

Eight Diploma Pathways for Tomlinson

Viewpoint by John Grove

A former comprehensive head, John has studied 16–19 reforms in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and completed a research year into 16–19 Scandinavian education at Warwick. He is currently advising both the SHA Cymru, and the NAHT Cymru on the Welsh Learning Pathways proposals for 14–19.

The International Scene : It is generally acknowledged that Britain has a quantum leap to make in matching the European achievement rates at Level 3 for most of its young people. Nevertheless, the oft-quoted comparisons of low rates of participation and achievement post-16 are not yet matched by the recognition that nothing less than a massive national campaign is needed to succeed in reaching a high aspirational target. The Welsh target of 95 per cent of young people to be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015 should also be the English target.

To have any hope of reaching such an ambitious target, the following would be essential:

1. A well marketed and presented National Target Strategy
2. New model schools and colleges and other training providers with a clear and detailed focus on the 14–19 age group
3. A new diploma system that achieves all the objectives so well delineated in the Interim Tomlinson Report.

However, although the Tomlinson Report avoids the Welsh extreme of ‘individually tailored learning pathways’, it may lean too heavily towards a 15 –20 ‘specialist lines’ model that the Swedes, who have pioneered this for the past 10 years, are in the process of changing for an eight-fold path. Following the Swedish example, I propose an eight pathways model for England and Wales. These pathways are in fact of British provenance, being modelled on existing FE prospectuses.

16 –19 Diploma – Intermediate and Advanced

1. Art, Design, Media, Performing Arts
2. Business & Administration
3. Construction & Property Maintenance
4. General Education (Post Intermediate Level)
5. Health & Caring (Inc. Childcare, Health & Beauty)
6. Landbased (Agriculture, Horticulture, Floristry, Animal Care)
7. Leisure (Catering, Tourism , Sport)
8. Technology (Applied Science And Engineering)

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