

Making a difference

Leadership Pathways programme in conference

SCHOOL LEADERS

Report

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Introduction

Leadership Pathways is a new programme launched by NCSL to help school leaders access tailored provision for their individual needs. The programme is modularised and is specifically designed to be flexible to suit a leader's context and learning needs.

Leadership Pathways was piloted during the spring/summer of 2006 and the first cohort started in the autumn term of 2006. To celebrate the success of this first cohort, a celebration day was held on 26 November 2007 at NCSL, Nottingham. Around 50 delegates attended, a mixture of participants, coaches, leadership mentors, programme managers and NCSL personnel.

The theme of the day was 'Making the difference' and a variety of group discussions and presentation were designed to explore this theme fully. Participants were asked to reflect on how the programme had made a difference to them as leaders and the impact on their schools. Participants discussed both tangible changes to their leadership practice and aspirational changes they hoped for in the future.

The aim of the day was to try and pinpoint what it is that has made the difference to leaders and their schools, and therefore what will enable future cohorts to achieve similar successes.

This publication has been designed to capture and share the learning from this celebration day. It will be of interest to those interested in or enrolled on Leadership Pathways and anyone who is interested in developing leadership capacity or succession planning.

Motivations

This publication has been designed to share the learning from a celebration day of the first cohort of Leadership Pathways. During the day, participants and their coaches were asked to reflect on what motivated them to join the programme.

While individual motivations varied; there were some overall key motivations which prompted participants and coaches to take part in Leadership Pathways:

A desire to gain 'leadership' not 'headship' training

A perceived benefit of Leadership Pathways was the opportunity to gain broader leadership skills. Many participants were not sure if they wanted to eventually move on to headship and wanted to develop their skills before they could consider becoming a head. Leadership Pathways was perceived to offer a personalised route that could be adapted for whatever future career path the participant chose.

"This programme attracted me because it had 'leadership' in the title. It appealed to me to learn how to be a leader."

"I needed some skills that I had but didn't realise I had."

"This programme allowed me to develop leadership skills in a broad way— it wasn't just focused on headship."

"I felt the need to step back and wanted to opportunity to reflect, explore and be given the room to make a difference."

The chance to bridge the gap between middle leadership and headship

Linked to the above theme, participants commented that Leadership Pathways was filling the gap between Leading from the Middle (LftM) and NPQH. Some participants, especially fast-track teachers, felt that LftM would not be appropriate for their needs yet they were not ready to undertake NPQH. Leadership Pathways was seen to be bridging this gap and enabling middle leaders' further development before considering headship.

"I wanted to develop my leadership skills but I wasn't sure if I was ready for NPQH or headship."

"I was a fast-track teacher and this seemed like a good way to step-back and gain additional leadership skills."

The opportunity to focus on specific leadership skills and build confidence

The personalised nature of this programme acted as a great motivator to participants as they were able to tailor the learning to their specific needs. Many participants were motivated by the chance to develop particular leadership skills; the most common being learning how to negotiate effectively, influence others and deal with challenging people. The programme has given participants the chance to develop leadership skills and build up their own confidence in themselves as leaders.

"I lacked confidence in dealing with conflict. I wanted to learn how to move people forward and manage change."

"I wanted to rehearse my skills and be able to make mistakes in a 'safe' environment."

"I joined this programme to gain more experience as a leader. As a young teacher, I felt it hard to challenge older teachers who had a lot more experience than me."

"I wanted to improve my negotiation skills and be able to influence more experienced senior leaders."

"As a coach and senior leader, I wanted to learn how to spot leadership potential in others and build capacity within my school."

"I wanted to raise my profile at school and take a more active role in leadership but I needed to develop the confidence and skills to do it."

Motivations – a personal account

Asiyah Shaikh, participant and Senior Manager from Park Lane Primary School, Warwickshire shares her motivations for taking part in Leadership Pathways and her aspirations for the future.

What led you to enrol on the Leadership Pathways programme?

I had been a teacher for five years, starting out in early years and moving to Key Stage 2. I had taken on the role of PE co-ordinator but I didn't feel comfortable with the leadership aspects of my role.

It was my ambition to become an assistant head or deputy and knew I needed to gain more leadership experience to do this.

My headteacher suggested this programme and it seemed a good way to develop my leadership skills. I enrolled on the first cohort and it took me a year to complete the programme – from October 2006 to October 2007.

I knew where I wanted to get to but I didn't feel I had enough leadership skills to get there. There is a wide variety of people working at my school, some of whom have been there a lot longer than me and have more teaching experience.

I felt it was very hard for me, as a younger teacher, to tell older and more experienced teachers how to do things. I was keen to learn how to motivate people and how to introduce change.

How did the programme make a difference to your leadership skills?

The skills days really opened up some new ideas for me. I learnt some simple strategies which I wasn't currently using. For example, thinking about how you communicate. I've learnt to think before I speak to someone about what they're likely to say back and whether they will agree or disagree. If I think they will disagree, then I'll think about what I can say to persuade them.

Throughout the year I undertook this programme, my leadership responsibilities within school also grew. I took on the role of ICT co-ordinator and I joined the senior management team, where I was involved in whole-school decision making. I began to have a much more clearly defined leadership role within the school. Leadership Pathways gave me confidence in my own leadership skills so that I felt ready to say 'yes, I can do that.' I also became an NQT mentor.

Another area I wanted to develop was handling conflict with parents. I had always found dealing with parents much harder than dealing with other members of staff. Due to the context of our school and community issues, I would normally be speaking to, on average, two parents a night. I feel a lot more confident in handling these discussions on my own now. In the past, I may have passed it over to my head to deal with or asked her to stay with me.

I'm more comfortable with my role, more confident in approaching experienced teachers and I have better relationships with staff, pupils and parents.

Now you have completed the programme, what are your aspirations for the future?

I'm ambitious and I like challenges. I don't like being stuck doing the same thing or cruising along in my comfort zone. I've always had goals to keep me going and to push myself forward.

My next goal is to become an assistant or deputy head. I'm also quite interested in working beyond one school, perhaps across a local authority or wider area. For me, the programme was about learning life-long skills. I'll be taking the skills I've learnt wherever I go next.

I feel I'm ready for the next stage in my professional development. I now have the confidence to start applying for assistant and deputy roles and I feel I have enough experience to move into these roles.

Personal journeys

Throughout the morning session, participants and their coaches were asked to reflect on their own personal leadership development journeys.

Due to the personalised modular nature of the programme, participants were able to diagnose their learning needs and adapt the programme to meet their requirements. As a result of this, every participant created their own pathway and was able to direct and guide their own learning.

When reflecting on their own personal story and pathway, there were some overall key themes which emerged:

Greater awareness of leadership behaviours and practice

A strong theme which emerged, from both participants and coaches, was a greater awareness of their own leadership practices and behaviours. Having the time and space to reflect allowed participants to become aware of how they tackle situations.

“This learning experience has affirmed my view that I can continue to develop and influence others significantly.”

“I’m learning to lead through influencing others. I want to learn how to develop leadership skills in others.”

“I’ve realised I used to think quite naively. Not everyone is as enthusiastic as me.”

“If you walked into a room in the dark – would you find your way out? If you did, how many things would you bump into? This programme is like turning on the light. You can see the obstacles – it illuminates everything.”

The chance to make changes to leadership practice

Participants felt the programme gave them the opportunity to not only become aware of their leadership practice but also to become aware on what they needed to do next. They were given the space and tools to discover the personal qualities they needed to develop to move forward as a leader.

Challenging situations could be explored in detail; different approaches could be tried and then be reflected on. The participants’ whole-school change project allowed them to put into practice their adapted or changed leadership behaviours and monitor how successful they were.

“I’ve learnt to develop an open, flexible and reflective approach to developing leadership skills.”

“My practice has changed. I try to pre-empt people now and never go to a meeting unprepared.”

Insight into how to influence and negotiate others

Many participants voiced a desire to learn how to influence and negotiate with others more effectively. One of the key themes which emerged was that the programme gave all participants a greater understanding of their own practice and the practice of others.

This insight and reflection time enabled participants to plan more effective strategies for dealing with a wider range of people and differing opinions. Learning to challenge, motivate, negotiate and influence both themselves and others was a strong theme emerging from the day.

“I’ve been learning to let go and trying to not always have the answers.”

“I listen more now rather than jumping straight in. I wait for people to finish before asking questions.”

“This programme has helped me to plan how to deal with people and how to avoid confrontation. I now plan carefully what I’m going to say to someone and I make sure I always say something positive too.”

My story – my pathway

**Madeleine Denyer, participant
and Assistant Headteacher at
Stanford Infant School shares
her personal leadership pathway.**

What motivated you to take part in Leadership Pathways?

I had been a fast-track teacher and I'd recently become an assistant head. I felt it was too soon to do NPQH but I wanted something to fill the gap and Leadership Pathways seemed to do that. There was another assistant head at the school and we thought it would be good for both of us to do this, with Karen Wicker, the headteacher as our coach.

My personal aim was to develop my leadership style in the school and I felt I needed to build these skills quite quickly.

What have you learnt about leadership from this programme?

What I gleaned from this programme was the multi-faceted role that a leader has to undertake. There are lots of different skills needed, such as public speaking, the way you present yourself even down to clothing and body language.

I spent some time shadowing my head and I saw the different hats she had to wear all the time. I think sometimes people think a head just sits in an office all day. I didn't realise the amount of work that a head has to get through in a short space of time. My day in the classroom would be relatively planned but as a head it can be hard to plan your day at all.

The key thing I've learnt is to reflect on things. After I've handled a situation, I'll reflect afterwards on what went well, what didn't and

what I could do next time. I didn't reflect to the extent I do now and I think a lot more before approaching certain situations. For example, previously if someone had asked to see me I would have just said yes. Now I ask what they want to see me about so I have a chance to prepare. Something else I've learnt is not to be afraid to ask for more time. I used to think that I needed to have all the answers right there and then.

Before this programme, I was more of a manager than a leader. I now understand the difference between managing people and leading them.

How has Leadership Pathways helped you change as a leader?

When I was about half-way through the programme, I realised how much I had changed and how much Leadership Pathways had helped me develop as a leader. Members of staff commented on how much I had changed. I don't think I realised initially just how much I would need to change.

The coaching really helped me to develop further than I could have done alone. Because I had someone with me I was able to explore things more fully and go further.

The biggest change for me has been with my relationships with staff. I used to be very friendly with a lot of staff and I have had to step back and change the way I am in school. I'm still friends with staff but in a different way, it is more of a professional relationship. I've also learnt how to use body language effectively, so people know I'm serious when I say something needs to happen.

I've learnt to reflect more, to take more time if I need it and I've learnt how to take control of situations. I had been coaching a fast-track teacher and she also noticed how much I'd changed. I used to think I had to give her answers, now I sit back and help her to find the solutions.

What are your next steps as a leader?

The key area I'd like to develop now is the leadership of others. I've discovered that one of the big benefits of being a headteacher is helping others to change and grow. This has really inspired me to want to develop others. As a result, I'm going to be coaching another member of staff when they start Leadership Pathways.

My story – my pathway

**Karen Wicker, Coach and
Headteacher of Stanford Infant
School, describes her experience
of coaching Madeleine Denyer
on Leadership Pathways.**

What led you as a school to become involved in Leadership Pathways?

We were interested in taking part in Leadership Pathways because of the changes we'd made within the school. We had remodelled the leadership structure and changed it to a flat leadership team. We have a headteacher, two assistant headteachers and two TLRs – one for inclusion and one for curriculum.

What motivates you as a coach and leader?

I have a strong belief that as an experienced and long-serving head of 12 years that I have a responsibility towards the next generation of leaders. I have quite a lot of knowledge and it's been hard won and I think it's important to share this learning. I feel it is important we promote the things we feel are important and give people the confidence and skills to have their own moral purpose.

I have a high regard for the staff in this school and if I can support them in any way then I will. This moral purpose has been a driver to me ever since I have been out of the classroom.

What have you learnt about leadership and coaching through the programme?

Being involved in this programme as a coach has confirmed to me that leadership should be a reflective process and the best leaders are those who can take time and think things through.

This reflection obviously has time implications and what Leadership Pathways did was give us 'permission' to have this reflective time. It gave us a chance to think things through, have strategic discussions and share ideas with someone else. I found this experience very useful and it would be great if we could incorporate this more in our everyday work. I hope that we now will and I've ended up with a different relationship with Madeleine. I think we feel we know each better than we did to start with.

I saw my role as a coach in quite an abstract way at first. Although I know the difference between coaching and mentoring, when I started the programme I thought my role was going to be more of a mentoring one. But it very quickly became apparent that this is exactly what it shouldn't be and it should be genuine coaching, challenging and provoking.

You can assume things about yourself and what Leadership Pathways did was make sure that I actually did them. I might have believed I was this type of person but the Leadership Pathways framework made sure I put my beliefs about myself into practice.

How has taking part made a difference to your school's leadership?

As a school, being involved in the programme has helped to change people's perceptions of leadership. Before I think people thought of leadership as headship. Now they've seen that actually that is not what it always means. There are lots of different ways to be a leader and in fact, every teacher is a leader.

People think of leadership as an upwards trajectory and it's shown that actually, sideways is okay as well. School staff have seen Madeleine's ability and confidence grow and that's made an impact across the school and now other members of staff want to take part in the programme.

The coaching and reflection time has been very valuable. We're always so busy all the time and this has given us the chance to reflect and we have all seen the value of that.

Taken part in the programme has changed the way I work with other members of staff too. We've created opportunities for shadowing and I'm a real convert to this way of working now. Shadowing gave Madeleine a better understanding of the role of a headteacher but I think shadowing could work at any level.

Making the difference

The overall aim of the Leadership Pathways programme is not only to increase the desire for leadership roles but to develop leadership that has an impact across the whole school and its pupils. Ultimately, it is hoped that the programme will help to build leadership capacity across the system and get more people to aspire to senior leadership roles.

To help develop the leadership skills which make a difference across a whole school, participants are asked to undertake a whole-school change project. Coaches and

participants are free to develop their own change project to suit their own context and personal learning needs. At the end of these change projects, participants are asked to give a presentation to others on the programme.

During the celebration day, participants from the first cohort were asked to reflect on what has made the most difference to them and what impact there has been for their schools and pupils. The following key themes emerged:

Confidence building

Many participants commented on the difference that increased confidence was making on their leadership practice. This boost in confidence seemed to be driver for change in many individuals – they now had to confidence to take on new leadership roles, to challenge and influence others and this belief in their own ability helped to raise their profile within their schools.

"I now have the confidence to say 'this is what we need to do and this is how we're going to do it'. I feel I have more authority and can challenge colleagues if needed."

"It's increased my confidence about my ability to be an effective leader."

"Her growth has had an effect on the whole school."

"It's really raised her profile in school –she takes a much more active role in leadership now."

"I have the confidence to tackle other colleagues who aren't on-board."

"When I started this programme I was already a middle leader but I'd always thought I was there by default. By the end of the programme, I understood why I was in that role. Now I have more confidence and I don't give up so easily."

"It's about giving the same message to grown-ups we give to little ones. You can achieve anything you want as long as you believe in yourself."

Snowball effect

Some participants commented that their change project sparked other developments and further changes grew from this initial project. The increased confidence of leaders and desire for change was seen to trigger a snowballing effect, spreading out throughout the whole of the school and extending beyond the original project.

“My change project snowballed and ended up triggering other areas of development.”

“My change project has really taken off in school and I’m not sure if it was my leadership which influenced this. But I’ve learnt that maybe this doesn’t matter. It’s embedded and working well.”

“The change project has invaded and found its way in – everyone is talking about it.”

Learning to champion and challenge

Another key theme from the day was this sense of seeing the bigger picture and viewing the needs of the whole school as well as the developmental needs of others.

“I’ve introduced quick wins – what can we do today? This helps to keep optimism up and I hope that this impacts on the children.”

“I’ve felt I had to always be leading from the front. I’ve learnt that I can get others to lead the way and this is a more rewarding experience.”

Case study: Torpoint Community College

**Kieran Earley, Coach and Deputy
Headteacher of Torpoint
Community College describes
the impact Leadership Pathways
has made across their college.**

What were your objectives when you embarked on Leadership Pathways?

In 2004, one of the areas of concern arising from our Ofsted inspection was that there was no direct tuition for PSHE. There are some local issues in Torpoint which created a real need for us to provide that education. We have a high rate of teenage pregnancy and a high rate of alcohol abuse by young people. So we felt we needed to look at this area closely.

Lee Matthews, a science teacher, was the participant on the programme. Lee had joined our college from the fast-track programme so he already had experience of whole-school impact. He joined Leadership Pathways to widen his leadership experience. Lee had also just taken on the role of developing PSHE. He was loosely involved in middle leadership but this wasn’t a high profile role in our college. However, Lee’s leadership of PSHE made him become a high-profile figure.

How did the programme impact on your college?

Lee's change project on the Leadership Pathways programme was the introduction of PSHE and a 'Learning for Life' programme across the college. This change project has produced some very real and visible changes within the college.

I believe that Lee would have followed his work on PSHE through to its conclusion anyway but Leadership Pathways speeded up the process of change. Through our coaching relationship, Lee had a structured route into SLT and into strategic discussions of where our college was heading. It also gave him a structure and opportunity to develop himself as a leader and to work on the skills he needed to take this programme forward.

He developed a very ambitious plan for PSHE and 'Learning for Life' with key colleagues, which led to some really big changes for our college which were driven by Lee's leadership. One example of this is that we changed the structure of the college day as a result of Lee's plan. I can't think of a more visible impact than that. We needed to put in a quality period of time for tutors to work with their tutor groups on PSHE, SEAL, IAG and Citizenship materials on a structured basis every day of the week. At the time, we didn't have a daily structure that enabled us to do this so we changed the timetable to allow a 30-minute session in the mornings.

The impact is that we now have a developing but credible tutor programme. It is used by all tutors and Lee has got the buy-in from the heads of year, the tutors and the students in something which is new. Prior to the changes Lee led with this programme, tutor time was twenty minutes when students had a chat with their tutor if they were lucky and if they were unlucky, it was an unstructured time where

they chatted to their friends. So it was a huge strategic step to introduce this structured and focused period.

On a personal level, being involved in the programme has inspired me to want to continue coaching relationships. Leadership Pathways builds on the theory of leadership and gives a genuine opportunity to put it into action – the structure of the programme will help us to get the best out of people; we learn by doing.

I've learnt a great deal too and I will take this way of working with me in the future. I would recommend, without question, coaching and this type of CPD to colleagues. It has an impact on the school but it also has a personal and professional impact. This way of working gives participants aspirations for themselves and their pupils. It generates the positive climate in a school that you need if you are going to move things forward quickly.

Success breeds success and we now have another colleague taking part in the programme.

Next steps

In the final part of the day, all delegates were asked to reflect on what was next on their personal pathways and the implications of their learning for future cohorts of Leadership Pathways.

Participants and coaches in this first cohort were in varying leadership positions. Some coaches were headteachers, other coaches were deputies aspiring to headship and participants were at varying levels of middle leadership.

Responses varied widely, some were aspirational, some participants or coaches had a very specific career move in mind while

others were focused more on skills and future personal development.

In the closing plenary, several themes emerged which participants and coaches felt were important for their next steps following on from the programme:

Reflective leadership time

A real strength of the programme observed by both participants and coaches was the reflection time. Having both the opportunity and being given 'permission' to develop reflective leadership was seen as vital component of the programme's success for many participants. Finding the time for strategic thinking and conversations was pinpointed felt as the catalyst for leadership growth.

"You can get too caught up in the day-to-day. This has given me time reflect and explore. You would struggle to legitimatise this time otherwise."

"This gives you the 'room' to make a difference."

A desire to consolidate learning and embed into everyday leadership

The next stage for many participants and coaches was to reflect and ensure that the new practices were firmly embedded into everyday learning. Although the programme had ended, many participants shared a desire to ensure that their change projects and personal leadership skills continued to grow.

"I want to maintain the momentum and ensure continued support from the senior management team."

Making sure everything learnt is sustainable in your own school

Sustaining the leadership changes also emerged as an important factor. Ensuring that leadership learning was sustaining in the long-term was felt to be a valuable next step for graduates of the programme.

"I want to build on the skills I've gained, apply what I've been learning and instil confidence in others."

Continuing on the self-directed learning path

Self-directed learning formed the basis for the Leadership Pathways programme and participants expressed their desire to continue on this path:

"I now know where I am and where I want to go next. I have the structures in place to support my self development."

Looking for the next leadership opportunity

Many participants shared their clear vision of where they wanted to progress to as a result of completing the programme:

"I want to be applying for deputy head posts within the next two years."

"This process has made me more aspirational. I have a clearer vision and feel ready to move on to NPQH."

"My aim is to gain a senior leadership role in the next two years, focusing on teaching and learning."

"I'm now aspiring to assistant headship."

Conclusion

This publication captures some of the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of those that attended the celebration day of the first cohort of Leadership Pathways.

Throughout the day, participants and coaches reflected on how the programme had made the difference to them as individuals and within their schools.

Overall, several key themes emerged from the day as a whole:

Time to reflect

Leadership reflection time was highlighted as one of the ways the programme had made the difference. Participants were given the 'permission' and time to reflect on their leadership practice and consider what changes they needed to make.

Theory into action

While the programme was grounded in theory, participants were able to translate this theory into leadership practice. Participants were encouraged to make changes to their leadership behaviours and take risks in a supportive and reflective environment.

Self-directed learning

The programme enabled both participants and coaches to gain a greater insight into their leadership style and behaviours. Leaders were able to review where they were now, where they wanted to go and how they were going to get there. This greater awareness allowed them to customise their learning to suit their individual needs. The modular and flexible structure of the programme allowed individuals to do this.

Coaching relationships

Many participants spoke of the value of their coaching relationship and how this was the most powerful part of the programme. One of the greatest benefits of school-based coaches means that these deeper relationships can continue long after the formal elements of the programme have finished.

Bridging the gap

It was felt that the programme was bridging the gap between middle and senior leadership as well as attracting those who were still unsure about headship.

Raised aspirations

As a result of taking part in the programme, participants and coaches voiced how their confidence was now stronger. This increased confidence gave individual the impetus to aim for the next role in leadership. Many participants were clear about now aiming for a deputy, assistant head or headship post within the next two years.

Useful links

If you are interested in taking part in the programme in the future then please visit:

www.ncsl.org.uk/leadershippathways

Other useful leadership learning resources include:

NCSL leadership library:

www.ncsl.org.uk/leadershiplibrary

Tomorrow's leader's today portal:

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/tomorrowsleaderstoday>

ECM leadership direct:

www.ncsl.org.uk

Join your local NCSL Leadership Network:

www.ncsl.org.uk/leadership_network

Appendix

About the Leadership Pathways programme

The programme lasts for one year – with a possible two-year option – and is designed with a heavy emphasis on work-based learning. The programme is aimed at established leaders and is positioned between Leading from the Middle (LftM) and National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). The programme isn't exclusively aimed at staff aiming for headship although it does provide a foundation for leaders who want to progress to senior positions. Applicants are expected to have significant experience in leadership roles which support the ECM agenda, be based in school, have the support of their senior school leaders and the opportunity to undertake a whole-school leadership change project.

All participants also need a school-based coach to provide ongoing support and challenge throughout the programme. The coach would normally be expected to be a senior leader, have experience of supporting staff development on a one-to-one basis and have undertaken training in mentoring, coaching or performance management.

Leadership Pathways was piloted during the spring/summer of 2006 and the first cohort started in the autumn term of 2006. This publication is designed to share and celebrate the learning from this first cohort and outline how the programme has made a difference to these leaders and their schools. This publication will be of interest to those interested in or enrolled on Leadership Pathways and anyone who is interested in developing leadership capacity or succession planning.

How is Leadership Pathways structured?

Leadership Pathways is designed around the principle of personalisation is underpinned by four theoretical concepts of leadership learning:

1. **Richard Boyatzis' theory of self-directed learning (2002)**. This theory underpins the approach of Leadership Pathways. Boyatzis' theory put simply is that the leadership development which makes a difference is based on self-directed learning. Self-directed learning involves five personal discoveries which are explored during the programme: Where do I want to be? Where am I now – what are my strengths and gaps? What is my learning agenda – how can I build on my strengths? What actions do I need to take? Who can help me?
2. **David Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984)**. This experiential learning cycle identified four different modes of learning: concrete experience; reflective observation; abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Kolb suggests that the learning experience is unique to everyone and although we may enter the cycle at different points we can optimize our learning by ensuring we move around the cycle.
3. **Argyris and Schon's double loop learning**. Double loop learning emphasizes the need for learners to question their assumptions and the norms they work within. This is the process of a learner reflecting on and questioning underlying values and changing or sometimes discarding them, and substituting new values and principles.
4. **Bruner's concept of spiral learning**. This concept identifies the importance of structuring learning to allow the learner to revisit material, build on its complexity and elaborate to a fuller understanding. This concept was used to build challenge into the programme's design.