



Flexibility *through* Listening

- the learner voice

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Listening to *existing* students and alumni - **necessary but not sufficient!**

- Whose voices don't get heard?
- What does the profile of the student body say about which communities the institution values and which markets it seeks to serve?
- Who else could benefit - and why don't they?

Secretary of State's view

‘We need to be that serious about adult skills and life-long higher and further education, for a number of simple reasons. First: almost half of British university students are already mature students. Second, most of the future British workforce of the 2020s is already in their twenties or older, and it is their skills that will determine our economic capabilities at that critical point. Third, the demographics of an ageing population mean that even with an influx of foreign students, the student market is going to get progressively older, and demand will reflect that.’

Social Mobility

-a powerful motivator
but not the only one

- **‘Unleashing Aspirations’ (Alan Milburn, July 2009)** critical of opportunities and support for adults in universities.
- **Need to reform**
 - the academic calendar;
 - the accreditation of individual modules; and
 - the "indefensible" division in funding and support between part- and full-time students

Secretary of State's view

‘HE and FE also have a critical role to play in increasing social mobility in Britain. There is no silver bullet on social mobility, but education and higher skills are as close as you get to one. That means keeping up the pressure to widen access to HE - both with respect to the time in your life when you can access HE and with respect to your social background, which should be irrelevant. Access to all forms of training and education is a question of equity and social justice as well as competitiveness.’

More Secretary of State

“In thirteen years as MP for Hartlepool I saw first hand the damage that can be done by low expectations and by barriers to social mobility. I have always believed that a fair Britain is one in which the daughter of a Hartlepool shopkeeper has the same shot at being a High Court Judge as the son of a Surrey stockbroker.”

Higher and Further Education, - *a single ecology?*

- Reluctance in some parts of system to acknowledge common ground.
- Preference to reinforce/defend historic silos and privileges.
- These distinctions don't matter to most learners/taxpayers most of the time.

Secretary of State's view

“HE and FE are two systems, joined by one goal. There was a time – well within most of our lifetimes – when our university and vocational training systems were seen as having distinctly different functions. Universities provided elite education and a training in the mores of professional life for about one in twenty of the population. Apprenticeships were for craftspeople – or rather crafts*men* who would go on to spend their lives in a particular trade. These were regarded not as different ways of making a living but as different universes.”

Secretary of State's view

“It was a division based on social prejudice as much as economic reality, and if it isn't dead, it needs to be.”

Part-time and Full-time - *a single ecology and an unhelpful distinction?*

- ELQs
- Natural justice (taxpayer argument)
- Case for capped tuition fees stronger if not limited to full-time study.

Tom Schuller • David Watson

Learning Through Life

Inquiry into the Future for
Lifelong Learning



iFLL
Inquiry into the Future
for Lifelong Learning

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Learning through Life: Recommendation 4

“Faster progress is needed to implement a credit based system, and to support people who combine study with other activities.”

- We should move quickly to implement fully a coherent system of credits as the basis for organising post-compulsory learning.
- The funding for learning (both fees and student support) should be credit-based and should not discriminate against part-time provision or part-time students.
- There should be greater fairness and consistency in funding for further and higher education.

Why Worry?

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. At the top, the BBC logo is on the left, and a search bar and 'Explore the BBC' link are on the right. Below the logo, the word 'NEWS' is prominently displayed in white on a red background, followed by 'BBC NEWS CHANNEL'. A navigation menu on the left lists various news categories: News Front Page, World, UK, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Business, Politics, Health, Education (highlighted), League Tables, Science & Environment, Technology, Entertainment, Also in the news, Video and Audio, Have Your Say, Magazine, In Pictures, Country Profiles, and Special Reports. Below this, there are links to 'Related BBC sites' including Sport, Weather, Radio 1 Newsbeat, CBBC Newsround, On This Day, and Editors' Blog.

The main article is titled 'Mandelson backs consumer students' and is dated 'Page last updated at 16:34 GMT, Tuesday, 20 October 2009 17:34 UK'. It is written by Katherine Sellgren, a BBC News education reporter. The article discusses Lord Mandelson's comments at a CBI higher education summit in London, where he suggested students should be more 'picky, choosy and demanding'. A quote from him states: 'The business secretary said government and industry must scrutinise and monitor courses on behalf of students. The government is about to begin a review of how students pay for university in England. Fiscal constraints Lord Mandelson told the CBI summit there needed to be "a greater degree of competition between institutions" so that courses would be improved and tailored. He said while the higher and further education sectors faced "increasingly tight fiscal constraint", standards should not fall. He said: "Expanding investment

There is a photo of Lord Mandelson with the caption 'Lord Mandelson hinted at an increase in tuition fees'. To the right of the article, there are sections for 'SEE ALSO' (linking to 'Charge students more, say bosses' and 'Q&A: Student fees'), 'TOP EDUCATION STORIES' (linking to 'More students on degree courses', 'Hoodies down' call for colleges, and 'Committee's powers "seems a sham"'), and 'MOST POPULAR STORIES NOW' (listing various news items like 'Crash for cash' scam, Leaders dash over postal dispute, and Apology for singing shop worker).

At the bottom of the article, there is a quote from Lord Mandelson: 'As students who go into higher education pay more, they will expect more'. The URL at the bottom of the browser window is 'http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/default.stm'.

Claire Callender's Figures

