour's A* to C measure and are replacing it with Progress 8.

"This will end the situation where teachers have to act against their best instincts by focusing only on children in the middle of the ability range."

The claim that Progress 8 is a Liberal Democrat measure likely relates to Tim Leunig, the Department for Education's chief analyst and scientific adviser, who spearheaded the new measure. He has had a long-standing association with the Liberal Democrats, with the Telegraph naming him in 2012 as one of the top 50 most influential Lib Dems.

Both Ukip and the Green Party were approached regarding future curriculum plans.

Green Party schools spokesperson Samantha Pancheri told *Schools Week* that the party was concerned by the introduction of "ever more divisive systems of qualifications" for 14 to 19-year-olds.

"The TechBacc and EBacc have both been widely criticised by teaching unions as being politically ideological projects, which reinforce division between pupils from different backgrounds.

"Rather than endlessly fiddling with new methods of measuring and comparing pupils' performance, we should be looking more holistically at providing a well-rounded and balanced education, which is accessible to all and doesn't disadvantage pupils by restricting access to learning or valuing certain subjects over others."

Ukip did not comment.

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