

Stepping Up and Stepping Forward

Learning Insight 8

The world of work is changing dramatically; learners require high quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), underpinned by an innovative cross-sectoral approach



What do we know?

The world of work is constantly evolving and the pace of change has been accelerated by the pandemic. In this context, learners need ready access to up-to-date CEIAG, relevant workplace experiences and open pathways to a range of education, training and employment options. The range of courses offered and the subject choices learners make can be influenced by a school's values and traditions and by parental advice, some of which can be misinformed. In the context of the changing demands of the economy, societal attitudes to certain qualification and career pathways, curricula and CEIAG need to continue to adapt at pace in order to support learners' life-chances.

Some young people are more interested in, or have more aptitude for, the traditional academic subjects while others prefer more practical subjects, either due to the nature of the content of the courses or due to how they are assessed. The courses offered through the Department of Education's (DE) [Entitlement Framework](#) should be economically relevant and individually engaging with clear progression pathways. To improve the career prospects of all learners, all teachers need to be supported to keep up-to-date with labour market intelligence and relevant information about the world of work. For example, apprenticeships offer a direct route into employment and higher level apprenticeships provide a valuable alternative to university.

What have we learned?

During Covid-19, learners were unable to access readily, work and volunteering experiences, educational visits, youth provision and careers conventions. Learners were somewhat disadvantaged by being unable to meet and engage face-to-face with external advisers, such as employers, college and university staff and others who normally support their career planning. Some learners were able to access online provision provided by the Careers Advisory Service which they report did help them with their career planning.

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The impact of Covid-19 has been widely felt across the local and global labour markets. The pandemic has accelerated changes that were already underway, and new opportunities are opening up for employment in areas such as: digitisation, cybersecurity, robotics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality. To enable learners to benefit from these new opportunities, schools and colleges are beginning to reflect upon the implications this will have on their provision. Promoting work experience and volunteering in some of the new technologies can extend learners understanding of the opportunities available.

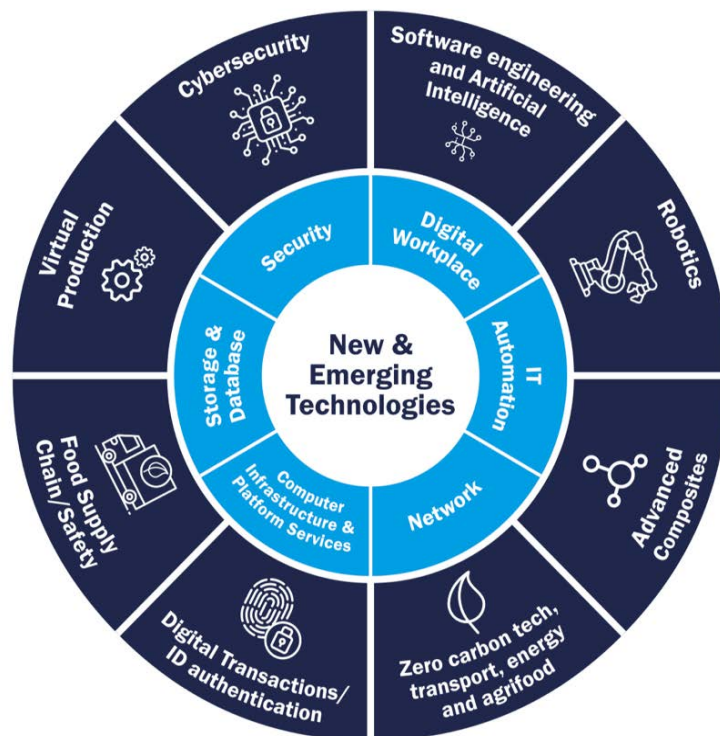


Figure 1: 'New and Emerging Technologies', A 10X Economy, Department for the Economy, May 2021

A 10X economy draws attention to the need for DE and DfE to work collaboratively to support optimum delivery of effective careers education through a coherent cross-departmental strategy for CEIAG.

What will help us move forward constructively?

Careers in the new industries will provide excellent opportunities for learners. All learners will be better served by an organisation that offers an enabling curriculum and can provide expert teaching and tuition. In addition, learners who choose a more vocational career pathway will benefit from access to industry-standard equipment as well as local, national and international links with employers.

In continuing to work in the best interests of their learners, organisations should consider carefully their ability to offer specialist instruction, provide access to relevant courses and enable learners to use industry-standard equipment and resources. Taking a learner centred approach will help identify when further education and training can provide a more appropriate curriculum and viable pathway than a school setting at post-16. In addition, according to UCAS, '[misplaced snobbery](#)' around apprenticeships may restrict learner opportunities; it is timely to value the many benefits of apprenticeships, including those at a higher level.

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At transitional points, where learners choose their next pathway, the schools, colleges and other organisations must function in the learners' best interests and the learners should have access to information on pathways from a wide range of providers at the right time. Schools can support their young people to make the right choice about where their career needs and aspirations can be best met; this is particularly important for learners with particular needs, including those in special schools, where advice needs to be highly individualised.

Careers teachers deserve more support in being upskilled further, so that they are equipped and confident in their roles. It is worth considering how Teacher Professional Learning could support this process through an ambitious programme of professional learning as part of an innovative and cross-sectoral strategy for CEIAG. Teacher Professional Learning and first-hand access, experience and fixed-term placements in industry and business for teachers could enhance their capacity to enable learners to make informed decisions around the best career pathway for them, including lifelong learning. Both DE and DfE have central roles in guiding and supporting this important work.



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