

Access, Learning and Development in the Creative and Cultural Sectors: from ‘Creative Apprenticeship’ to ‘being apprenticed’

This paper challenges the prevailing conventional wisdom in the UK that the Government is the sole architect of the education and training (E&T) system and that qualifications are the magic bullet for securing employment in the creative and cultural sector. It also argues that if policymakers are serious about wanting to diversify the occupational profile of the creative and cultural sector to reflect both the multicultural composition of the UK’s population and the rising demand for broader creative and cultural products and services, then it is necessary to develop a less qualification-driven and more multifaceted approach to facilitating access and supporting learning and development in that sector. The paper maintains that this presupposes a shift from the current credentialist strategy to develop ‘creative apprenticeships’ towards a strategy that supports people to ‘be apprenticed’ in a variety of ways in the creative and cultural sector.

The hallmark of this strategy is to recognise that there are a number of ways that people can be apprenticed in the creative and cultural sector and to allocate funding to support each of these routes into the sector. Drawing on the earlier argument, the paper has identified three routes:

- the *accredited route* based on academic or vocational qualifications;
- the *industry-recognised* route based on non-accredited activities such as work placements, internships, master classes;
- the *network* route which is designed to develop capability and capacity within a region and is also presupposes non-accredited activities.

Enacting this strategy presupposes that instead of predetermining the type of output (i.e. qualifications) that sector skills agreements can contain and assuming that education and training agencies (i.e. Colleges of Further Education and accredited training providers) are the sole providers of training solutions, the government should relax the reigns of policy and allow the demand-side to identify a broader outputs and to work in partnership with other stakeholders to broker bespoke education and training solutions. This would offer all stakeholders more freedom choose to determine what combination of routes of being apprenticed they felt were appropriate to their economic regeneration and/or diversity strategies..

Introduction

The profile of the creative and cultural sector and its contribution to the UK economy (and for that matter, the economies of other advanced industrial countries) has risen dramatically for economic and social reasons over the last decade (Howkins 2001; Florida 2002). The economic reason is that this sector is deemed to be a paradigmatic example of ‘high-growth’ and ‘high added-value’ industrial sector which policymakers assume will be the basis of the UK’s prosperity in the 21st Century (DCMS 1998; 2001). The social reason is that the creative and cultural sector symbolizes cultural diversity because it not only generates new cultural products and services, but it also generates new culturally diverse audiences for those products and services (Florida 2002). Taken in combination, this has led the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS 2001, foreward) to affirm the importance of providing all young people with the opportunity to ‘express and channel their creativity through a wide range of activities’.

During the same period, successive UK government policies for education and training to consistently emphasise that success in the knowledge economy will be ‘education-led’ and ‘qualification-driven’ (DfES 1997). This credo has resulted in a number of measures to increase the proportion of young people obtaining qualifications in the UK. On the one hand, policymakers have attempted to broaden the 16-19 academic curriculum to encourage more students to remain in full-time education (DfES 2000), and urged universities to ‘widen participation’ by broadening their curriculum to respond to reflect the changing occupational structure of the UK as well as to diversify higher education (DfES 1997), with the result that an increasing number of young people are now studying degrees in creative and cultural fields (Universities UK 2005)¹. On the other hand, policymakers have revised vocational courses, for example, the Apprenticeship Programme, to extend its reach into non-traditional industrial sectors (i.e. sectors that have little tradition of offering apprenticeships) and to use apprenticeship as a measure to address social exclusion amongst low academic achievers (Fuller and Unwin 2003b).

This paper advances, however, a very different set of arguments as regards the link between access, and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector compared with current policy prescriptions. The first argument is that the prevailing conventional wisdom

¹ The report from Universities UK (2005: 17) reports a consistent increase in enrolments in creative and art and design subject areas since 1994 (55% overall) and concludes that this development along with increases in Business and Administration, Engineering and Technology and Health related subjects ‘represents a major change in the nature of higher education institutions of the United Kingdom’.

that qualifications are the ‘magic bullet’ (Keep 1999) for securing employment is, on its own, an inadequate strategy to facilitate access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector. The second argument is that, if policymakers are really serious about wanting to diversify the occupational profile of the creative and cultural sector to reflect both the multicultural composition of the UK’s population and the rising demand for broader creative and cultural products and services, then it is necessary to develop a less qualification-driven and more multifaceted approach to facilitating access and supporting learning and development in that sector. The third argument is that in order to realise the above goals it will be necessary for the Government to stop seeing themselves as the ‘sole architect’ of the education and training (E&T) system (Keep 2006: 62), and to allow demand-side E &T partners to develop innovative strategies to enhance entry routes into the creative and cultural sector.

The paper makes this argument in the following way. In the first section, the paper sets the context by providing a brief overview of the creative and cultural sectors. The second section identifies existing problems of access and learning and development in those segments of the creative and cultural sector that are characterized by an extremely high proportion of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) and freelance work. Section three analyses the reasons for the mismatch between Government E&T policy and the actual needs of those segments. Based on its conclusions, the paper argues that a shift has to occur from the current credentialist strategy to develop ‘creative apprenticeships’ (Hutton 2006) towards a less qualification-driven and more multifaceted strategy that supports people to ‘become apprenticed’ in a variety of ways in the creative and cultural sector. The paper concludes by outlining the implications of such a shift for E&T policy.

The creative and cultural industrial sector

The distinctive features of the sector

It is widely accepted that although some industries in the creative and cultural sector, for example, art and design, broadcasting, film, music etc, have been a longstanding feature of the UK and for that matter the American, European, Pacific Rim economies, the process of industrial convergence which began in the late 1980s has gradually established the conditions for these sectors to be intertwined economically and technologically in radically new ways (Coffee 1996; Tapscot 1995). The paradigmatic example of this type of convergence is encapsulated by what is increasingly referred to as the ‘creative economy’. Some writers, for example, John Howkins (2002) define this economy in terms of the outputs achieved by the following fifteen industries: Crafts, Design, Fashion, Film, Music, Performing Arts, Publishing, Research and Development, Software, Toys, TV and Radio and Video Games.

While other writers, for example, Richard Florida (2002) focus on the occupations that generate the new ideas that enable those industrial segments to flourish. Irrespective of which view of the creative economy is adopted, it is generally agreed that the creative and cultural sector is now worth worldwide about \$2,2 trillion and, according to the World Bank's estimation, is growing at 5% per year (Florida 2002). The largest market is America which is now worth in excess of \$1 trillion while Britain is ranked third in the creative economy behind Japan. The UK's creative and cultural sector generates revenues of around £115 billion and employs 1.3 million people. They contribute over £10 billion in exports and account for over five per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and, moreover, output from these sectors grew by more than twice that of the economy as a whole in the late 1990s (DCMS, 2001).

One hallmark of the creative economy trans-nationally is that the profile of the clusters and sectors that comprise this economy are rather different from the historical profile of conventional economic sectors such as the automobile and pharmaceutical industries (Florida 2002). The latter industries are characterised by strong national identities and vibrant corporate sector with strong 'strategies', 'structures', 'systems' which facilitated the manufacture of standardized products and services (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1997). Whilst globalization has transformed competitive strategies and work organization in those industries significantly, they still tend to be involved with large-scale production. In contrast, the profile and structure of the creative industries is characterised by a mix of a small number of global corporations and national organisations and a very large number of SMEs and freelance work who continually form value chains and networks, often only for a short duration, to develop new products or services (Florida 2002). This pattern is replicated across Europe, with the result that the European Union (EU) has acknowledged the 'importance of business support and investment that is targeted at the particular needs of creative micro-businesses' who otherwise struggle to survive in very un-stable market conditions (Powell 2002; page. 3).

Another hallmark of the creative and cultural sector trans-nationally is that its very cultural diversity and complexity has made it difficult in the past for policymakers to target support effectively. In the case of the UK, the creative and cultural sector is, in effect, an invention of New Labour in an attempt to provide some overarching coherence to traditional craft and artisan industries such as design, fashion and music, longstanding professionalized industries such as broadcasting and journalism and new media industries such as video, games and web design (DCMS 2001, page. 04). The government's attempt to impose some coherent overarching definition of creative and cultural activity, however, masks a number of problems in the sector. The first problem is that it is actually very difficult to produce a clear-cut definition of the creative and cultural sector labour force (Selwood 2001). The conventional approach adopted by the National Labour Force Survey (LFS) to defining creative and

cultural occupations is to use the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system (Pratt 1999). There are, however, a number of conceptual difficulties associated with occupational classification. One difficulty is that the criteria can range from strict market place criterion (e.g. the amount of time spent on creative work or the amount of income derived from such activity) to more subjective self-evaluations of who considers themselves to be a creative (Galloway *et al.* 2002: 28). Whilst both criteria are clearly valuable, they generate a rather one-sided picture of the creative and cultural sector. Employment patterns based on marketplace criteria tend to focus on the work patterns of people who are either working for large enterprises in the private sector, for example, IBM, SONY, or in the public sector, for example, BBC, national Library Service. Thus they do not necessarily capture people who are freelance workers.

Another difficulty is that the SOC classifications are rather traditional, for example, the first three 'Major Groupings' of the SOC scale are defined as 'Managers and Administrator's, 'Professional occupations', 'Associate professional and technical occupations' and their respective 'Unit Groups' are defined as creative and cultural sectors are defined as: Entertainment and sports managers, Architects, librarians, archivists and curators, and Authors, writers, journalists, Artists, commercial designers, graphic designers. Neither the Major Groupings nor the Unit Groups are therefore particularly appropriate for capturing the distinctiveness of much work in the creative and cultural sectors. They perpetuate un-helpful hierarchical distinctions that accord curators a higher status than artists. They also are unable to take into account that the work of many people in the creative and cultural sector ranges over a wide spectrum of occupational areas and less susceptible to standard forms of occupational classification (Bilton 1999). A further difficulty is that the pool of creative and cultural labour is increasingly characterised by self-employment and short-term contacts. This results in a high rate of 'multiple job holding' (Baines and Robson 1999; Creigh-Tyte and Thomas 1999) as people are forced to take second jobs to supplement their income stream or as a form of 'bridging' finance to support them whilst they break in or establish themselves in their chosen niche.

The rigidity of the SOC classifications makes it difficult to not only capture the existing diversity of employment patterns in the creative and cultural sector, but also the emergence of new creative activity such as internet services and new occupations, for example, web design. As a consequence, when intermediary organizations with a remit for facilitating economic development such as Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and/or facilitating workforce development such as Sector Skills Councils (CCS) commission research on the creative and cultural sector, they often prefer researchers to capture the intimately connected and mutually supporting nature of work in the creative and cultural sector by using more generic and

encompassing forms of classification. A good example is the well regarded report commissioned by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA 2002). The report uses the following terms - 'content origination' (i.e. the generation of new ideas), 'exchange' (i.e. relation to audience or market place), 'reproduction' (i.e. production of goods and services) and 'manufacturing inputs' (i.e. specialist tools and materials), to capture the cross-sectoral interconnectedness of the industrial segments that comprise the creative and cultural sector, the scale and significance of the sector's contribution to the economy in the South East and the way in which growth may be best supported in the future.

Despite its good intentions to impose some coherence on the creative and cultural sector the SEEDA report, like the DCMS's Mapping Document, masks another problem in the sector. Unlike other industrial sectors such as the automobile, engineering and medical sectors which have historically been characterized by very strong 'occupational labour markets' (OLMs) and firm-specific 'internal labour markets' (FILM) (Ashton 1995), the creative and cultural sector is characterised predominantly by 'external labour markets' (ELMs). These labour markets function in rather different ways from one another. OLMs enable new entrants to be trained in a range of skills which provide competence in specific occupations. This process of occupational socialization results in the development of an identification with an occupation, for example, engineer, nurse, mechanic as well as a 'skill base' that can be enhanced through further training within firms. While FILMs provide a series of job or career ladders which following further training enable young employees to be promoted and to progress within an organization.

These labour market conditions are only really found in those segments of the creative and cultural sector which have developed equivalent professional identities and education and training traditions, for example, broadcasting and printing. In the main, large swathes of the creative and cultural sector are characterized by ELMs. These markets are formed where the buying and selling of labour is not linked to jobs which form part of a FILM or a long standing and clearly defined OLM. Movement of labour in ELMs is determined by the price attached to the job and/or contract on offer and the requirements of the individual concerned and such jobs/contracts in the creative and cultural industries tend to run the gamut from high to low skill. Traditionally, ELMs were seen as constituting the 'secondary labour market' and labour market economists tended to treat them as less desirable work contexts for young people than OLMs and FILMs because they did not offer the same form of employment protection and structured opportunities for development (Ashton 1995, p.15). The impact of globalization, new forms of work and out-sourcing has, however, profoundly increased the prevalence of ELMs within the UK economy in general (Ashton 1995) and in the creative and cultural sector in particular (Howkins 2002), with the result that even organizations such as

the BBC which in the past offered its employees permanent contracts is now inclined to place new recruits on short-term and temporary contracts.

Access to livelihoods in the creative and cultural sector is, therefore, not straightforward for anyone and particularly not so for people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds. In fact access in this sector, like most other sectors, remains ‘belligerently easier if you are white, middle class and male’ (Demos 2006). It is widely accepted that data available on diversity in the creative industries in the UK is incomplete, but the overriding impression is of the under-representation of certain groups (Selwood 2001). For example, black and minority ethnic groups make up 4.1% of the workforce in the creative industries, compared to 7% in the UK economy as a whole. The situation is worse in London. Only 13 per cent of people in creative occupations are from black or ethnic minority origin, compared with 21 per cent for London’s workforce as a whole (GLA 2004). Moreover, certain sectors have acute representation problems. Film production for example is predominately white - only 1 in 20 are from a minority ethnic background. This represents just 5% of the workforce (Skillset 2005).

On the one hand, the prevalence of ELMs in the creative and cultural sector not only makes it very difficult for young people to gain access to that sector in the UK (Selwood 2001) as well as in Europe (Janssen *et al* 2001) compared with gaining access to traditional industrial sectors such as Automobile, Engineering, Medicine, but also limits the opportunities for learning and development once they have secured a foothold in the sector compared with opportunities in traditional industrial sectors. On the other hand, the increasing number of graduates who hold degrees in creative and cultural subjects means that the supply of people who aspire to work in this sector often exceeds demand. This leads many graduates to accept that the best way to secure a foothold in the sector is to participate in un-paid activities. The implications of this for access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector is explored in the next section by drawing on a recent study from Galloway and colleagues and research emerging from the EU Equal Project – *The Last Mile* (TLM)².

Access, learning and development in the creative and cultural sector

Galloway and colleagues (2002)³ analysed access and learning and development in the following six occupational areas - performing artists; authors and writers; musicians; visual

² *The Last Mile* is a £13 million project funded through the EU’s EQUAL Programme. It is looking at inclusion and learning in the creative and cultural sectors in the following regions in the UK: Cumbria, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Slough, with special reference to the Black and Minority Ethnic population.

³ The primary aim of Galloway and colleagues study was to analyse the relation between labour markets and the tax and benefit system. In doing so, they generated a considerable volume of data on access and professional learning. I have drawn on those aspects of their study to highlight the link between ELMs, access and professional learning.

artists and craftmakers; producers, directors and managers and designers, by interviewing a mix of aspirant and recent entrants who hold a range of qualifications at Level 3 and 4 and some who did not hold any qualifications. It is clear from their research that most people were forced to develop a number of 'coping strategies' to facilitate their entry into the external labour market of their chosen profession and to develop within that profession and labour market.

One common strategy which was adopted by a significant number of performing artists, musicians, visual artists was to cope with the problems of entry via part-time work and on a self-employed basis by diversifying their expertise. Professionals sought and accepted work such as drama/music workshops with young people, voice/music/art coaches or to acquire a teaching qualification, for example, Post-Graduate Teaching Certificate or City and Guilds 7407, which they hoped would enhance their professional expertise and not sap their energy or jeopardize their reputation at the start of their career (Galloway *et al* 2002: 52). Another strategy that enabled a significant number of authors/writers, visual artists/craftmakers and directors/producers and designers to cope with the problem of entry was to be cushioned by the income of a spouse, partner or family. Financial cushioning enabled aspiring and recent entrants to accept short-term and part-time contracts and even unpaid internships in order to raise their profile and to begin to develop a track record in their professional field. Furthermore, financial cushioning was also used by aspiring and recent entrants in fields such as art/craft/design to minimize their outgoings, to save for lean periods and to secure business premises/workshop space where they could develop their creative ideas, rather than being forced to 'beg, steal and borrow' space from their peers (Galloway *et al.* 2002: 52).

It is also clear from Galloway and colleagues' research that professionals developed equivalent coping strategies to support their professional learning after their initial entry into their chosen professional field as well during the early stages of entry. Their evidence indicates that unless professionals were fortunate to gain full-time employment with a corporate organization or public sector employer where the combination of FILM and OLMs tended to guarantee a good level of development opportunities, they had to assume responsibility for their own continuing professional development. This is partly because:

SMEs are rarely in a position to offer training opportunities to their own staff, let alone, freelance staff whom they employed, either regularly or on a recurrent basis (Galloway *et al* 2002: 114).

since SMEs lack the financial or human resources to do so. It is also partly because tight staffing levels means that many SMEs find it difficult to take in recently qualified professional and place them in 'job slots' where they can be immediately productive. No

matter how well trained newly qualified professionals and/or recent entrants have been in educational institutions, this does not automatically equip them to work in the creative and cultural sector. Work in this sector increasingly requires forms of knowledge and skill which can only be acquired on-the-job because educational institutions cannot, and arguably should not be expected to, teach the forms of occupationally-specific knowledge and skill that employers are looking for (AGR 2000). Hence, SMEs not only in the creative and cultural sector but also elsewhere in the UK economy ‘hedge their bets’; they offer aspirants short-term and low-paid contracts so as not to over commit themselves financially, a strategy which in the process allows aspiring and recent entrants to gain relevant experience.

To overcome this lack of industry-readiness, aspiring or recent entrants resorted to voluntary unpaid work and engaged in networking activities. This helped them to develop a personal OLM so that they heard more quickly about commercial opportunities. It also allowed them to position themselves in creative and cultural ELMs to work collaboratively with professionals in similar or complementary fields to tender for commissions or to be invited to join a project team that has successfully secured a tender. This combination of a ‘culture of volunteering’ and learning ‘on the job’ nevertheless posed a particular challenge for aspiring and recent entrants. Recognition in the creative and cultural sector does not rest on talent alone, it also requires tremendous drive and commitment to sustain any aspiring or recent entrant through the uncertain, destabilizing and de-motivating experience of simultaneously working for little financial reward and having to fund their professional development. It is therefore hardly a surprise that most people interviewed by Galloway *et al.* (2002, p. 114) considered that attempts to diversify the profile of the creative and cultural sector would falter unless there was a more ‘inclusive environment’ because as the director of an arts centre observed:

Those people who do survive through the system are not necessarily just self-selected, because they may be the ones who have money to support them through that process. So you tend, you are tending to get maybe a slightly moneyed class of people who end up being artists.

One strategy that was favoured by designers, musicians, artists and craftmakers was to develop the knowledge base of their particular creative or cultural practice by participating in ‘master-apprentice’ schemes. Sometimes these schemes are funded by a public body such as the Arts Council or Craft and Design Guild place relatively inexperienced professionals with more experienced professionals for a short period. These schemes have proved to be a boon for both parties; they assisted new entrants to grasp how to apply the knowledge and skill that they had gained whilst training in a commercial setting as well as providing the ‘master’ with a small bursary for volunteering her/his expertise and time. On other occasions, aspiring and recent new entrants negotiated their own master-apprentice ‘contract’ or internship. This

arrangement allows aspirants to support experienced professional to develop her/his business by trading-off their labour for work experience which will enable them to gain professional knowledge and skill that they could not acquire through conventional education and training programmes.

Access and learning and development issues also related to many aspiring entrants' experience of programmes such as the New Deal which have been developed to cater for young people who are socially excluded (Lao and Lucas 204). Whilst some professionals, for example, designers, musicians and performing artists had some positive experiences of training and professional development courses that they had been supported to or subsidized to attend, these professionals also noted that neither higher education institutions nor local training providers necessarily provided 'what was needed for commercial enterprises'. Both were frequently criticised for relying on 'traditional didactic styles of delivery when what was needed in many cases was exposure to experienced people' so as to develop the knowledge base of their practice so that they are closer to being perceived as industry-ready and to improve their business acumen to enable them to secure tenders for work (Galloway *et al* 2002: 90). Furthermore, many established professionals as well as aspiring and new entrants interviewed by Galloway and colleagues (2002: 115) felt that the current focus of education and training (E&T) policies which falls in the main on the 16-25 age group was unhelpful in the creative and cultural sector. There was general agreement that:

'there should be opportunities for those aged over 25 to break into the arts, since some fields required a degree of maturity which youngsters usually lacked; indeed state support for training should involve lifelong provision'.

The general feeling was that finance should not just be restricted to accredited courses; it also should include forms of development such as work placements and access to network and network development which have a demonstrable track record for facilitating access to the creative and cultural sector.

Similar conclusions have also been reached by *The Last Mile* Project. This project is, in contrast to Galloway *et al.*'s study, focusing on aspirant and recent entrants' experiences of access and learning and development in art and design, film, jewellery, music, media and theatre as well as on the experience of those intermediary agencies such as City Councils (CCs) and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) who are either coordinating programmes to facilitate access and learning and development. Researchers have identified the important role played by the European Social Fund (ESF) in this regard (Guile and Okumoto, forthcoming). The ESF is the EU's main source of financial support for efforts to develop employability and human resources so that Europe's workforce and companies are better

equipped to face new, global challenges. Specifically, funds are channeled in the UK through CCs and RDAs in an attempt to help people to improve their skills and, consequently, their job prospects⁴. One way in which CCs and RDAs frequently deploy funds is by explicitly incorporating a learning and development dimension into their economic regeneration and business development programmes (Guile 2006). This integrated strategy allows CCs and RDAs to provide a diverse range of non-accredited activities such as work placements, master class sessions and network creation that simultaneously supports the growth of small businesses and facilitates access to and learning and development within the creative and cultural sector.

Attendance at master classes alerts aspiring and recent entrants, irrespective as to whether they have obtained any qualifications, to the standard of performance expected in different segments of the creative and cultural sector, while work placements provide an opportunity for their existing knowledge and skill to be developed in accordance with the commercial requirements of the creative and cultural sector. So in the case of the music industry where talent in fields such as dance, rock, jazz has traditionally been assessed in terms of the ability to innovate in a musical idiom rather than in terms of qualifications, access to master classes helps aspirants and recent entrants to appreciate the standard of musical performance, musical production and music management (Guile 2006). Furthermore, the opportunity for SMEs and freelancers to use master classes to demonstrate their knowledge and skill also provides them with an additional income stream, and the provision of work placements provides them with an additional source of labour to help them to develop their businesses.

In contrast, investment in network creation serves a rather different generative purpose (Guile 2006). From CCs and RDAs perspective, it helps to develop capability and capacity at the local and regional level by offering SMEs and freelancers and aspiring and new entrants opportunities to learn how to contribute their diverse expertise to economic and social regeneration schemes. From professionals' perspective, network creation provides an opportunity to combat the exigencies and uncertainties of ELMs by broadening their network of contacts and, in the process, generating new ideas that can be presented to agencies in the private and public sector that fund creative and cultural activity.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the preceding analysis of access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector. The first conclusion is that the cornerstone of UK's E&T policy that qualifications support employability is decidedly wide of the mark. Both newly qualified and recent entrants rely on financial cushioning from family, friends and peers if they are to make the transition into the creative and cultural sector OLMs. The second

⁴ In 2007, a [new programming period](#) for the ESF will begin. The implications of this development for the work placement programmes and master class sessions described in this paper are, at the present moment, unclear.

conclusion is that the growth of graduates who hold degrees in creative and cultural subject areas and who are prepared to accept un-paid work to secure a foothold in the creative and cultural sector is exerting downward pressure on people who either hold qualifications at Level 3 or below or who lack any qualifications to enter this sector. Yet, when such people are able to take advantage of master classes, work placements etc there is some evidence that it facilitates entry into the creative and cultural sector. The third conclusion is that those who flourish are not necessarily the most talented but rather those who can maximize their family's cultural capital and develop their own social capital to sustain them while they attempt to carve out a niche for themselves in the creative and cultural ELMS. The third conclusion is that innovative demand-side strategies such as the provision of master-apprenticeship schemes, work placements and network creation funded through the ESF Programme are not only necessary to supplement the accredited programmes funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) such as the FD and/or APP, but are also more attuned to the needs of many segments of the creative and cultural sector than the aforementioned accredited programmes. The reason for the DfES's lack of interest in and commitment to demand-side initiatives is explored below.

Government policy for education and training

General direction of educational policy

The idea that a highly qualified workforce is central to economic prosperity has been the dominant influence on successive UK government's policies for education since the early 1990s. Up to 1997, the then Conservative administration concentrated primarily on addressing underachievement amongst specific sections of the UK 16-19 cohort, for example, school leavers with few qualifications above Level 2 (Young 1999) or on promoting the development of an 'enterprise culture' in Higher Education by offering financial incentives to universities through the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative (EHEI) to introduce more vocationally-orientated elements into the academic curriculum (Brown and Lauder 1997). The Conservatives supplemented this focus by launching the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in the UK in 1994 to assist employers to address their intermediate skill shortages. Since New Labour was elected in 1997, however, all aspects of government educational policy have been explicitly intertwined with its social inclusion agenda on the grounds that education is the best policy to support employability in the 'knowledge economy' (Lauder 2004).

In the case of higher education, the primary emphasis has been to encourage universities to address social exclusion by widening participation so as to attract non-traditional learners, for example, learners whose families have little or no previous experience of university study into HE, rather than to target measures to facilitate access into specific subjects or occupational

sectors. Another measure has been to launch new vocational qualifications such as the Foundation Degree (FD) to address a perceived skill deficit at intermediate (associate professional and technical) level and also as a strategy to help the Government to meet its target of ensuring that at least 50% of the population entered HE (DfEs 2003). In the case of the post 16 cohort, one of the government's aims has been to attract young people into the Apprenticeship/Advanced Apprenticeship Programme (AAP), leading in the case of the former to Level 2 qualification and in the case of the latter to a Level 3 qualifications, irrespective of employers' demand for intermediate skills. One important group, as Fuller and Unwin (2003b, p. 22) remark, that has been targeted:

are those young people, not proceeding into further and higher education, whom the government perceives to be vulnerable to social and economic exclusion. In this respect, the Modern Apprenticeship can be seen as a continuation of the same policy of social inclusion which has governed youth training schemes since the early 1980s. The strategy has been to concentrate on volume, in terms of apprentice numbers and participating sectors, rather than on skill formation in those sectors which might be said to be important for economic growth.

This emphasis on quantity not only masks a major difference between the AAP and previous approaches to apprenticeship in the UK and for that matter elsewhere in Europe, but also ties AAP firmly into national education and training targets (E&T). In the past, 'apprenticeships were demand rather than supply-led. Employers decided when and if they needed apprentices' (Fuller and Unwin 2003b: 22). Thus, apprenticeship was very responsive to labour market demand. In contrast, at the present time the prevailing orthodoxy of centrally imposed planning regimes and national targets for education and training, coupled with the nexus of quangos, for example, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) with responsibility for devising sector skills agreements to deliver those targets and whose livelihood depends on meeting their target quotas, serves to underpin a decidedly supply-side conception of E&T. This has a number of pernicious effects as regards apprenticeship. First, most employers, despite having a degree of representation on the boards of SSCs and LSCs, and particularly employers in the creative and cultural sector rarely feel any particular ownership of apprenticeships (Fuller and Unwin 2003; Hutton 2006). Second, the hands of the SSCs and LSCs are tied as regards financially supporting any new initiatives for learning and development that do not directly support government targets for education and training or their own financial position (Keep 2006).

Educational policy for the creative and cultural sector

Despite the publication by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport of the widely celebrated 'Mapping Document' (DCMS 1998; 2001) for the creative and cultural sectors which highlighted for the first time in the UK the link between these sectors and national

prosperity in the global economy, the development of policy for these sectors is still in its early stages of development. Progress has been spasmodic because E&T policy since 1998 has in Coffield (2002) memorable phrase been subject to ‘101 initiatives and no strategy’.

SSCs and Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) perceive that their primary purpose is to function as a ‘delivery agent’ for government policy (Keep 2006: 50), rather than an institutional tier capable of mediating between central government and other groups in the E&T system or even a bulwark against the arms of Whitehall. This state of affairs is clearly evident from *Skillset* who represents broadcasting, film, video and multimedia and *Creative and Cultural Skills* (C&CS) who represent advertising, crafts, cultural heritage, design, music, performing, literary and visual arts. Their respective E&T activities which are concerned with commissioning research to identify current skills requirements, skills gaps and identify future trends as well as establishing a qualifications strategy for their respective sectors. The research is designed to feed up-to-date forecasts of skill needs into national Skills Strategies and Sector Workforce Development Plans which SSCs are required to produce by the DfES. The qualifications contribute towards the specification of qualifications to be delivered in schools, FE colleges, training providers and/or to support workforce development so as to widen participation in the sector and support progression routes that are based on industry requirement⁵.

In order to implement their qualification strategies, Skillset and C&CS are working with their respective sectoral segments to develop ‘blueprints’ that describe what the recommended qualifications should aim to do and cover to make them relevant for learners. The ultimate intention is to produce three types of qualification stipulated in the recent White Paper *Success for All* (DfEs 2004). They are: ‘General Qualifications’ that aim to promote awareness about the creative and cultural sectors – such as GCSE and GCE A levels; ‘Career choice Qualifications’ that aim to inform and support career choice by offering practical or ‘taster’ opportunities – such as through the 14-19 Diplomas; and, ‘Preparatory Qualifications’ that aim to prepare learners for entry to employment such as the AAP and FDs.

There is a discernible difference in the way in which C&CS and Skillset are addressing this remit. Skillset is working within its pre-given parameters and is developing a broad range of qualifications, for example, Specialist Diplomas, Apprenticeships/Advanced Apprenticeships, Foundation Degrees to address identified skill shortages and to improve access into broadcasting, film, video sectors.

⁵ Given the SSCs focus, the next section of the paper concentrates on the way in which they have been developing preparatory programmes such as the MA to facilitate access into the creative and cultural industrial segments.

Whilst their enthusiasm to provide schools, colleges with the choice of a wide range of accredited courses is to be admired, there are nevertheless a number of problems associated with this aspect of government policy. One problem is that the development of new qualifications such as Specialist Diplomas not only promotes premature specialization in the 14-19 cohort, but it also reinforces the impression that intermediate-level qualifications are a stepping stone to employment in the creative and cultural sector. Yet, it is clear from Galloway *et al's*. (2006) research and the emerging evidence from *The Last Mile* that access into the creative and cultural sector is difficult for people who hold a degree, and that there are very limited opportunities for entry with intermediate-level qualifications unless they receive additional support. Thus, Skillset runs the risk of inadvertently increasing rather than diminishing social exclusion as the hopes of young people who lack a degree are dashed when they try to secure employment in the creative and cultural sector. Another problem is that the governments' qualifications strategy is predicated on a notion that there are functioning OLMs and FILMs in the creative and cultural sector which will help to channel the flow of a more highly qualified students towards their preferred occupational destinations. Once again this assumption is wide of the mark. The challenge for all aspirants to the creative and cultural sector, irrespective as to whether they hold a qualification, is to gain access to ELMs in their preferred occupational segment and access to master classes, work placements, internships etc play an invaluable role in helping them to achieve their goals.

In contrast, C&CS has responded to widespread concerns voiced within their sector that it suffers from 'the lack of apprentices because very limited opportunities exist for employers or sole traders and employers to access a flexible approach or secure public support' by commissioning a report on *Creative Apprenticeship* (2006) from Will Hutton, Chief Executive of the Work Foundation. The Hutton Report proposes a number of new principles for apprenticeship in the creative and cultural sector. The first principle is that the aim of creative apprenticeship should be to develop forms of sectoral rather than occupationally-specific knowledge and skill. The Report (2006: 8) defines the former as: 'soft skills' such as 'written and oral communication, teamworking, problem solving, customer handling, and planning'; and, an 'understanding of how creative processes work' (i.e. how 'creative culture evolves and develops an can create social capital') and, an understanding of the 'service ethic' in a service economy (i.e. 'customized, consumer friendly and adaptable and responsive to changing tastes'). The second principle is that since:

Navigating through these different cultures requires high levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. They [i.e. apprentices: DG] need exposure to the very different authorising environments in which different types of organisations operate (Hutton, 2006, p. 8).

Thus, the report advocated that apprentices should be offered access to a range of learning in ‘creative and cultural sub-sectors other than the one the apprentice wishes to pursue a career in’ to ensure that they developed a broad skill base (Hutton, 2006, p. 8). The third principle is that creative apprenticeships should be funded through ‘a voluntary creative and cultural apprenticeship levy’ so that their cost could be shared between organizations such as SMEs who might be interested in taking an apprentice but are unable to carry the full cost of such a commitment. The final principle is that creative apprenticeships should be designed to ‘appeal to more people from all backgrounds and of all ages’ so as to reflect the diversity of talent aspiring to enter the creative and cultural sectors (Hutton 2006: 10).

In one sense these principles are new because they have never been articulated in relation to apprenticeship in the creative and cultural sector. In another sense, this is a slightly disingenuous claim because the Hutton Report fails to acknowledge the affinities between its recommendations about the re-design of the AAP and similar recommendations put forward by other writers, for example, Fuller and Unwin 2003(b) have called for a broader-based academic element and broader-based conception of Key Skills which pre-date its publication. Furthermore, the principles that underpin the Hutton Report keep the focus firmly on ‘the Institution of Apprenticeship’ (Guile and Young 1999), that is, the longstanding concerns of the DfEs for the design, funding, credentialist strategy, rather than how to support ‘learning’ in apprenticeship/workplaces which researchers have emphasized is equally as important as institutional arrangements to retention and progression in vocational programmes (Billett 2004; Fuller and Unwin 2003(a), Gamble 2001).

The notion of creative apprenticeship advanced by the Hutton Report nevertheless represents a significant attempt to re-think the design of an Advanced Apprenticeship to reflect the circumstances of the creative and cultural sector. Given that this idea is based on different design principles compared with the AAPs’ occupationally-specific blueprint, C&CS have been left with the challenge of ‘squaring the circle’ and trying to engage with the report’s recommendations within the strictures of the AAP framework. Leaving on one side the merits or demerits of creative apprenticeship for a moment, the Hutton Report highlights the tension that exists at present in the UK between demand-side E&T prescriptions and prevailing state orthodoxies. To understand why this mismatch exists it is necessary to analyse the dynamics of policy formation in UK and to use that analysis to identify the implications for creative and cultural sectors.

Mismatch between E&T policy and access, learning and development

The national policy cycle

One of the most cogent and perceptive analysis of the direction of national E&T policy over the last decade has been produced by Keep (2006). Employing a macro level framework to analyse the relation between the demand for and supply of E&T, the role of E&T providers and intermediary agencies and the lack of a role for social partners, Keep traces the lines of continuity between the E&T policy of successive governments. He argues that it has been predicated on a 'cycle of state intervention' (Keep 2006, page, 56). By this he means that both the previous Conservative and New Labour administrations have ascribed a centrality to upskilling that is not shared by other actors, particular employers, and which render all assumed stakeholders in the upskilling process, for example, educational institutions, LLSCs, merely as delivery agents for national policy, rather than active contributors to the formulation of public policy. In an attempt to realise this upskilling agenda, successive governments have engulfed the E&T system with an escalating series of policy dictums which they are obligated to address. These supply-side measures and levers, which reflect the well-established belief amongst policy makers in the 'efficacy of centrally imposed planning regimes', specify targets, explicitly interface funding with targets, severely restrict the scope for any discussion of the direction of policy (Keep 2006, page, 56).

The net effect has been, according to Keep (2006, page, 56), to produce a crippling paradox. On the one hand, the UK government's commitment to 'free-market neo-liberal policies renders unavailable a host of potential policy interventions used in other countries – for example, training levies, strong trade unions and statutory rights to collective bargaining on skills, strong forms of social partnership... or an industrial policy that might favour higher skill sectors'. On the other hand, the government's concern to micro-manage all aspects of E&T policy predisposes SSCs and LLSCs to work with the DfES to realize national E&T targets by allocating funding in line with those targets and denies them the opportunity to sponsor initiatives which might offer an alternative vision and set of practical measures to facilitate access to the labour market.

The macro-level logic of Keep's argument about the mismatch between demand and supply of E&T is undoubtedly germane to the creative and cultural sector. At present, although the national policy rhetoric constantly affirms the centrality of 'choice' and 'flexibility' if the UK is to respond to the demands of the knowledge economy, E&T policy is tightly circumscribed by policymakers assumptions there are clear and functioning OLMs and FILMs in all areas of the UK economy whose needs can be met through the creation of sector skills agreements and qualification blueprints. As a consequence, all that the government's much vaunted rhetoric of choice and flexibility amounts to is an opportunity for the demand-side to tailor pre-given blueprints to reflect their needs. Moreover, when the government encounters opposition to or a reluctance to go along with its E&T agenda, it does not pause to consider whether policy is

correct for all industrial sectors. Instead, the government tries to realize its goals by offering a limited number of financial inducements, the form of a public subsidy for E&T programmes such as the AAP and task-specific adult training, to employers in an attempt to secure greater employer investment in training (HM Treasury 2002: 15).

Keep is certainly correct that the above labour market assumptions and ideological no-go zones mean that the DfES UK policy makers with a 'very limited range of space for policy development or experimentation' (Keep, 2006, p. 59), not least because the DfES finds it extremely difficult to make any progress in consulting with and actively involving other stakeholders in the design of public policy developments. His preferred solution to boost the role of the social partners through the introduction of training levies, statutory rights is, however, unlikely to address the problem of access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector described in this paper. Training levies etc presuppose permanent employment and functioning FILMS in large organizations and these conditions simply do not exist, as we have seen the Hutton Report acknowledged, in many segments of the creative and cultural sector. To understand how to address the issue of access and learning and development, it is necessary to grasp why the cycle of intervention has had such limited impact in the creative and cultural sector.

The limited impact of 'cycle of intervention' in the creative and cultural sector

Current research on the APP reveals that the limited impact of the cycle of intervention on access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sectors. In the case of the former, it is clear from a survey conducted by Fuller and Unwin (2003b) of participation in the AAP that the creative and cultural sectors lags significantly behind traditional sector associated with apprenticeship such as Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction as well as other non-traditional sectors such as Business Administration. There is not one creative or cultural sector in Fuller and Unwin's (2003b, p. 12) list of the 'top ten' sectors participating in the AAP. Furthermore, Fuller and Unwin's (2003, p. 15) survey also reveals that even in the list of the 'top forty' sectors where apprentices begin at age 18 and over, the only creative and cultural sectors are only represented by sectors which have either historically been characterized by a combination of strong OLMs, and FILMs, for example, broadcasting and newspapers or recent high growth sectors such as IT where certain segments have developed fairly robust OLMs and FILMs over the last two decades.

It is glaringly obvious that flexible blueprints and the provision of a public subsidy has failed to encourage participation in the AAP on behalf of those sectors that are characterized by a high proportion of SMEs, very strong ELMs, and little history of involvement in nationally accredited apprenticeship programmes such as Art and Design, Film, Fashion, Film, Music,

New Media, Performing Arts etc. SMEs' reluctance to participate in the AAP can be explained in a number of ways. First, the combination of ELMs and the high proportion of SMEs in the creative and cultural sector create a labour market context that mitigate against the widespread up-take of the AAP. There is little evidence that ELMs are responsive to supply-side interventions in general, let alone, in the creative and cultural sector in particular (Ashton 2000) while many SMEs, as the Hutton Report acknowledged, lack the financial and human resources to be convinced that they would benefit from participating in the AAP. Second, the mandatory qualification outcomes in the blueprint for AAP – NVQs, Technical Certificates and Key Skills are perceived in many segments of the creative and cultural sector as serving 'educational' goals because they are promoted by the DfES to enhance academic progression, rather than attempts to develop sectorally-relevant vocational knowledge and skill (Guile and Okumoto, forthcoming). Thus, despite offers from training providers to 'shoulder the burden of recruitment, selection and paperwork' (Fuller and Unwin, 2003, p. 9), employers in general and SMEs in particular refuse to 'sign-up'. Third, SSCs and LLSCs are often reluctant to support, even when there is clear evidence of employer demand, the development of apprenticeship blueprints for low-volume occupational niches (MTNW 2006). Investment in such niches is not deemed to offer a sufficient return on the investment when it comes to achieving AAP targets.

In the case of learning and development, the continuing focus of government policy on the Institution of Apprenticeship means that policy makers have failed to recognize that funding regimes, quality assurance procedures and mandatory outcomes do not necessarily support good quality learning opportunities within apprenticeship schemes. The key issue is, as Fuller and Unwin's (2003(a) (b)) research on the AAP has shown, the extent to which companies can create 'learning environments' and 'learning practices' to facilitate the progression from novice to expert. Fuller and Unwin (2003a, p. 410) identify a continuum that runs from 'expansive' to 'restrictive' modes of apprenticeship. They argue that the main characteristic of the former is that it provides a strong and rich environment for apprentices to gain access to learning opportunities to participate in 'multiple communities of practice inside and outside the workplace', to make a 'gradual transition to full participation' in a specific vocational field, and to gain access to 'on-and-off the job' training' so as to broaden and deepen their knowledge and skill. In contrast, the latter offers access to a much more restricted version of these learning opportunities. Fuller and Unwin (2003a, p. 423) conclude that the 'expansive approach to apprenticeship is more likely to create the conditions for 'deep learning'' that will support progression at work and in education. They temper this observation, however, by acknowledging that at the present time there is little support from the DfES to re-design the AAP so that it can make a 'more positive impact on the quality of apprentices' participation and opportunities for personal development' (Fuller and Unwin,

2003(b), p. 424).

A number of conclusions follow from the preceding analysis. The first conclusion is that, if E&T policy is to facilitate access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector, policymakers need to take more account of the operation of labour market conditions, the organisation of work and the possibilities for facilitating learning and development in the sector than they do at present. The second conclusion is that there may well be a much more circumscribed role for the AAP and by extension the FD in the creative and cultural sector than present policy assumes. This is partly because the high proportion of and continued growth of SMEs and freelance work creates a very fluid labour market in the creative and cultural sector that is impervious to the application of supply-side levers and financial inducements. It is also partly because the large pool of graduates who are willing and supported by family to accept under-employment and/or a mix of short-term contracts and work experience to secure a foothold in the creative and cultural sector, offers employers a relatively inexpensive and un-demanding way a way to source their labour needs. The third conclusion is that anyone who is seeking to work in the cultural sector requires help to develop the cultural and social capital in the form of their own network to position them to operate effectively in ELMs.

Taken in combination, the above conclusions suggest that a shift has to occur in government policy⁶. Instead of relying on widening participation strategies to diversify the HE population and to expand access to the AAP and credentialist strategies to support employability and to foster social inclusion in the creative and cultural sectors, a more multifaceted and differentiated E&T strategy is required. The hallmark of this strategy is to recognise that there are a number of ways that people can ‘be apprenticed’ in the creative and cultural sector and to allocate funding to support each of these routes into the sector. Drawing on the earlier argument, the paper has identified three routes:

- the *accredited route* based on academic or vocational qualifications;
- the *industry-recognised* route based on non-accredited activities such as work placements, internships, master classes;
- the *network* route which is designed to develop capability and capacity within a region and is also presupposes non-accredited activities.

⁶ It is conceivable that the argument advanced in this paper is also relevant in other sectors of the UK economy, however, it is beyond the scope of the paper to consider the extent to which this is the case.

Enacting this strategy presupposes that instead of predetermining the type of output (i.e. qualifications) that sector skills agreements can contain and assuming that education and training agencies (i.e. Colleges of Further Education and accredited training providers) are the sole providers of training solutions, the government should relax the reigns of policy and allow the demand-side to identify a broader outputs and to work in partnership with other stakeholders to broker bespoke education and training solutions. This would offer CCs, RDAs and employers more freedom choose to determine what combination of routes of being apprenticed they felt were appropriate to their economic regeneration and/or diversity strategies..

Conclusion

The paper has argued that if policy makers are serious about their own rhetoric that the creative and cultural sector is a major contributor to the UK economy, they need to create more space for the demand-side to contribute to the formation of E&T strategy. Instead of relying on a centrally-controlled manpower planning strategy based on the notion of matching skill shortages to the raft of qualifications that they have deemed are appropriate to the development of a knowledge economy, policymakers should work collaboratively with the demand-side to identify access routes into the creative and cultural sector and how to enhance those routes to facilitate access and learning and development. The implementation of this strategy presupposes that the UK Government should relinquish its desire to be the sole architect of the E&T system and actively create a context whereby all stakeholders can contribute to the formulation of innovative solutions, and refrain from placing preconditions in the form of targets on the formulation of innovative solutions.

The implications of this reverse engineering approach are currently being explored through the auspices of *The Last Mile* Project. This project is beginning to shed some light on the way in which the three routes identified in this paper - accredited, industry-endorsed and network, can facilitate access and learning and development in the creative and cultural sector and, in the process, combat social exclusion and promote diversity in the creative and cultural sector.

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