Aspiration, Resilience, Awareness; a career learning curriculum for KS5

Rationale and timing

Aspiration, Resilience and Awareness KS5 is a set of lessons inspired by a sense that career learning has the potential to be doing more to prepare young people for increasingly complicated progression routes and less employment predictability. It is designed to enable schools to prepare their students for working life, not simply for their post-KS5 choice of option.

We focus on '**awareness**' of options, self and influences. However, awareness alone does not guarantee a sense of career wellbeing. Considering how best to help students to deal with setbacks ('**resilience**'), we recognised that we had to go back a step; we needed to enable students to define their own understanding of 'success'. We therefore explore some topics not found in other resources, topics that increasingly occupy the attention of academics (for example, how we should define career '**aspiration**').

A suggested order is given in the Programme of Study (below). Obviously, Teachers may wish to adapt this; however, some lessons build on themes that have been explored in previous lessons. Some of the lessons need to be delivered in terms 1, 2 and 3 of year 12. They are designed to precede 'information'-based activities (HE/employer fairs and visits, talks from specialist providers, work experience), as they aim to inspire students to make the best possible use of such events; our lessons are about the framing of key questions, whether to self or opportunity provider. Other lessons you may feel need a higher level of reflection and may be more effectively delivered later in the key stage.

There are two sessions that have been deliberately omitted, as the information they need to be based on changes every year: 'UCAS application systems' and 'student finance' should be added to the programme.

Learning outcomes

We use a 'values, skills and knowledge' lesson structure. We have found this structure, used widely in PHSE, a valuable starting point to interpret the interdependence of aspiration, resilience and awareness. It has enabled us to break down the aims of our lessons into component objectives. Its use has also meant we have never lost sight of the 'values' element of a lesson (for example, taking responsibility); if values are omitted, even the most up-to-date and well-taught careers programme will lack impact. We use 8 core values, one or more of which are developed in every lesson:

1. Valuing self
2. Valuing honest self-reflection
3. Valuing positive influences
4. Valuing qualifications
5. Valuing planning ahead
6. Valuing being open minded
7. Valuing aspiration
8. Valuing careers support (CEIAG)

The Indigo Framework

The secondary school curricula are founded on programmes of study that aim to capture the 'essentials' of what should be taught in each key stage. Consideration also needs to be given to whether students are 'next stage ready' (any major theme needs to be introduced and assessed before higher-level understanding is attempted later on).

Applying this thinking to a framework for career learning lessons has sharpened our focus on what exactly needs to 'go before', and of course much needs to go before in career learning to inspire students to make the most of opportunities. In addition, the new emphasis on what can be 'taught' (the skills, knowledge, understandings that students should acquire) has ensured that the framework for lessons has an exactitude that can be easily evaluated. So this framework attempts:

- a high degree of specificity
- to capture the 'essentials' of each key stage
- to ensure that themes are covered incrementally

	Students will be taught to:
1.	Know the timeline of applications for post-18 opportunities
2.	Know the key features of post-18 opportunities
3.	Know how to find out more about post-18 opportunities
4.	Know about progression routes from these opportunities
5.	Know a range of opportunities to extend experience, learning and skills
6.	Use knowledge of self in decision making
7.	Use knowledge of the labour market in decision making
8.	Use strategies in planning
9.	Use strategies in job hunting
10.	Complete a personal statement
11.	Know who/what can help with decisions/information

Evaluation

There is no one tool for measuring the success of a career learning programme, although we suggest two possible approaches, which can be used in tandem:

1. Evaluation against the Career Learning Framework (above)

By evaluating the 'essentials' of each key stage you are ensuring that key elements have been taught and that these 'essentials' have had impact.

2. Evaluation of learning objectives

Learning objectives, as outlined in each lesson, can also form the basis for evaluation. A focus on lesson objectives not only enables evaluation of a particular lesson, but in addition can help determine the degree to which your programme has engendered less tangible objectives over a key stage (for example, valuing positive influences or the motivation to plan).

Evaluation tools

1. The plenary activities in each lesson are very often a way of assessing the effectiveness of the lesson against the objectives.

2. Interview groups of students to explore similar themes (a conversation gives you a chance to ask follow-up questions, and students are often freer with feedback than on a form, and feedback is often more nuanced).

Indigo Programme of Study KS5

Years 12-13		
Lesson	**Theme**	**Learning outcomes**
1. Options and timeline	An outline of the range of post-18 options, and introduction to a timeline of research and application	Values • Valuing the role of information when making decisions Skills • Research of post-18 options • Use of strategies in planning, to maximise chances Knowledge/Understanding • Timeline of decisions • Post-18 options
2. What else can I get involved in?	Information on activities and learning opportunities (in addition to main body of study)	Values • Taking responsibility • Aspiration – being proactive in seeking out opportunities to extend experience and skills Skills • The ability to use knowledge of self in decision making Knowledge/Understanding • Skills, attitudes and experience which HE providers and employers look for
3. Making decisions (1): Planning with confidence	A reflection on the process of making post-18 choices	Values • Taking responsibility • The importance of honest self-reflection • Valuing the role of information when making decisions • The importance of back-up choices Skills • Ability to use knowledge of self in decision making • Use of strategies in planning to maximise chances • Coping with and learning from change and rejection Knowledge/Understanding • Influences on my decisions

Lesson	Theme	Learning outcomes
4. Making decisions (2): Reflecting through case studies	Considering and learning from the stories of others	**Values** • Taking responsibility • The importance of honest self-reflection • Valuing the role of information when making decisions • The importance of back-up choices **Skills** • Ability to use knowledge of self in decision making • Use of strategies in planning to maximise chances • Coping with and learning from change and rejection **Knowledge/Understanding** • Influences on my decisions
5. Making decisions (3): Personal priorities	A suggested template for decision making	**Values** • Taking responsibility • The importance of honest self-reflection **Skills** • Ability to use knowledge of self in decision making • Coping with and learning from change and rejection **Knowledge/Understanding** • Influences on my decisions
6. Employability	The attributes that employers may require	**Values** • Taking responsibility • Aspiration – being proactive in seeking out opportunities to extend experience and skills • Valuing the skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look **Skills** • Self-presentation **Knowledge/Understanding** • The skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look

Lesson	Theme	Learning outcomes
7. Higher Education options	An overview of HE opportunities and key sources of information	**Values** • The importance of honest self-reflection **Skills** • The research and evaluation of post-18 options **Knowledge/Understanding** • Post-18 options • Entry requirements • Key sources of information • Influences on my decisions
8. River (1): Managing challenges	A consideration of the possible challenges students will face in a lifetime of working, and identification of the values and skills that will help students manage these	**Values** • Taking responsibility • The skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look **Skills** • Coping with, and learning from, change and rejection **Knowledge/Understanding** • That the world of work perpetually changes • Influences on my decisions • The skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look
9. River (2): Understanding the changing labour market	The unpredictability of employment	**Values** • Taking responsibility • The skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look **Skills** • Coping with, and learning from, change and rejection **Knowledge/Understanding** • That the world of work perpetually changes • Influences on my decisions • The skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look

Lesson	Theme	Learning outcomes
10. Apprenticeships at 18	Opportunities that might be available (notably apprenticeships) and how to apply	**Values** • The role of information when making decisions • The importance of informed advice and guidance **Skills** • The research and evaluation of post-18 options • Networking **Knowledge/Understanding** • Post-18 options • Key sources of information • Application processes • Who can help me?
11. Gap year	Graduate employment	**Values** • The role of information when making decisions • Valuing the role of labour market experience in decision making **Skills** • Information on research destination and employment **Knowledge/Understanding** • Key sources of information • Progression routes • HE events and how best to use them
12. What might this lead to?	Graduate employment and researching plans	**Values** • The role of information when making decisions • Valuing the role of labour market experience in decision making **Skills** • Research of destination and employment skills **Knowledge/Understanding** • Key sources of information • Progression routes • HE events and how best to use them

Lesson	Theme	Learning outcomes
13. Applying to HE (1): What do admissions tutors look for?	Personal statements – key preparation and research	**Values** • Aspiration – being proactive in seeking out opportunities to extend experience/skills • Valuing the role of information when making decisions • Valuing the role of labour market experience when making decisions **Skills** • Self-presentation **Knowledge/Understanding** • Entry requirements • Skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look • HE events and how best to use them • Key sources of information
14. Applying to HE (2): What makes a good personal statement?	Personal statements – effective use of limited words	**Values** • Aspiration – being proactive in seeking out opportunities to extend experience/skills • Valuing the role of information when making decisions • Valuing the role of labour market experience when decision making **Skills** • Self-presentation **Knowledge/Understanding** • Entry requirements • Skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look • HE events and how best to use them • Key sources of information
15. Applying to HE (3): Developing writing skills	Modelling an effective personal statement	**Values** • Aspiration – being proactive in seeking out opportunities to extend experience/skills **Skills** • Self-presentation **Knowledge/Understanding** • Entry requirements • Skills, attitudes and experience for which HE and employers look

Lesson	Theme	Learning outcomes
16. Job applications; how do employers select?	The strategies employers use to differentiate candidates	**Values** • Aspiration – being proactive in seeking out opportunities **Skills** • Self presentation **Knowledge/Understanding** • Skills, attitudes and experience for which employers look • Key sources of information
17. Knowing yourself (1): Strategies for self-reflection	Strategies for self-reflection	**Values** • Positive self-image • Taking responsibility • The importance of honest self-reflection • The importance of advice and guidance • The importance of labour market experience in decision making **Skills** • The ability to use knowledge of self in decision making **Knowledge/Understanding** • Influences on my decisions • Who can help me?
18. Knowing yourself (2): Self-reflection in practice	Self-reflection in practice	**Values** • Positive self-image • Taking responsibility • The importance of honest self-reflection **Skills** • The ability to use knowledge of self in decision making **Knowledge/Understanding** • Influences on my decisions

Lesson	Theme	Learning outcomes
19. Is 'follow your passion' good career advice?	An examination of cultural influences on career choice	**Values** • Taking responsibility • Importance of honest self-reflection **Skills** • Ability to use knowledge of self in decision making **Knowledge/Understanding** • Influences on my decisions
20. The philosophy of 'success'	An investigation of the concept career success	**Values** • Positive self-image **Skills** • Coping with and learning from change and rejection • Ability to use knowledge of self in decision making **Knowledge/Understanding** • Influences on my decisions