



**National Endowment for
Science, Technology and the Arts**

**Learning Programme Evaluation
Final Report**

Tavistock Institute

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The responsibility for the interpretation of these inputs, as set out below, is entirely down to the authors of the report.

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REPORT SUMMARY

1. Focus of the Evaluation

NESTA wanted the evaluation to focus on four key aspects of the Learning Programme:

- The extent to which it informs and challenges current policy and practice in learning
- The contribution it makes to promoting innovation in learning policy and practice
- What impact the programme has (on 'beneficiaries' – i.e. teachers and learners – on policy makers and on deepening and expanding the knowledge base in learning e.g. in the practitioner community)
- Whether the way the programme is managed is 'fit for purpose' (e.g. selection of particular projects for funding; monitoring of the projects)

This summary sets out the areas in which the Programme has made a positive impact in relation to these four aspects, and the areas where there is scope for improvement and change. It concludes with a set of recommendations and options for implementing them.

2. What the Programme does well

- The Programme provides opportunities for promoting and supporting learning innovations that might otherwise not happen. Around 90% of projects surveyed in the evaluation said their project would not have started without funding from NESTA. Around 65% of projects surveyed had applied (unsuccessfully) for funding from other sources.
- It supports key UK and EU policy thinking, initiatives and instruments across a range of core education, training and learning agendas. It is particularly strong in strategic learning areas around 'school based' education – and in promoting the development and utilisation of new technologies in learning. Examples include: bringing external experts in contact with pupils; enhancing teacher training; developing virtual learning environments; attracting non-traditional learners; enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship among young people.
- It delivers both tangible and intangible outputs and outcomes, to direct beneficiaries and indirectly outside the Programme. Over 50% of projects achieve planned outputs and milestones. Very few projects are wound up before the end of their contract period.
- The outputs of projects are comprised of four broad types: 'technological artefacts' (for example web portals; immersive software); teaching products (video courses; text-based courses); support services (guidelines; research results; funding brokerage); human resources (training).
- Indirect outcomes and impacts can also be divided into four main types: raising awareness of science, culture and technology; enhancing learning capabilities; (for example for 'disengaged'; 'hard to reach' and excluded groups); skills, competence and personal development; developing 'networks of excellence' and collaborative knowledge networks.

- The Programme promotes network development – for example with the DfES Innovation Unit – and promotes partnerships. These efforts bring together in ‘cross-boundary’ and ‘cross-sectoral’ partnerships people who might not normally collaborate.
- The Programme has increased its portfolio of projects as it has evolved. In response, it has both consolidated and expanded its skills base and created new roles. This in turn has led to a more effective operational performance. Almost 90% of projects surveyed were highly satisfied with the management and support they receive overall; 75% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way financial issues were handled; 78% were satisfied with the help they received on meeting deadlines.
- As reflected in the evolution of the Programme’s mission and objectives (through successive Operational Plans and Business Models) and as articulated by current staff, there is evidence of a collective ‘will’ to: drive the Programme forward towards a more strategic ‘learning organisation’ mode; develop more effective evaluation systems; develop a more targeted and systematic approach to ‘innovation-focused’ project selection; develop more effective dissemination procedures and systems.

3. Things that need to be addressed

- Although the Programme is consistent with and supports key UK and EU policy agendas, projects are under-represented in a number of areas that are considered important in current policy agendas - including ‘social inclusion’; adult and informal learning; work-based learning and continuing professional development. For example, the proportion of projects specifically targeting excluded groups has fallen from 11% in 2002 to 6% in 2005.
- The Programme could be more actively engaged in current learning debates, policy initiatives and practices that focus on ‘joined-up’ approaches to learning, for example ‘knowledge regions’ and community regeneration. More significantly, the NESTA Learning Programme has gained little recognition across a range of ‘knowledge constituencies’ and ‘communities of practice’, and there is a low level of cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary knowledge transfer within and outside the Programme.
- The current distribution of projects; the types of innovation funded, and the pedagogic and innovation models represented within the Programme tend to reinforce existing ‘learning hierarchies’ and power structures within the learning domain. Only 19% of projects explicitly aim to promote what might be termed ‘new forms of learning’, for example by promoting new combinations of inter-disciplinary knowledge. The majority can be classified as ‘enhancements’ to existing pedagogic models and practices.
- The broader issue here is that the Programme does not explicitly state that promoting ‘new forms of learning’ is one of its objectives. In turn, the Programme does not have a clear definition of what it considers to be ‘innovative’. The programme portfolio reflects an eclectic mix of

different types of project; different configurations of innovation, and different 'constructions' of innovation.

- Evaluation is unsystematic and of variable quality both at the Programme level and at the project level. The existing evaluation data and 'evidence base' makes it difficult to make informed judgements about Programme impacts, primarily because of the variability of evaluation methods deployed (and hence the variable quality of data produced) and the lack of systematic longitudinal studies of outcomes and impacts.
- A related set of issues highlighted by the evaluation include the lack of 'quality standards' embedded in the Programme; the absence of guidelines on ethical issues and protocols around ownership and protection of IPR.
- There is wide variation in the range and depth of benefits produced – some projects focus on intensive, small group, 'paradigm-changing' objectives; others on providing information to a wide audience.
- There is considerable variation in the 'cost per head' of the range of projects represented in the evaluation. This variability is clearly related to the nature of the innovation represented by the project; its pedagogic approach, and the delivery mechanism and setting in which learning takes place.
- The evaluation has raised some issues around the transparency and efficacy of the project selection process; whether this is representative of the spectrum of 'knowledge constituencies' and communities of practice in the learning world; whether the programme sufficiently addresses 'access' issues; whether the Programme reinforces the domination of certain groups in accessing learning opportunities.
- Other areas for improvement identified by the evaluation include: the need for more effective dissemination systems and support; support for developing sustainability strategies and collaborative working within the Programme itself.
- This latter point reflects a number of issues associated with transferability of results, and how the Programme manages its 'learning legacy'. In some ways, the project portfolio reinforces 'sectoral silos'. Relatively few projects are actively dedicated to promoting cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning. Most projects operate within their own disciplinary space. This is compounded by the under-development of 'concertation' mechanisms within the Programme (organising projects into clusters; synergising shared knowledge; promoting active cross-fertilisation of ideas across projects and outside the Programme; creating spaces and opportunities for critical reflection and feedback into strategic development).

4. Recommendations

Our recommendations are split into two types:

- 'Technical' recommendations – these are mainly about enhancing the way the programme is managed and can be implemented with minimal impact on organisational structure and practices.

- ‘Strategic’ recommendations – these are more far-reaching and imply more radical changes in organisational structure and practices.

4.1 Technical recommendations

1. Quality issues.

The Programme should include a dedicated ‘transversal’ project to provide both common protocols and mechanisms for projects to incorporate quality and support and mentoring to individual projects. A ‘quality’ initiative should make some reference to developing learning standards and interoperability, for example the use of ‘SCORM’ and ‘ARIADNE’ standards for projects that develop ‘learning objects’.¹ It should also pay attention to promoting the adoption of standards on ethics, gender and inclusion mainstreaming.

2. Dissemination.

Effort needs to be put into: encouraging projects to develop effective dissemination plans; providing support through funding a dedicated ‘transversal’ project to provide advice and mentoring on dissemination and business plans.

3. IPR and ownership.

NESTA should develop and circulate clear Guidelines about ownership rights, and where necessary, encourage partnerships to work to a ‘consortium agreement’ that clearly sets out rules, responsibilities and rights regarding ‘background’ and ‘foreground’ IPR developed as a result of participation in the project.² At a minimum, contracts should support proper acknowledgement and attribution of ideas and work developed by individuals and groups.

4.2 Strategic Recommendations

1. Innovation

The programme requires a clear definition of how it defines innovation; what are the criteria through which it assesses ‘innovative’ projects; what are the procedures and protocols for incorporating different constructions of innovation within its portfolio of funded projects.

2. Balancing the portfolio: access and inclusion

The Programme should set specific targets for re-dressing the under-representation of projects in certain areas and sectors; notably in targeting excluded groups, and in supporting adult, informal and work-based learning.

3. Transparency in project selection.

More effort should be devoted to awareness-raising about funding opportunities, aimed at a broader constituency than is currently engaged within the NESTA ‘family’, and a clear set of selection criteria that prospective projects need to follow in order to submit proposals (supported, for example,

¹ ARIADNE and SCORM are international standards for educational metadata.

² ‘Background’ rights refer to existing IPR that is brought into projects by individual actors. ‘Foreground’ rights cover IPR that is generated as a result of subsequent project activities.

by the use of on-line interactive proposal forms that assist proposers in developing more effective proposals).

4. *Sustainability and transfer of knowledge*

The Programme could benefit from implementing a 'multi-stage' life cycle model that applies different contractual models, rules and protocols for different types of project. The spectrum of types of project could encompass: primary research; applied research; research and development; demonstration and market validation projects.

5. *Managing the 'learning legacy'*

Dissemination and concertation activities need to be supported by additional effort aimed at evaluating, managing and applying the 'learning legacy' generated by the Programme as a whole.

6. *Evaluation*

The Programme needs to develop and implement a strategic evaluation framework, methodology and tools at both the 'meta-level' of the Programme and at the project level. At the Programme level, the evaluation strategy needs to be integrated within organisational learning, strategic planning and programme management. It should lay the foundations to develop baselines and an 'evidence base' for what works, including commissioning longitudinal studies to assess longer term impacts. The programme should also support projects to carry out systematic evaluations.

5. Possible futures: options for implementing the recommendations

These 'strategic recommendations' potentially offer both benefits and costs and present a number of options for NESTA. The Table below briefly reviews each recommendation in terms of what the Programme is likely to gain; the possible negative effects involved and the options available.

Recommendation	Benefits if implemented	Possible negative effects	Options
Developing an innovation model	Clear bridging to NESTA 'mission'. Helps shape project selection criteria Inputs to evaluation strategy Demonstrates 'value added' in policy terms	Reduces flexibility and responsiveness to 'off the wall' ideas	1. Incremental – Programme staff develop innovation model from analysis of projects. 2. Moderate – model developed from literature review 3. Radical – model incorporated in re-vamped NESTA mission
Inclusion targets	Better linkages with policy agendas – particularly Lifelong Learning Policy and political credibility Access to untapped potential of 'hard to reach' innovators	Overlap and replication with competing 'exclusion' Programmes Diversion from NESTA key mission Practical problems – 'active inclusion' is hard work	1. 'Exclusion free zone' – Programme specifically does not target excluded groups 2. Mainstreaming of inclusion guidelines in selection procedures 3. Explicit targeting of specific groups, linked to 'positive action' policy 4. Coverage of 'gaps' not filled by other Programmes
Reforming selection process	We would regard this as a 'must do' for NESTA Programme needs to be seen to follow good practices on transparency and equity	Could penalise small organisations with no resources or skills to comply with rigorous proposal procedures and protocols	1. Incremental – tighten up current procedures. More help for proposers in completing necessary documentation 2. Moderate – Programme invests in 'active awareness-raising' 3. Radical – selection process explicitly linked to targeting strategy
Multi-stage life cycle model	Supports thematic clustering of Programme Enables more effective matching of programme skills to needs of projects Adds to sustainability potential of Programme and projects Smooths disparities and anomalies in funding models applied to projects Contributes to better knowledge creation and dissemination	Implies more administrative and management investment from programme Possibly over-bureaucratic for size and scale of the Programme ³	1. Incremental – portfolio analysed and projects categorised on their position in 'innovation life cycle'. Projects assigned relevant programme 'handler' according to type. 2. Moderate – multiple contracts and client handling procedures established. 3. Radical – programme specifically structured to reflect life cycle. Targeting and project selection strategies linked to this model

³ The Learning Programme is broadly similar in size to the Urban Cultural Programme (£15m in total funding) but is three times smaller than the ESRC's teaching and Learning Research Programme (£30m in total). In terms of comparable EC funded programmes, it is around a third the size of the eLearning Programme but twice as big as the Minerva Programme.

Learning legacy	<p>We would regard this as a 'must do' for NESTA</p> <p>Essential to support organisational learning for the Programme</p> <p>Bridges the Programme with the 'external' world of policy and practice and 'internal' world of Programme stakeholders</p> <p>Promotes ownership and knowledge transfer</p>	No real justification for not implementing this recommendation	<p>1. Incremental – more resources and effort devoted to team sharing meetings, cross programme 'bubble groups', meetings, launches, conferences.</p> <p>2. Moderate – investment in outside consultancy e.g. Action Learning Sets; PAL learning laboratory.</p> <p>3. Radical – dedicated Programme 'transversal' project to develop organisational learning framework and model; support projects in knowledge transfer; promote active knowledge sharing with external world.</p>
Evaluation strategy	<p>We would regard this as a 'must do' for NESTA</p> <p>Standardisation of data collection</p> <p>Enables evidence base to be established on 'what works'</p> <p>Provides evidence to support justification of programme for sponsors and donors</p> <p>Provides monitoring and feedback loops into Programme management and strategy development</p>	No real justification for not implementing this recommendation	Various: logic models; 'theory-driven'; 'realistic'; 'constructivist'. Our recommendation: logic model shaped by 'theory-driven' framework; supported by mechanisms for reflection and reflexive review.

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this Report

The Tavistock Institute was commissioned by NESTA to carry out an evaluation of its 'Learning Programme'. This document reports on the work carried out in the evaluation and presents its main results, conclusions and recommendations. The main objective of the Learning Programme, in keeping with NESTA's overall mission - to invest in the promotion of 'innovation' within science, technology and the arts - is to fund innovative projects in learning within these three sectors.

Against this background, the evaluation was intended to help NESTA gain an understanding of:

- The extent to which the Learning Programme informs and challenges current policy and practice in learning
- The contribution it makes to promoting innovation in learning policy and practice
- What impact the programme has (on 'beneficiaries' – i.e. teachers and learners – on policy makers and on deepening and expanding the knowledge base in learning e.g. in the practitioner community)
- Whether the way the programme is managed is 'fit for purpose' (e.g. selection of particular projects for funding; monitoring of the projects)

And

- Help identify examples of good practice and 'success' to provide inputs for NESTA profile-raising activities.
- Help make short term evolutionary improvements to the programme
- Inform strategic decisions about the longer term future of the programme
- Apply what has been learned to the development of NESTA's other programmes, and the development of new programmes

The main **questions** the evaluation addresses are:

- How fit for purpose is the programme model? This reflects a number of subsidiary questions, including:
 - What is distinctive about the programme within the educational funding landscape?
 - Is the programme sufficiently focused to have an impact on key strategic areas of learning?
 - Has the programme been able to source innovative projects?
 - Is there a link between the programme's flexibility and the quality of proposals?
 - How effective and equitable is the assessment process and criteria?
- What impact has the Programme had to date? This also reflects a number of subsidiary questions, including:

- To what extent have the projects benefited their direct beneficiaries?
- What is the quality of evidence and transferable learning produced by projects? Has the approach to project evaluation been robust?
- What potential lasting benefits have been generated from the partnerships the programme has developed? What can be said about the sustainability of projects funded?
- Has the learning from the projects and the programme been used to inform policy?

1.2 Structure of the Report

- The report is set out as follows
- Following this Introduction, section 2 presents the evaluation approach, methodology and work carried out.
- In section 3, we present the results of the evaluation activities
- Section 4 analyses the results and draws together the evaluation evidence to present conclusions.
- On the basis of the analysis and conclusions, the final section (Section 5) presents our recommendations.

This Report is supplemented by two Annexes:

- Annex 1 provides the methodology and 'evaluation toolkit'
- Annex 2 provides individual summaries of the ten cases reviewed in the case studies

2. Evaluation approach and work carried out

2.1 Approach and methodology

A key feature of our approach to the evaluation was the use of triangulation, involving using multiple sources of data. The methodology combined the following evaluation tasks:

- Scoping – involving ‘context-setting’ interviews with NESTA staff; a panel of Experts; content analysis of key documents
- Process Review – an assessment of the ‘external policy and practice environment’ in which the Programme operates, and how this links to the internal ‘programme architecture’ (i.e. selection and funding process, management systems). This included an on-line survey of project managers.
- Secondary data analysis – combining an ‘Audit’ of currently funded projects and a ‘citations analysis’ to assess the extent to which the Programme is making an impact on policy and practice.
- Case studies – a more in-depth assessment of ten projects funded by the Programme, chosen to represent typical examples of project ‘clusters’.
- Comparisons and context analysis – a review of how the Learning Programme is positioned compared with other similar programmes in the UK and EU.

The approach, methodology, data collection instruments and analysis used in the evaluation is set out in detail in Annex 1.

2.2 Evaluation activities and work carried out

Table 1 summarises work completed in each workpackage. A more detailed description of the work carried out is provided in Annex 1.

Table 1: Summary of evaluation activities carried out

Activity	Work Completed
WP1: Scoping	Interviews Website Content Analysis Expert Panel set up Methodology Report and Evaluation 'toolkit'
WP2: Process and Policy Review	Policy Analysis Content Analysis Structured interviews On-line survey Case Study interviews
WP3: Secondary data analysis	Projects audit – content analysis of website profiles Analysis of NESTA portfolio database Citation analysis On-line survey of project managers Content analysis of case study reports
WP4: Case studies	Pilot case study 9 additional cases Results synthesis
WP5: Comparisons and context	Database search Interviews with Expert Panel
WP6: Analysis & Report	Presentation: internal stakeholders Triangulation of data Preliminary findings Draft Final Report
WP7: Project Management	Ongoing throughout evaluation

The data collected and analysed for the evaluation is summarised as follows:

- Expert Panel: 6 experts interviewed.
- NESTA staff: 10 staff interviewed.
- On-line Discussion Fora: 3 Discussion Groups set up (Expert Panel; Co-ordinators and managers of projects; 'Interested parties')
- Process Review: content analysis of 32 documents and reports.
- Projects Audit: 180 projects analysed.
- Citation Analysis: Citations for NESTA programme and 10 projects analysed on three search engines (Google; Yahoo; Google Scholar) and three bibliographic databases: ERIC – Educational Resources Information Centre in the U.S.A., and BEI – British Educational Index in the U.K.; the British Library. The Citation Analysis also included searches for 7 'comparator' Programmes similar to the NESTA Learning Programme.
- On-line survey: 70 online questionnaires completed.
- Case Studies: 10 case studies carried out, incorporating 42 interviews with project participants; 2 on-site observations.
- 'Comparisons and Context analysis': 10 comparison programmes assessed.

3. Evaluation Evidence and Results

This section presents the 'evaluation evidence' in terms of the results of the evaluation activities carried out. Each activity, and associated results, has its own distinctive perspective, its particular 'voice', and its corresponding limitations. The opening section – which assesses the 'programme architecture' – draws on data from two sources: interviews with Programme staff and content analysis of key programme documentation, for example Operational Plans. Its dominant 'voice' is therefore that of the Programme, and its obvious limitation is that the data will tend to 'privilege' the positions of 'insiders' working within the Programme. This section can therefore be seen as the starting point or 'baseline' against which the results of the other evaluation activities can be compared and reviewed. In contrast, the 'On-line Survey' focuses on the perspectives of awardees, and can be thought of as a counter-view to that of the Programme. The main limitation of these survey data is that to some extent respondents are 'self-selecting', in the sense that they overwhelmingly represent 'live' projects (who may feel less inclined to be critical). In contrast, the data derived from the 'citation analysis' and from the 'Projects Audit' might be thought of as more 'objective', since they deal mainly in statistical data rather than self-reported observations. However, the main limitation of the citation analysis is that, whilst it represents a good reflection of the degree to which the knowledge produced by the Programme diffuses within what might be called two opposite poles of the 'knowledge base' – the academic and the popular – it is far less useful in terms of presenting a picture of how the Programme engages with practitioners. In turn, the Projects Audit relies heavily on the constructs (indicators and categories) used to define the characteristics of the projects – for example their target groups and expected outcomes – that have been developed by the programme staff and by ourselves as evaluators. These constructs are in essence subjectively determined (although we did use 'item analysis' in their development).

In short, each strand of evidence has its deficiencies and limitations. Set against these limitations are two compensating factors we have tried to build into the evaluation: internal consistency and triangulation. In each of the data sets presented below, we have attempted to assess whether the 'voices' tell a consistent story and to ensure that obvious inconsistencies in the data are identified and critically reviewed. Secondly, the underlying approach used in the evaluation, as discussed above, is to 'triangulate' the different voices and identify commonalities and inconsistencies. The process of triangulation also means putting together the evidence to build the overall picture. Each separate strand of evidence is another piece in the jigsaw. On this basis, we firstly present in this part of the Report the evidence and results of the evaluation activities, bearing in mind their respective limitations. In the following part of the Report, we draw together the results in the form of conclusions and recommendations.

3.1 Policy and Process Analysis

3.1.1 Analysis of the Programme Architecture

This part of the evaluation combined content analysis of key documents (including NESTA Business Plans; Learning Operational Plan; Learning Committee meeting minutes; Guidance and Information for Solicited Applicants) with observation of Learning Programme meetings and interviews with key staff (including Learning Director; Learning Executive; Learning Programme Development Leader; Learning Programme Managers; Director Research and Development).

Overview

NESTA has grown rapidly in size (it has tripled in the past 5 years) reflecting the continued increase in portfolio of projects, additional money in 2002/2003 and the ability of the organisation to operationalise its role quickly. During the period of NESTA's initial growth the processes and skills of assessment, contractual arrangements and evaluation were developed in house, there were fewer programme areas, one was Learning / Education and there were programme managers who held a mixed portfolio of projects spanning these. Subsequent restructuring, a structural review and the 2003-2006 NESTA strategy has resulted in a number of defined project specific programmes (including the Learning Programme) and two cross NESTA functions, Policy & Research and Strategy and Communications.

One of the critical points in the Learning Programme's development was the opening up of the programme to include new strands of work as a result of an extra chunk of money in 2003 and the strategy for next three years. The Learning Programme was without a Director in 2003 for a year until the existing Director joined in September 2004. New strands of work were not pushed ahead as much as the team wanted during that period because they were over laden with the project portfolio but representation of the Learning Programme within the organisation was maintained and the team was involved in an internal review process in which programmes objectives were reviewed and revised.

The Learning Programme is currently in a phase where it is implementing and pushing forward new strands of work whilst at the same time taking stock of where it is in development and context. Over the past year there has been a shift in thinking around project selection, strategic purpose and impact and staff have been working on this in mini-teams to focussing on a small number of key areas. New leadership and introduction of the cross NESTA Learning Executive role have emphasised the need to build up a secure base from which to talk to and influence policy makers. This is a case of building on what the Learning Programme does well, the processes and links that exist and a shift in approach, rather than wholesale redesign, to improve and develop other areas. The core purpose and values of the Learning Programme remain the same but it is intended that its strategic impact on policy and the learning environment will be increase and be clearer.

Values and strategic direction.

Values are expressed in practice in the LP's openness to ideas which shows itself in constructive creativity, responses to proposals (they are all different) and in their engagement with projects. NESTA is not open access (apart from a small number of funded projects) but because it concerns itself with what is innovative in the field of learning it identifies where the gaps lie and its potential to have an impact and shape that area through the projects that it solicits. It automatically tackles the issues of access and inclusion in this way.

There is now more strategic selection of new projects to as described in the key themes with the Learning Programme Overview and in line with the Learning Operational Plan 2005/6. This is both a response to identified need and the LP's potential to respond to it and also in response to maximise learning by clustering projects on themes emerging during the past year. It can be seen in terms of getting the balance between being predictive and responsive and getting added value by increasing momentum by linking projects.

Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluation in the field of innovative learning projects is not clear cut and whilst some projects may be able to produce hard evidence of outcome and impact, for many the assessment of wider impact is less tangible. There is more emphasis now being put on sound evaluation of individual projects, evaluating the collective learning impact of groups of projects, presenting the summative outcomes in a coherent themed dialogue with policy makers.

The Awards and Evaluation role which was previously a cross programme post is being reworked to support and work with the new Learning Team Director and with the new Learning Executive role to facilitate a more coordinated use of evaluation by projects and by the LP as a whole.

The diversity of projects funded by NESTA is reflected in the range of evaluations produced. A revised series of questions for new projects which will guide them in approaching evaluation in a way which will enable the Learning Programme to compare, make links between projects and draw out collective learning outcomes is part of the continuing focus on harnessing evaluation as a vehicle for moving forward.

There is a natural tension between innovation and creativity and the perception of what constitutes sound evaluation and this is something that the process of 'standardising' evaluation within the Learning Programme will work with and go some way to reduce. That is that by identifying and using useful evaluations from previous projects as examples, the Learning Programme will steer new projects into building in appropriate but rigorous evaluation from the outset. This may create an increased shift in the proportion of project spend on evaluation but it is anticipated that increasing the emphasis on learning within and from the projects will increase their usefulness and therefore potential sustainability and, importantly from the LP's perspective, enable them to tap into and assimilate project learning before the funding period ends.

Much of the knowledge of what works is embodied in Learning Programme staff and many of the outcomes and impact are concerned with how partnerships have functioned. Extraction of learning from projects therefore hinges on the ability of staff to communicate their established knowledge base together with the use of multidimensional evaluation techniques with projects and work towards this has already taken place through a series of evaluation workshops. Other ways of developing solutions and disseminating knowledge are integrated into programme design e.g. the National Collaborative of Leading Edge Schools which is implementing a rapid cycle improvement model. Here NESTA is partnering DfES Innovation Unit and is an opportunity for NESTA to play on a major stage and impact on mainstream education. More systematic building in of creative and useful evaluation methods which can be tapped into as projects progress is something the programme is trying to achieve.

One of the difficulties in the past in tracking the effect of LP projects was that once funding has come to an end follow up and continued contact is variable and of course limited by time constraints of an increasing portfolio of live projects. It is anticipated that the increased focus on evaluation, its usefulness in terms of type, timing and clustering for cross project learning will enable and earlier identification of the type of impact, collective influence and contribution to this.

Evolution of Programme strategy and direction

Key areas of focus in the 05/06 Operational Plan group projects together into: Science, Arts, Illuminate, Technology, Enterprise Education, National Collaborative, Basically Creative. Looking at the project portfolio the TI conducted a cluster analysis and came up with a typology of six different groups but projects can also fall into other natural groupings based on other characteristics e.g. models for influencing policy e.g. projects which have a defined evidence base e.g. projects which produce practitioner materials e.g. Digital Science and projects which are cross sector partnerships e.g. Illuminate.

The LP staff base has necessarily grown (from 6 to 9.5 staff) and developed a team of programme managers and assistant programme managers which also reflect diversity in background, areas of interests but who also have common characteristics in their ability to act as catalysts, broker partnerships, manage projects through from concept, negotiation, contract and implementation but also can be identified according to their particular interest / experience. Although the organisation is quite young and some of the current staff have been in post for 2 years or less they share the ability to thin slice projects to identify where the innovation lies and its potential for development.

The Programme Development Leader role was introduced as a result of an increase in funding and workload and to develop the new strands of work coming out of the strategic plan. This role is a key interface between a more coordinated strategic approach to development and impact of the LP and the identification of potential projects, distribution of selected projects as well as taking a team lead and managing projects in the arts area. The distribution of projects between Programme Managers and Assistant Programme Managers

is not necessarily clear cut between science, technology and arts because of the nature of the projects - being innovative in many cases involves the combination of science and arts. Programme Managers on average handle 15 live projects and Assistant Programme Managers between 6-11.

Identification of innovation within projects starts from the earliest contact with NESTA. Applicants are referred to the guidance and information which asks projects to assess themselves and provide evidence of match against innovation as one of 6 criteria. These are revised and updated regularly and incidentally now include an explicit evaluation and dissemination criterion rather than these elements being couched within criteria for impact and exit strategy (again, reflecting the discussion above on the increasing emphasis being put on evaluation).

Perceptions of innovation.

There is a clear perception expressed within the organisation – both in terms of how it is symbolised in communicative practices, and the ways in which Programme staff interpret their role – that innovation has different interpretations, and there is a strong sense amongst stakeholders of the need to contextualise it. Innovation can be described in terms of junctions between context, participants and ideas. Innovation in relation to the LP has also been described in terms of identifying a gap or need and finding a new way of addressing it but not inventing for the sake of inventing. Applying a different methodology to a particular issue or context or using a methodology that is commonplace in one field to another to tackle a problem can be considered innovative. Bringing people together who wouldn't normally work together to deliver a particular learning experience is characteristic of a lot of LP projects. Partnership is also a criterion and encompasses other funders, collaborators and participants.

A concept of innovativeness was also put forward as being able to look for and being open to new solutions and being able to share them in an appropriate way. Programme Managers not only have a feel for what is innovative in a particular area (and call on others more expert within NESTA (in Futurelab or I&I programme or an assessor contact) but also have a feel for what will work. These may not accord with a more esoteric view of education and learning but they are concerned with new solutions to societal and practice based issues in learning. How far these translate into pushing the boundaries of more academically oriented issues is not clear but NESTA is about seed funding and investing in early stage work so that outputs are likely to either be practical products achieved over the funding period (which then could then be disseminated) or a model or concept primed for future funding. The effectiveness of projects or approaches again is to do with finding ways of sharing learning which means identifying groups / audiences and working out how to serve up the learning in a useable way.

Project selection

Identifying innovation within a proposed project takes place at several stages: Regional Offices and Programme Development Assessor have initial contact with a project (may be a cold caller or have had contact with Programme

Manager or Regional Manager) and produce enquiry report. Together with Learning Development Manager (who has an overall view) decide to take the idea further or to offer constructive feedback as to why they won't be doing so (within 4 weeks). There are informal discussions with Programme Managers and more formal opportunities for input from the Learning team and Learning Team Director to decide how to take the proposal forward and dialogue with the applicant to help them produce an outline proposal as the first stage in the formal assessment and selection process. The process is described with guidance for applicants on the NESTA website. Depending on the cost of the project it is assessed for innovation and impact and accepted or rejected for funding either by the team through the delegated route, by the Learning Committee or by the Board of Trustees.

Characteristics of NESTA support include early stage support: constructive feedback, advice and guidance with the process and brokering partnerships. The use of assessors and supervisors to help select potential projects and to support funded projects are ways in which the Learning Programme is a way of adding value to projects as well as to the programme as a whole by gauging project fit, potential for dissemination and strategic impact. The Learning Committee is the arena in which new project ideas get kicked about by a panel of experts whose experience spans a range of fields and the project gets discussed against the current political and policy landscape.

The Learning Programme Committee members were described as rigorous people who knew their stuff, who were thorough in looking for value. It was thought that the nature of the committee had changed over the past years, perhaps more conscious of reputation management now and, although challenging, had helped the Learning Programme team to improve the quality of proposals put forward. Part of their role is concerned with assessing risks and making suggestions to manage these. Taken that NESTA is an organisation prepared to take risks and fund projects that would be unlikely to be funded elsewhere, a large amount of the support the Learning Programme provides is about managing risk both internally to the project and also externally in terms of the capture and use of knowledge.

Discussions at committee stage usually lead to recommendations and alterations some of which can be designed in at contract stage and followed up through monitoring with milestones required to be reached at particular stages before subsequent money is signed off. There are formal processes (checks, balances and paperwork trails) to monitor project progress and the Learning Programme Director gets an overall picture of how projects are going through discussions with staff around the monitoring process and authorisation of funds.

Project support

Projects vary in amount of support / engagement they require and staff have to be adaptable and creative in how they themselves support or work through others to support projects. Part of managing risk is about understanding the nature of the projects many of which are dependant on strong partnerships and good interpersonal relations (often involving people from quite different fields,

types of organisations and environments). There has been some work done within the team around quantifying risk (see portfolio health status and added value) which rate projects by how much intervention by programme staff might be needed to achieve objectives. The team and programme as a whole has learned from the few projects which have run into problems and from others which have not achieved the expected impact and improvements put in place include: tightening up on preliminary proof of concept and market testing for technical projects (using Future Lab), more staging of funding and tightening up on evaluation and making it more useful.

The Learning Programme has well developed systems and skills within the team for assessing and working with innovative projects in the fields of science, technology and the arts. These have developed over time in response to the growth and development of NESTA and other opportunities for expansion and partnership. The main thrust now however is about extracting learning from projects in order to identify and secure a sound knowledge base with which to be better placed to influence policy and inform the wider learning environment. To do this it is a case of identifying what are the main areas in which to develop which has been done in the scoping by staff and formulation of draft operational plan. It is also a case of identifying the audience for the information as well as the form it needs to be in for it to be useful. It is on these two issues that the Learning Programme has more work to do and they relate primarily to evaluation, as already mentioned, but also to communication. Formative evaluation needs to be integrated within a much broader 'learning organisation' infrastructure that draws on the 'collective learning' derived from the Programme as a whole, and which is explicitly linked to the management of the Programme's 'learning legacy'.

Dissemination

The more strategic approach to need and project clustering has already been mentioned in terms of maximising learning and impact, but other steps taken towards improving the outward communication of the Learning Programme within the current policy and learning environment have been the introduction of the Learning Executive post and the increased connection between Policy and Research function and the Learning Programme. Both involve strengthening links: with the wider learning community and policy makers and with bodies of knowledge through research conducted in house or commissioned which can inform and support the cross project learning. An impact of the emphasis being put on the useability and communication of learning outcomes will be more thorough planning at the beginning stages and time / resource spent implementing exit and dissemination strategies .

Sharing learning from projects within the Learning Team, with NESTA and externally is done in a variety of forms e.g. team sharing meetings, cross programme 'bubble groups', e-bulletins, meetings, launches, conferences. Individual staff also have links to a range of organisations, programmes and networks e.g. Specialist Schools Trust Arts Expert Panel, London Schools Arts Service, British Academy, Royal Society, Research Council, Wellcome Trust and DCMS Social Policy & Education Network. Existing links and other ongoing contacts e.g. through briefings for government departments and

politicians are incorporated in plans for improved communication and dissemination with more strategic impact in the Learning Operational Plan. However, dissemination and concertation activities need to be supported by additional effort aimed at evaluating, managing and applying the 'learning legacy' generated by the Programme as a whole to: supporting the nation's policy, theoretical and practice knowledge base; encouraging reflection by individual projects in learning from their own and others' experience in the Programme; utilising the collective skills and competences of constituent projects to develop strategic improvements to the Programme. (By 'concertation', we mean clustering the portfolio of projects into meaningful types and promoting knowledge sharing within and between clusters).

Conclusions

- The programme currently sees itself at point in its development where it is in the position to learn from the experience of completed projects. The perception of staff is that as the Programme has evolved it has acquired new skills and expertise and it now has a significant base of competences and a team sufficiently motivated to take a critical and strategic view on the future development of the Programme. There are a number of areas highlighted by staff to support this picture of a strategic focus, including:
 - a focus on clustering projects to maximise their collective value (as reflected in the strategic themes and core areas of focus for 2005/06). New projects will be expected to demonstrate where they fit in to this.
 - work on improving evaluation knowledge and skills within the programme in order to help projects evaluate their work in ways which are meaningful and useable by others. An existing post is being redeveloped to provide a point of contact on evaluation within the Learning Programme. A 'framework' for evaluation is being worked on which will provide support and guidance for project and programme staff. Increased focus is being put on dissemination through identifying collective learning from clusters of projects and identifying target groups / audiences for the learning outputs.
 - A commitment to shifting the proportion of project spend on the early stages to build in sound evaluation and dissemination from the outset and also on the exit stage of a project to maximise dissemination.
 - Building more structured relationships are across NESTA where there is potential for joint work, support and strategic development.
 - Increasing the focus on, and investment in, dissemination.
- It is important to re-iterate the point made in the introduction to this Section – that the above observations represent the 'collective view' of Programme staff. On the one hand, there is evidence of a collective 'will' to: drive the Programme forward from its initial focus on securing a 'critical mass' of projects towards a more strategic 'learning organisation' mode; develop more effective evaluation systems; develop a more targeted and systematic approach to 'innovation-focused' project selection; develop more effective dissemination procedures and systems. This is consistent with the evolution of the Programme's

mission, values and objectives, as reflected in successive operational and business plans. The next sections critically review these positions and perspectives by introducing contrasting stakeholder perspectives, and by assessing the extent to which 'intentions' are translated into 'practices'.

3.1.2 Policy Analysis

The NESTA Learning Programme is broadly consistent with both EU and UK-based policies. For example, its focus on new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, including but not exclusively e-Learning, is in line with the European policies and programmes (e.g. e-Learning Initiative and Programme, IST-related Technology-enhanced Learning). Indeed, one could argue that NESTA's programme has a broader scope than the former, since it covers all areas of learning and is not confined to the school and HE sectors. The promotion of innovation in learning and teaching is also a key priority in the UK e-Strategy and in policies aimed at fostering creativity, e.g. among pupils. Crucially, NESTA sees innovation as not solely involving the use of ICTs in the learning process, but as the development of new teaching and learning approaches which succeed in engaging learners of all ages.

Examples of policy consistency include the following:

- bringing external experts in contact with pupils, e.g. Adopt-an-Author; Motivate
- engaging learners in and outside the classroom, e.g. Arts Curriculum for Creativity project ; Physics to Go
- enhance teacher training – e.g. Hearts ; School Teachers Innovation Programme
- the use of ICTs in the learning process The aim here is to develop models that both enhance learner engagement and foster new media learning. The range of projects ensures that the most of the "new" type of literacies⁴ and e-learning competencies deemed essential for today's

⁴ As the recent Commission's Report *Better e-Learning for Europe* states these include the following: (i) *technology literacy*, i.e. the ability to use new media such as the Internet to access and communicate information effectively; (ii) *information literacy*, i.e. the ability to gather, organise and evaluate information, and to form valid opinions based on the results; (iii) *media creativity*, i.e. the capacity to produce and distribute content to various audiences; (iv) *global literacy*, i.e. developing understanding on the interdependence among people and nations and having the ability to interact and collaborate across cultures; and (v) *literacy with responsibility*, i.e. the ability to consider the social consequences of media from the standpoint of safety, privacy and other issues. Overall, the importance of media literacy, i.e. the ability to communicate fluently in all old and new media, as well as to access, analyse and evaluate the powerful images, words and sounds in the 21st century media culture is being stressed.

rapidly changing world are being addressed. Examples include *Dreamlab Generation*; *Interactive Whiteboards*; *Techno Games series*; *Sonic Arts Network*.

- virtual learning environments (VLEs). e.g. *Vu2 Media*; *Cosmic Composer*.
- disaffected and digitally excluded individuals/groups as well as those with learning disabilities and special needs. For example, *Image Conscious* ; *Living with Science*, *Razor Edge*.
- attracting non-traditional learners in the areas of arts, science and technology. For example *Acrisat*; *Science Alliance*; *Planet Jemma*; *Grandmother & Me*
- enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship among young people, e.g. *Blue Skies*; *Channel 4: Bedroom Britain*
- bringing the education and business worlds closer together, e.g. *Better Education Business Links*; *Bolton Technical Innovation Centre*
- supporting informal and/or adult learning. For example, *Bringing Scientific discoveries to life*; *Learning on the move*
- gifted and talented individuals a number of projects are specifically designed to enhance creativity and talent. This focus resonates with the policies to maximise the potential and talent of such children (e.g. UK national Gifted and Talented Strategy), both at and out of school, e.g. *Creative Generation*
- early years learning (in line with UK early years policies/programmes such as Every Child Matters Programme), e.g. *5 x 5 x 5* project.

In terms of limitations, our preliminary policy analysis suggests two areas that would merit further exploration:

- The focus on young people - aspects of adult and informal as well as community-based learning not as well developed, a few projects only address these key dimensions in the broader policy environment of promoting lifelong learning
- the social exclusion aspect is not as well addressed as other areas, e.g. developing creative ways of teaching science/arts at school. Only 10% of the programme portfolio explicitly targets 'excluded groups'.⁵ This was also borne out by the NAO Report on NESTA which attributes this to the fact that there has been a lack of clarity between Department of Culture and NESTA as to what contribution NESTA can make towards tackling social exclusion.

⁵ In the Projects Audit, we categorised each project (on the basis of project descriptions in web sites) in terms of whether the participants targeted explicitly included people from 'excluded' groups (as specified in current OECD and Eurobarometer definitions of 'social exclusion'). These cover, inter alia: people with disabilities; people with special learning needs; black and ethnic minority groups; 'at risk' and 'drop out' young people; prisoners; long term unemployed

3.2 Citation analysis

Table 2 shows the results of an initial citation analysis of the Learning Programme, set against citations for a range of comparable Programmes.

Table 2: Citation Analysis: NESTA Learning Programme and comparison programmes

	NLP	ESRC LS	ESRC TLRP	ESRC PES	UCP	PEP	SLC
ERIC	0	0	0	156	0	1	1
BEI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
British Library	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Google Scholar	0	3	228	156	0	4	8
Google	41	34	10700	686	330	18	683
Yahoo	80	30	3560	672	366	21	343

NLP: NESTA Learning Programme

ESRC LS: ESRC Learning Society Programme

ESRC TLRP: ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme

ESRC PES: ESRC Public Engagement in Science Programme

UCP: Urban Cultural Programme

PEP: Public Engagement Programme

SLC: Wellcome Science Learning Centres

Table 2 shows:

- The preliminary evidence suggests that the NESTA Learning Programme has gained little recognition across a range of ‘knowledge constituencies’. Searches across key databases representing the academic knowledge base identify only one citation for the Programme. In turn, recognition of the Programme across the broader ‘public’ constituency (as reflected in searches on Google and Yahoo) suggest a very low level of awareness of the Programme.
- Whilst this pattern generally holds true for comparable Programmes, NESTA appears to be less well-recognised than these Programmes, for example the ESRC ‘Public Engagement in Science’ Programme and the Wellcome ‘Science Learning Centres’ Programme.

As a comparison, we also carried out a citation analysis on five of the projects covered in the case studies (Nestonauts; Snug and Outdoor; Acrisat; Planet Jemma; PAL). This showed a similar pattern to the analysis carried out for the Programme as a whole, with, for instance citations for the projects on ‘Google’ ranging from 7 in the case of Nestonauts to 370 for PAL and Planet Jemma. The latter two projects showed a more extensive range of citations than for the project as whole. For example, PAL is linked to a diverse set of web links, including media sites; national and international government agencies; NGO’s and commercial organisations. In common with the Programme as a whole, the citation analysis showed that there has been minimal knowledge dissemination from the projects within academia.

3.3 Projects Audit

3.3.1 Data and coding frames used in Projects Audit

The analysis was carried out using a projects portfolio database provided by NESTA. This contained details of 180 funded projects. As discussed above, a number of these are extensions of previously funded projects. The database includes data on dates funded; duration of project; total amount funded; partners; health status; learning specialism and discipline; region funded activity. On the basis of a content analysis of the project descriptions, we added a number of additional indicators to the database, as follows:

Delivery mechanism – the medium through which learning is delivered (e.g. delivered in curriculum; on-line; roadshow; exhibition)

Target groups – the beneficiaries identified in the project description (e.g. young people; school students; general public; professionals)

Setting/scenario – the ‘space’ in which learning takes place (e.g. existing educational establishment; visitor centre; outreach; virtual/ on-line)

Intended outcomes – the specific concrete objectives of the project (e.g. personal development; new learning - new discipline; cross-discipline - supporting curriculum of the learning establishment)

Technology dimension – the deployment of new technologies (e.g. whiteboards; games; mobile)

Inclusiveness – whether excluded groups specifically targeted as beneficiaries

Innovation type – degree of ‘learning innovation’ represented (Limited - new type of content within conventional learning mode; modest enhancement to existing learning paradigm - improves efficiency of learning delivery; adds new dimension to existing paradigm; significant enhancement - combines performance art/science modes; radical new learning paradigm - e.g. immersive technologies)

3.3.2 Main results

The Projects Audit highlighted some key issues around the distribution and representativeness of the Programme portfolio, and the learning and innovation models reflected by funded projects. Table 3, for example, explores the distribution of funded projects in terms of two indicators: award status (which reflects the extent to which ‘multiple’ award holders are represented in the Programme funding base) and ‘inclusiveness’ (which reflects the degree to which projects are targeting specific ‘excluded’ groups (for example black and ethnic minority communities). As Table 3 shows, there is a significant proportion of projects within the Programme that are extensions of previously funded projects, or are co-ordinated by awardees who have previously been funded.⁶ In relation to ‘inclusiveness’, just over 10% of projects funded directly aim to develop learning innovations aimed directly at engaging ‘hard to reach’ and ‘excluded’ groups within the learning process.⁷

⁶ 29 of the 180 projects analysed – 16% - were ‘awards to same project’. 73 of the 180 projects – 40% - constitute extensions to previously funded projects or new projects to awardees previously funded

⁷ As defined by OECD and Eurobarometer definitions of ‘social exclusion’

Table 3: Status of Award and ‘inclusiveness’ of projects

Indicator	Category	% projects
Award Status	Single Award	60
	Multiple Award	40
Inclusiveness	No inclusion element	90
	Specific excluded group	10

We explored other aspects of the distribution and representativeness of the Programme in the Projects Audit. Figure 3 depicts the geographical spread of funding in the form of a ‘location quotient’. (The Location Quotient is a broad measure of the extent to which projects funded are consistent with the distribution of population in the UK. The closer the LQ score is to zero, the more the regional distribution of funded projects is in line with the UK’s population distribution). As Figure 3 shows, London appears significantly over-represented in terms of funding awarded to projects. However it should be noted that the high concentration of London-based projects has fallen significantly in recent years (as discussed in more detail below). Figure 4 reflects another ‘representation’ angle – the spread of ‘user constituencies’ targeted by projects. As Figure 4 shows, the Programme is strongly oriented towards the secondary education sector, with over 40% of projects targeting school students. Just over a fifth of projects are aimed at the general public (the majority of these comprised of ‘awareness raising’ initiatives). What is perhaps significant about this pattern is the absence of innovation investment targeted specifically at ‘adult learners’. Figure 5 raises additional issues about how the Programme and its associated purposes and objectives are being delivered. The Figure shows the distribution of projects in terms of their delivery setting (or ‘scenario of use’). As Figure 5 shows, the largest proportion – 27% - of projects operate within an existing educational establishment (typically schools), although around a quarter of projects operate within a ‘virtual’ space. Around 13% of projects are based in other kinds of existing learning ‘centres’ (for example museums, galleries and so on). Only a very small proportion of projects take learning innovation ‘out there’ – either through outreach work, or ‘in-reach’ activities (for example bringing users into the workplace). Given the degree of ‘anchorage’ of the Programme within the established educational environment, it is perhaps not surprising that the kinds of impacts associated with the learning innovations the Programme reflects may appear to be more ‘reinforcers’ of existing paradigms rather than promoting ‘radical’ alternatives.

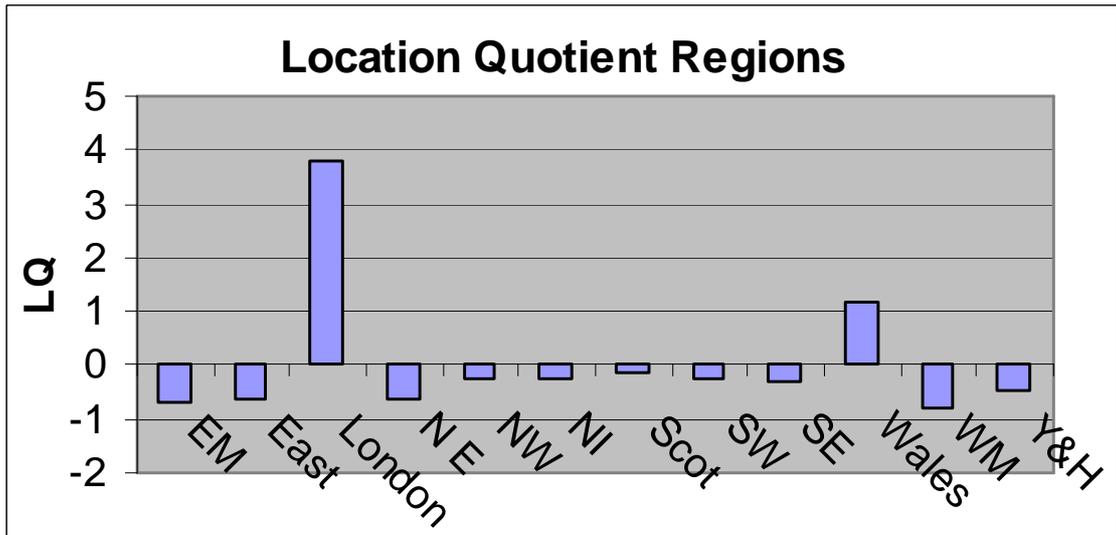


Figure 3

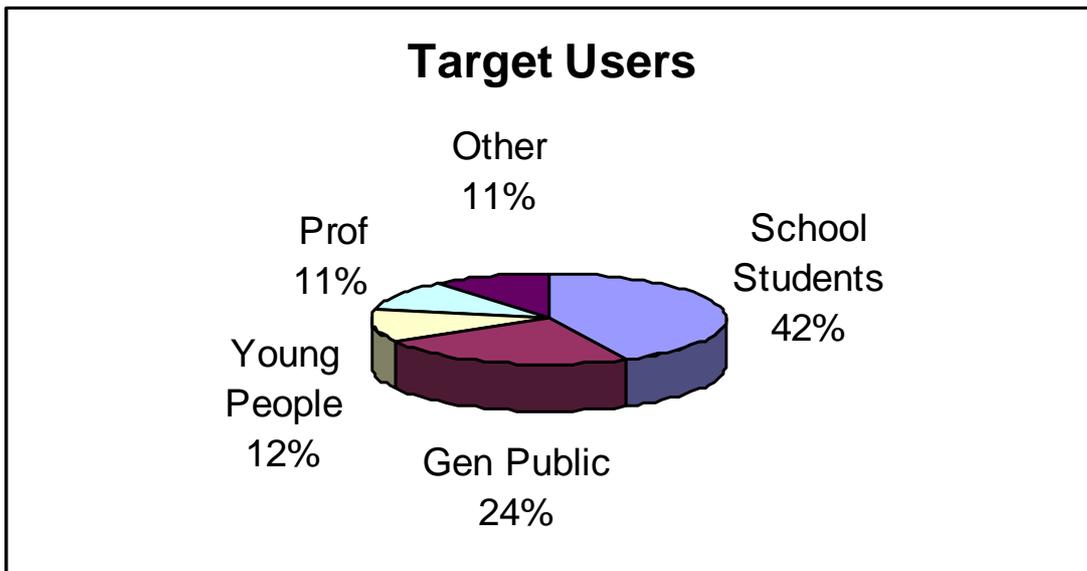


Figure 4

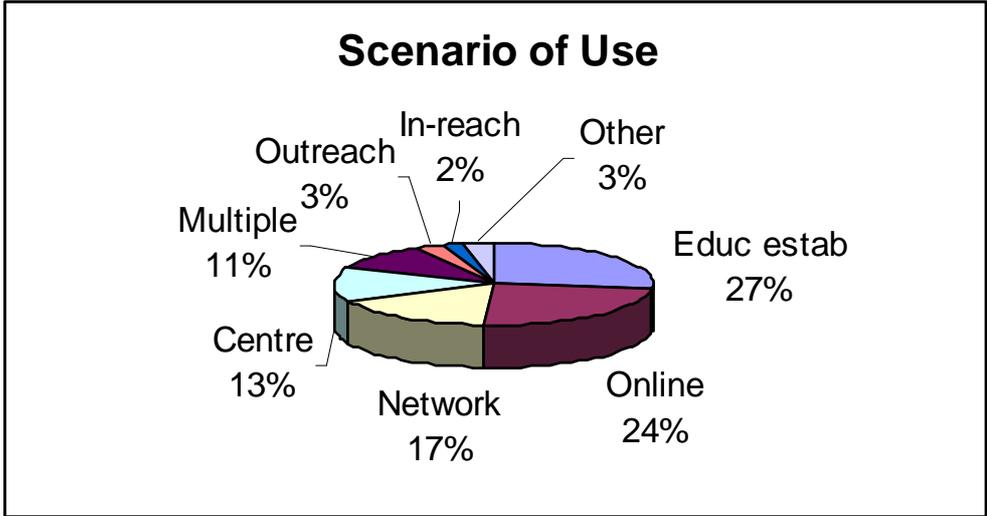


Figure 5

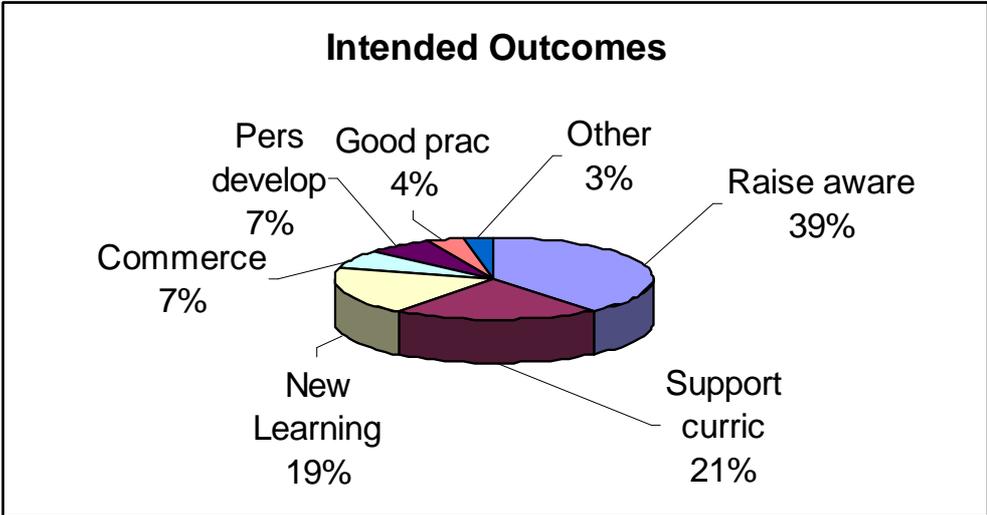


Figure 6

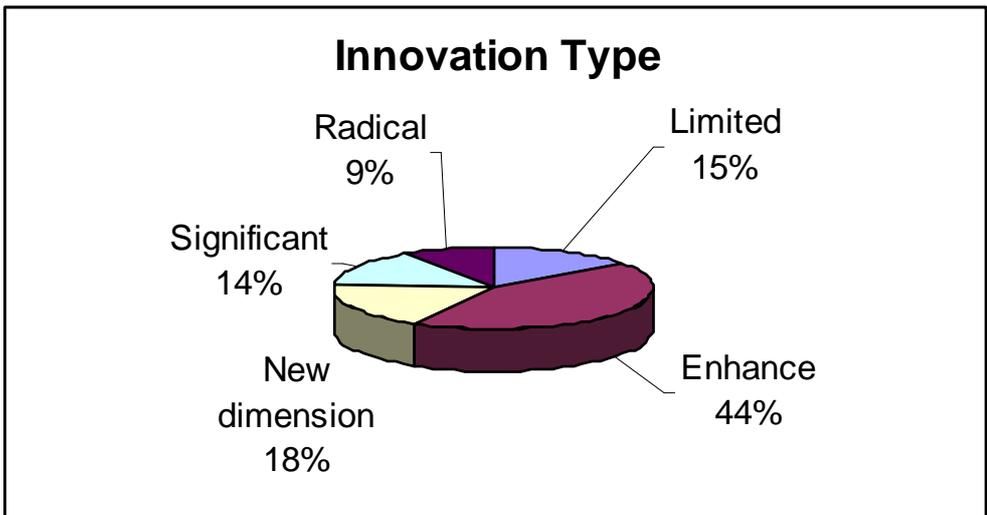


Figure 7

Figure 6, for example, shows the distribution of projects in terms of their ‘subscribed’ intended outcomes (i.e. the main objectives set by particular projects). As Figure 6 shows, the largest proportion of projects – just under 40% - can be classified as ‘awareness raising’ initiatives, a typical example being to expand the level of public interest in a particular scientific discipline. In turn, around a fifth of projects aim to support the existing school curriculum by developing more novel forms of teaching and learning practice. Only 19% of projects explicitly aim to develop what might be termed ‘new forms of learning’, for example by promoting new combinations of inter-disciplinary knowledge. These patterns are reinforced by the data shown in Figure 7. As part of the Projects Audit, we classified projects (using an ‘item analysis’ procedure ⁸) in terms of their ‘innovation model’. It should be stressed that this is not intended to be construed as an ‘objective’ measure of innovation, but is intended to act as a starting point to further explore and map how ‘innovation’ operates in the Learning Programme. The projects were classified in the following categories: Limited contribution to developing new paradigms; Modest enhancement to existing learning paradigm; Adds new dimension to existing paradigm; Significant enhancement (e.g. combines creative/science modes); Radical new paradigm. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of projects were classified as ‘enhancements’.

A key aim of the Projects Audit was to develop a ‘project typology’. This was done using cluster analysis ⁹ using a range of discriminating variables identified by preliminary descriptive analysis and analysis of variance of the data. Table 4 summarises the results of the cluster analysis.

Table 4: Cluster analysis of funded projects

No.	% projects	Label	Distinguishing features
1	27	Wired schools	Multi-sectoral; target schools; high technology component; support curriculum
2	17	Communities of practice	Research-dominated. Support professional development and curriculum. Limited innovation
3	12	Public Awareness arts projects	Large projects; highly networked; focus on performing arts and ‘creativity’. Awareness raising focus ; general public
4	19	Public Awareness science projects	Similar to cluster 3, but more focus on science and ICTs
5	7	Seed projects	Small ‘hybrid’ projects combining science and arts; mainly targeted at professionals
6	17	Ground-breaking	Large high profile, high-tech and innovative projects promoting new forms of learning

As Table 4 shows, the cluster analysis suggested a typology comprised of six groups of projects, as follows:

⁸ Item analysis involves a ‘criterion group’ assigning projects to particular categories on the basis of agreed characteristics

⁹ Wards Method: level of funding; discipline; learning specialism; size; target groups; delivery; setting; intended outcomes; inclusiveness; technology mode; innovation model

- Type 1: 'Wired schools' – the largest category, comprised of 27% of projects, focusing primarily on supporting curriculum development through the application of e-learning innovations.
- Type 2: 'Communities of practice' – 17% of projects, supporting networks of practitioners through research and dissemination.
- Type 3: 'Public Awareness Arts projects' – totalling 12% of projects. These are mainly engaged in public awareness-raising initiatives including performing arts.
- Type 4: 'Public Awareness science projects' – 19% of projects with a similar profile to Type 3, but with more of an emphasis on science and technology.
- Type 5: 'Seed projects' – labelled because they tend to be small in funding and spread of target reach, and involve interactivity between professionals, aimed at developing new thinking in particular domain areas.
- Type 6: 'Ground Breaking' – 17% of the total. These are typically large, highly innovative projects aimed at developing new paradigms in learning, often involving the integration of inter-disciplinary knowledge, and typically using innovative forms of e-learning.

3.3.3 The evolution of the Programme

The patterns and results discussed above need to be set against a Programme that is evolving. The Programme has been developing, both through 'natural' evolution, and as a result of strategic and operational decisions made by its managers and trustees. For instance, a major change in strategic direction can be traced from the inception of the Programme in the late 1990's, at which point in time the focus was on developing a 'critical mass' of projects in order to kick start the Programme, to a more recent focus on promoting specific 'thematic objectives' and clusters of projects. Against this background, key changes have included:

- An increase in the size of projects in the Programme portfolio
- An increase in staff dedicated to managing the Programme
- Acquisition of new programme skills and the creation of new Programme roles
- Clustering of projects into 'thematic areas'
- More strategic selection of new projects, in line with these themes, and in line with the Learning Operational Plan 2005/6
- Promoting more 'open-ness' (through more clearly defined criteria for proposers and less emphasis on 'commissioned' projects).

These changes might be expected to have had an effect on the kinds of projects funded and, in turn, on issues like depth of coverage and representativeness. We therefore carried out a further analysis of the Projects Audit data on a set of key indicators and on the basis of the date projects started. The projects were grouped into three categories: Jan 1999-Dec 2002; Jan 2003 – Dec 2003; Jan 2004 – current. Figure 8 to 12 show changes over time in the Programme portfolio from the Programme's inception to the present.

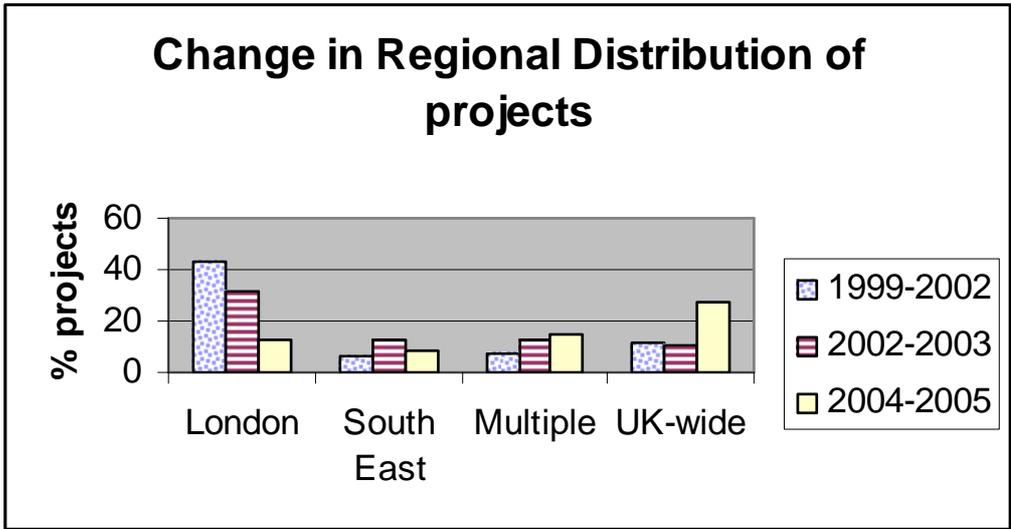


Figure 8

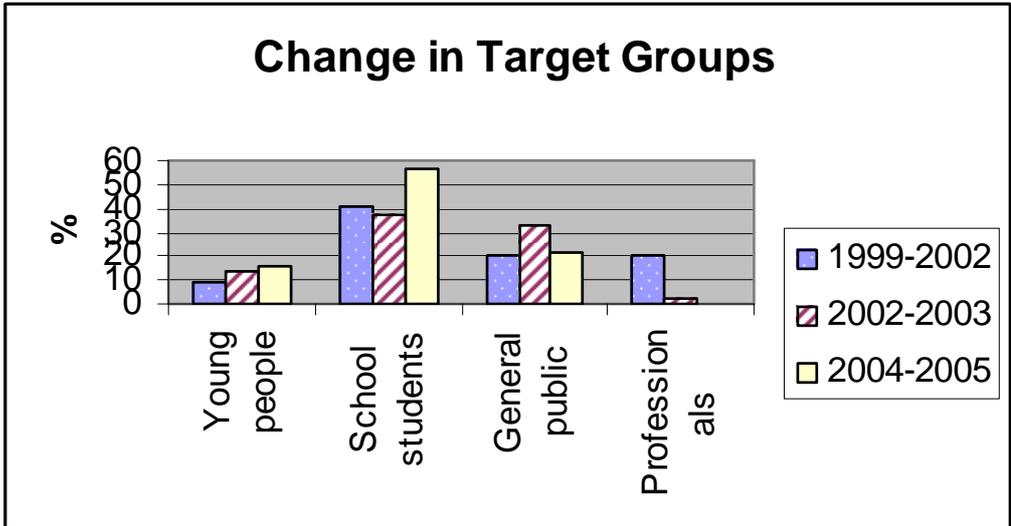


Figure 9

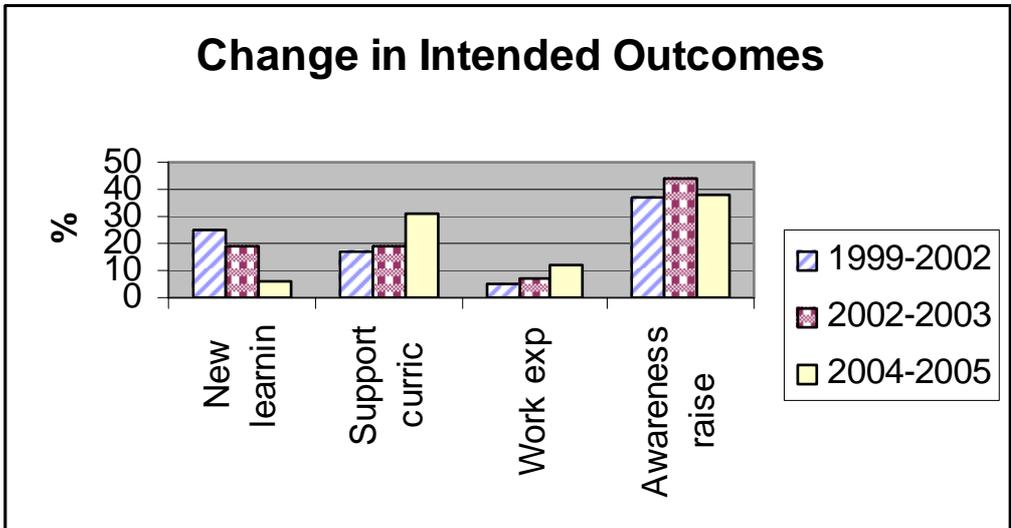


Figure 10

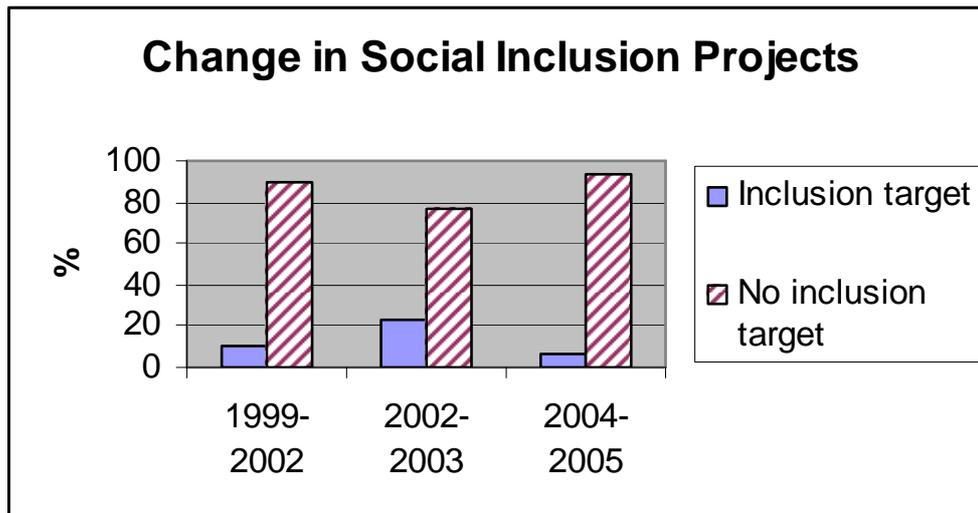


Figure 11

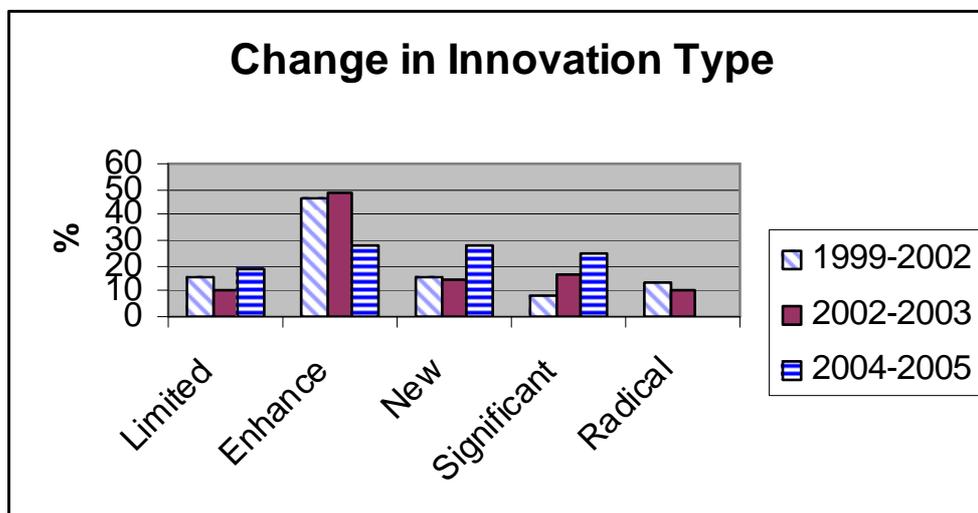


Figure 12

The Figures show:

- The regional distribution of projects has changed dramatically over the period. London accounted for 43% of projects funded by the end of 2002, but its share dropped to only 13% between 2004-2005. This pattern has been accompanied by an increase in ‘multi-region’ and ‘UK-wide’ projects (Figure 8).
- The focus on compulsory education, and on supporting the school curriculum has widened as the Programme has evolved. The proportion of projects targeting school students increased from 41% in 2002 to 56% in 2005 (Figure 9). In turn, the proportion of projects aimed at supporting the curriculum increased from 17% to 31% over the same period. Meanwhile, the proportion of projects aimed at supporting new learning has decreased from 25% to 6% (Figure 10).
- The proportion of projects specifically targeting excluded groups has fallen from 11% in 2002 to 6% in 2005 (Figure 11).
- In terms of ‘type of innovation’, the proportions of projects developing ‘new’ and ‘significant’ learning innovations have increased by 13% and

15% respectively. However, the proportion of 'limited innovation' projects has grown by 3% and the proportion of 'radical' projects decreased by 4% over the period (Figure 12).

- In summary, although the early dominance of London on the funding landscape has receded significantly as the Programme has developed, and there has been a modest shift towards more innovative projects over time, the 'schools bias' of the Programme and the low representation of excluded groups and non-formal learning sectors has remained persistent.

3.4 On-line Survey

The evaluation included a survey of project managers. This was administered on-line via the dedicated website. The survey covered the following areas:

- Initiating circumstances, history of the project and future project plans
- Progress in achieving project objectives and milestones
- Outputs, outcomes and impacts
- Experience of working with NESTA within Programme and satisfaction with Programme management
- Views on improvements to Programme

70 respondents participated in the survey, comprising 38% of projects in the Programme. The main results are set out below.

3.4.1 Initiating circumstances and history of the project

Table 5 summarises the responses to questions about project origins.

Table 5: Project Origins

	%
Approach from NESTA	25
Through grapevine	69
Through publicity	0
Other	7

Table 5 shows:

- Of the projects represented in the on-line survey, 25% said they had received an approach to be considered for funding directly from NESTA, and a further 69% said they had heard about the Programme 'through the Grapevine'.

Table 6 shows responses to questions about the impact of NESTA funding.

Table 6: Impact of NESTA funding

	%
Applied for funding from other source	65
NESTA funding considered inadequate	47
NESTA funding considered adequate	51
Project would not have happened without NESTA	90

Table 6 shows:

- The results suggest that NESTA plugs an important gap in provision of funding for innovative projects. Around 65% of projects surveyed had applied (unsuccessfully) for funding from other sources. 90% of projects were of the opinion that their project would not have started without funding from NESTA.

- Just over half the projects thought the amount of funding received was sufficient for their purposes

Table 7 shows whether projects are planning to continue after funding has finished.

Table 7: Sustainability Plans

	%
Plans for continuing project after funding	88
Likely spin offs from project	82

Table 7 shows:

- There is widespread optimism throughout the Programme about the sustainability of projects. Almost 90% of respondents said they had plans for continuing their project after NESTA funding had ended and over 80% were working on spin-offs from the project

3.4.2 Progress in achieving milestones and objectives

Table 8 summarises the performance of projects (self-reported) on a number of key indicators.

Table 8: Project performance and achievements

Target area (% respondents)	Below target	On target	Above target
Objectives	19	49	12
Beneficiaries	21	40	16
Specific outputs	21	44	12
Milestones	28	42	12
Sustainability	40	21	9
Dissemination	26	35	19

The Table shows:

- The majority of projects report they are on or even above target on all key performance dimensions – meeting project objectives; delivering expected benefits for beneficiaries; producing specified outputs; meeting contractual milestones; developing sustainability plans and meeting dissemination targets.
- However, a significant proportion of projects are below target in these areas, notably in terms of sustainability targets.

3.4.3 Outputs, outcomes and impacts

Table 9 summarises how projects rate their success across a range of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Table 9: Project benefits

Success criteria (% respondents)	Low	Average	High
Extent project achieving objectives	19	7	54
Contribution to innovation	19	5	58
Positively viewed by beneficiaries	18	7	49
Improving lives of beneficiaries	17	12	33
Developing UK knowledge base	21	7	42
Usefulness of lessons learned	21	5	51
Effectiveness of partnership	19	9	52
Sustainability of outputs and outcomes	21	16	30

The Table shows:

- The majority of projects – 54% - claim a high success rate in having achieved or working towards achieving their overall objectives.
- Projects report similar levels of success in contributing to innovation; improving the lives of beneficiaries; developing the nation’s knowledge base; generating useful learning; developing effective partnerships.

These results are supported by the data shown in Table 10. This shows that none of the respondents described their project as unsuccessful – 98% considered their project successful or very successful and 65% thought their project had performed above expectations. However, around 44% had experienced some problems in their work. Typical problems included: staffing and skills problems and retention of competent staff; logistical and technical problems (for example reliability of technology platforms and infrastructure); delays and similar problems leading to time and deadline pressures.

Table 10: Project success

Dimension (% respondents)	Unsuccessful	Neither/nor	Very
Overall success of project	0	2	98
	Below	As expected	Above
Extent project meets expectations	5	30	65
	Many	Some	None
Problems experienced	2	44	54

3.4.4 Experience of working with NESTA within Programme and satisfaction with Programme management

Table 11 summarises respondents’ experience of problems associated with the ‘programme architecture’ of the Learning Programme (i.e. the way it is operated and managed).

Table 11: Problems encountered

Type of problem	%
Negotiating contract	0
Working with Programme officers	4
Funding issues	4
Contract completion	0
Project monitoring	0
Evaluation	11
Meeting deadlines and milestones	14

The Table shows:

- None of the respondents participating in the on-line survey reported any problems encountered in contract negotiation.
- Only 4% of respondents reported any problems associated with management, and administration activities
- A proportion of projects reported problems with evaluation and meeting deadlines.

This very positive picture of the Programme is supported by the data in Table 12, which summarises respondents satisfaction with the Programme across a range of rating scales.

Table 12: Project Rating of Programme

Rating scale (% respondents)	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
Project selection process	0	18	79
Contract negotiation	0	4	95
General advice and support	4	18	75
Help with deadlines/milestones	4	14	78
Financial management	4	18	75
Support with objectives	3	26	67
Monitoring and feedback	7	21	64
Closedown advice and support	3	50	21

The Table shows:

- Almost all - 95% - of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way contract negotiations were handled;
- Significant numbers of projects expressed satisfaction with the other aspects of the Programme - 75% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way financial issues were handled; 78% were satisfied with help received on meeting deadlines; 75% with financial management.
- Levels of dissatisfaction recorded were very low indeed, with only 7% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with monitoring and feedback systems, and even smaller numbers (between 3-4%) expressing dissatisfaction with general advice and support; help with deadlines; closedown advice and support.
- However, only 21% of respondents were satisfied with the support they received in relation to project closedown.

3.4.5 Improvements to Programme

Table 13 shows the respondents' views on areas where they feel the Programme could be improved.

Table 13: Suggested programme Improvements

Area of improvement	%
Funding	18
Contract negotiation	0
Management and co-ordination	4
Monitoring and Evaluation	14
Dissemination	29

The Table shows:

- Most respondents did not perceive a need for improvements to the Programme.
- Areas where some need for improvements was expressed include: funding (level and payment process); monitoring and evaluation; dissemination procedures and systems.

3.5 Comparisons and Contexts Analysis

This part of the evaluation was intended to situate the programme in relation to comparable programmes. The methods used included:

- Running a Forum and interviews with the Expert Panel
- Bibliographic database searches for comparable Programmes
- Review of existing evaluation reports and other relevant documentation on comparable programmes

The Programmes reviewed were as follows.

In the UK:

- Arts Council England (The Urban cultural programme; The Heritage Lottery Fund)
- Cultural and Learning Innovation Programmes
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport 'Culture Online' ;
- 'Big Lottery Fund (The Creative Education Programme)

European Commission Programmes:

- SOCRATES programmes (COMENIUS; eLearning; Grundtvig; L-Change – European Observatory on IST and Learning change)
- Information Society Technology (IST) Programme;
- Minerva

The key results of the analysis are as follows:

- The NESTA Learning Programme both complements and supplements existing initiatives aimed at promoting innovation in learning. Its main value added lies in: supporting the cross-fertilisation of new knowledge across science, technology and the arts; in funding 'high risk' initiatives that are unlikely to be funded in programmes with more narrowly-defined parameters of 'learning' and 'innovation; promoting 'emerging technologies' to support new forms of learning, rather than as adjuncts to traditional modes of teaching and learning.
- There are a number of lessons NESTA could usefully learn from similar Programmes, and which could be used to add value to the current Learning Programme. These include the following:

- Broader scope of coverage of sectors and target groups. The current Learning Programme focuses more on statutory education, and other sectors are relatively under-represented, particularly Higher Education; Adult Learning and work-based learning. Continuing Professional Development and 'corporate learning' is an area in which there is currently significant interest and investment, particularly in developing innovative 'e-learning' scenarios.
- 'Societal learning' agendas. The programme is also relatively 'light' – in comparison with EU programmes, for example – in promoting innovative learning initiatives for excluded and 'hard to reach' groups. These target sectors are well-represented in EU programmes such as 'Grundtvig', 'MINERVA' and the Information Society Technologies programme. A related set of innovation agendas currently less well covered in the NESTA Programme centre on ways of linking learning to 'active citizenship', human rights and democracy (including the use of new technologies to support these agendas). An associated trend has been the significant investment applied within learning programmes to mainstream anti-racism, gender and equality. A number of EU Programmes, for example, include action lines such as 'Gender and European Women; 'Identity and immigration'.
- There has also been a trend in recent years to link 'learning' to other policy agendas via Programmes aimed at developing a 'holistic' approach to innovation. Examples include the recently-launched EC-funded programme 'Regions of Knowledge'.
- Another key element of EC-funded programmes is the systematic use of 'transveral' actions to support projects engaged in research and development. These include: quality and benchmarking actions; evaluation, concertation and exploitation.

3.6 Case Studies

3.6.1. Introduction

In one of the main research activities of this evaluation, a total of 10 mini-case studies of typical projects funded by the Learning Programme, were undertaken. Data collection was carried out using a multi-methodological approach and toolkit, combining content analysis of documentation; interviews with stakeholders; observation and focus groups. Data analysis focused on a common 'template' to enable cross-case comparisons to be carried out (See Appendix 1. The selection of cases was partially undertaken using the results of the cluster analysis, and each of the six clusters in the project 'typology' are represented. Additional criteria used to select cases were:

- Stage in Programme life cycle – examples reflecting the evolution of projects (typically re-funded or linked to previous awards) and of the Programme itself
- Access – generally, 'live' projects, or those with which NESTA has regular contact, have been prioritised
- Geographical spread
- Project 'health' – the cases include examples of projects that have been classified as 'problematic'

Table 14 below lists the 10 projects that served as case studies.

Table 14: The 10 Case Studies

1. EDU0070: Award Holder = Camden Art Centre - Project Name: Image Conscious. (Pilot for the case study toolkit)
2. EDU0005: Award Holder = Performing Arts Labs - Project Name: PAL Labs foster multidisciplinary talent. Project Description: Labs for Learning:
3. EDU0158: Award Holder = Land Design – Project name = Special software for special needs.
4. EDU0154: Award Holder = Neston Primary School – Project Name: Nestonauts.
5. LP0201: Award Holder = Snug and Outdoor – Project name: Snug and Outdoor.
6. EDU0019: Award Holder: ACRISAT – Project name: ACRISAT Strategic Plan.
7. EDU0113: Award Holder: Razor Edge – Project name: Educating and empowering people with learning disabilities.
8. EDU0125: Award Holder = Niminim Ltd – Project Name: Lecture List.
9. EDU0074: Award Holder = XPT Ltd – Project Name = Planet Jemma.
10. LP0169: Award Holder = Scottish Executive – Project Name: Small Grants Scheme - boosting science in Scottish schools.

3.6.2. Case Study Project Profiles

The following case study synthesis table (Table 15) provides details of the key characteristics for the 10 case study projects reviewed.

Table 15: Case study profiles

Project	Status	Aims	Participants
ACRISAT Projects	Mixture of completed and active projects	4 projects that in different ways aimed to improve the take up and the perception of science and technology in education and at work among the UK residents of African Caribbean origin.	Organisations with influence on science and technology education such as the DfES, and the Science Museum. Schools taking part in projects in Brighton and Kirklees. BME role models sought in Birmingham. BME organisations interested in tackling the issues of lack of representation of BME participants in Science and Education.
Image Conscious	Complete	To promote youth mentoring expertise developed in the youth sector and use the method within the arts centre.	13-19 year olds who are at risk and referred from YOT or the youth centre.
Nestonauts	Complete	To consult, design and construct a 'Moonbase' in the playground. Within the dome there will be a variety of space related experiments. The aim of the project is to create a learning facility, to experiment, play and inspire.	Primary school pupils age 4 – 11 years.
Snug & Outdoor EPK	Active	To make school playground throughout the country creative places for play and learning, by designing and piloting an experimental playground kit that can be manufactured.	Primary school pupils age 4 – 11 years.
PAL	Complete	To develop and apply a collaborative learning model for cross-fertilisation of ideas and talent in film, media, technology, visual and performing arts, architecture, education and science.	'Discipline-based' labs bring together specialists in their particular discipline (e.g. screenwriters). Labs of Learning bring together teachers, scientists, performing artists.
Scottish Executive	Active	Promote better transition in science between primary and secondary education and support teachers in making productive links between schools. To stimulate children's' enthusiasm for science and improve their attainment by enhancing their science experience.	Science teachers from Scottish primary and secondary schools.
Razor Edge	Active	To set up a <i>pathway</i> for people with learning difficulties for a career in the performing arts through developing and running a HE Degree course.	Adults with severe learning difficulties.
Lecture List	Active	Create online list of all lectures taking place throughout UK to promote attendance.	Adults.
Planet Jemma	Complete	Raise awareness and the perception of physics as a further education	13-18 yr old female students who are

		study choice amongst young women thinking of following a science degree course.	considering science as a university option.
Land Design	Completed	Develop low cost model inter-re active immersive software for use with children with PMLD and SLD based on the type of technology used in the Kaleidoscope installation in the playzone at the Millennium Dome.	Students in two establishments with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities and Severe Learning Disabilities

Project	Partnerships	Geographical Coverage	Funding Awarded
ACRISAT	One project is working with mainstream strategic organisations in the science community and with BME organisations that have an interest in tackling lack of representation of BME groups in science.	National, regional and international in dissemination practice. Local projects have tended to be based around local education authorities.	£108,210 £14,964 £25,000 £23,520
Image Conscious	Original partner was the Youth mentoring project which subsequently was reorganised and the mentoring project ended. A Youth centre was later the main agency that referred young people as it could provide support for those attending the Image Conscious project.	Mainly Camden (London), but did go outside the borough boundaries too.	£97,130
Nestonauts	Westinghouse Rail Systems: A local company that provided technical expertise. DfES 'Vibrant Schools Project' Network: The professional network of Educators (from 25 Wiltshire primary schools) meets to exchange ideas on creativity and best practice.	South West. Local – The Moonbase and related activities are currently only available to Neston Primary School pupils, Wiltshire.	£35,057
Snug & Outdoor EPK	The 'Design Laboratory' based at Central St Martins, and their postgraduate students; the Institute of Education; Hampshire County Council; and Camden Borough Council.	Pilots - an inner city borough (Camden) and a county council (Hampshire). Potential application is nation wide.	£199,900
PAL	Complex range of collaborative partnerships with NESTA, large agencies and NGOs (e.g. Wellcome Foundation); creative partners; schools; universities; national and international government departments.	Residential labs focus mainly on Bore House, Kent. The catchment population is drawn from all over the UK, but has concentrations in London and the South East. There are four International 'sister' services in South Africa, Europe, Senegal.	£1,105,247
Scottish Executive	NESTA; Scottish Executive Education Department; Careers Scotland (plus outside consultant)	All of Scotland	£46,910
	Mount View College of FE is the educational establishment	The southeast.	£181,574

Razor Edge	through which the diploma will be offered. Various employers in the performing arts industry.		
Lecture List	Guardian Unlimited	Nationwide.	£107,350
Planet Jemma	N.A.	National (did include modest number of US users too but no campaign undertaken outside UK).	£135,820
Land Design	N.A.	Local - Two schools in pilot trials, Middlesex.	£132,775

Project	Type of Learning	Setting of Learning
ACRISAT	Consultation, research and workshops on the issue. Raising awareness and encouraging organisations to tackle the issues in their area or sector. Exemplar projects given funding to try out new approaches and ideas. Database of resources including good practice. Dissemination and promotion of the project.	ACRISAT Brighton works with schools providing web based materials and training workshops. ACRISAT Birmingham has set up links with role models in its area. ACRISAT DISC has a web based database and repository for resources, dissemination and networking and is setting up residential workshops and events.
Image Conscious	A blend of enhancing skills and raising confidence and self esteem. The Arts Centre hopes to broaden horizons, enhance appreciation and skills in media, arts and technology.	The Arts Centre, youth centres and there have been sessions at the artists' studios.
Nestonauts	Educational. The following knowledge areas covered:- Engineering; Computer Science; Digital & Multimedia; Control Systems; Earth Science; Plant Growth and Observation; Physics; and mathematics.	Local – Primary School - Neston School in Wiltshire is a village based school of 156 pupils plus staff and governors.
Snug & Outdoor EPK	Learning through play. An environment for children to imaginatively manipulate and a teaching support aid for educational concepts to be physically demonstrated for the children.	Primary school playgrounds.
PAL	The basis of the learning delivery platform is the 'Lab' – which brings together a range of 'talented people', either from a particular sector (e.g. screenwriting) or in a 'cross-discipline' format (e.g. Labs of Learning) in experimental 'imaginative risk-taking' learning events. The underlying pedagogic approach is primarily constructivist in orientation, scope and practice. The main aim of the exercise is to break down hierarchies that inhibit creativity, collaboration and learning.	The Labs are normally run from 'Bore House' in Kent, which provides the setting for in-residence experiments (typically 10 days duration). This template is recreated in other settings (for example 'SCRAWL' in South Africa; PYGMALION in different European locations; MUSIC LAB, Senegal).
Scottish Executive	Science teaching in schools. The project does not carry out direct learning – NESTA funding is to encourage schools to apply for 'Science Small Grants'.	Actual project is delivered through workshops; one-to-one advice and consultancy.

Razor Edge	Skills: performing arts skills for learning disabled. Personal: For the learning disabled teachers and the students – independence, confidence, social relations, increased sense of self-worth and place in the community, aspirations to go further and be in paid work.	Multiple. Current base is the Oval Theatre where the learning disabled team members are becoming ‘teachers’ and the team as a whole are developing the new model of teaching. The diploma course will be based at Mount View College.
Lecture List	None. Just an information portal.	Online.
Planet Jemma	Raising awareness amongst young women of science as a career, specifically physics as an option for university study by providing positive role models.	Online.
Land Design	Immersive sensory experience.	Two schools.

Project	Innovation
ACRISAT	Role models and web sites are not innovative ways of working but there are not many schemes around using role models. Getting BME groups and Science community together in workshops and residential events is a new approach that meets NESTA criteria of bringing together individuals and organisations who are committed to explore new approaches.
Image Conscious	“The individual elements of the project are not unique: youth mentoring, encouraging disaffected young people to use art venuesbut what is potentially innovative is the way the project brings these elements together within an arts centre”.
Nestonauts	Innovation in delivering the primary school curriculum – using the concept of ‘Space’ to capture the children’s imagination regarding science and technology and enabling them to have atypical experience of direct hands-on participation in the domains of science and technology.
Snug & Outdoor EPK	Learning through play – not an innovative idea, but innovative in an attempting to produce something accessible that will support this approach to learning in UK schools - Innovation in delivering the primary school curriculum.. The children will for the first time have control over their landscape, they can manipulate it, they will be having a new experience and thinking in a new way, that is yes I can change what this space looks like, and none of them will have experienced that before on such a big scale or in a shared environment.
PAL	Firstly, and primarily, the LAB concept itself is seen as a pedagogic innovation, reflecting a collaborative learning model for cross-fertilisation of ideas. However, it could be argued that PAL was already an established – and stable – model when NESTA funded the Choreographers Lab in 1999, and that the subsequent enhancements of the model and its migration to other disciplines are refinements rather than fundamentally innovative developments. PAL might argue that the ‘Labs of Learning’ contribute to moving forward state of the art particularly since they promote cross-disciplinary collaboration and learning between previously unengaged practitioners. Perhaps more problematic is the extent to which the delivery mechanism of the PAL model is innovative. Residential experimental learning environments are not new. Nor is the constructivist basis of the learning approach followed particularly new, with its emphasis on well-established experiential learning paradigms (Kolb, 1984). The evidence suggests that PAL’s innovativeness lies mainly in the contextualisation of these models, paradigms and practices in novel ways.
Scottish Executive	Primarily ‘institutional’ innovation. Creates space for collaboration between primary/secondary education sectors. Instead of setting up a working group to look at what schools are doing and come up with ideas for streamlining the science transition, ideas are being sought

	directly from teachers.
Razor Edge	Creating the role of learning disabled teachers. Challenging the status quo and pushing the boundaries of access for all to HE, through developing a HE diploma in the Performing Arts for learning disabilities. Developing a new teaching model appropriate for learning disabled people in HE, which involves non-verbal teaching.
Lecture List	It seems likely that the project fits the criteria of meeting a need rather than being innovative.
Planet Jemma	Based on existing technology but innovative in that it contributes to change in story telling techniques by using interactive online drama mixing new media.
Land Design	Inter-re-active immersive technology applied to learning environment such as school for Severe Learning Disabilities and Profound and Multiple Learning disabilities rather than in large scale installations is cutting edge and the development of reasonably price systems for increased access is also innovative.

3.6.3. Innovation

A review of the project details under the heading of 'Innovation' in table 15 above, raises a number of questions about the degree and nature of innovation embodied in projects, and the 'balance' of different types of innovation within the Programme. Whilst a project may for example be highly innovative in terms of technology application, it may be very low with respect to pedagogic innovation.

Looking at the strategy of NESTA for 2003-2006, the mission statement for the organisation is

'to pioneer ways of supporting and promoting talent, innovation and creativity in science, technology and the arts'.

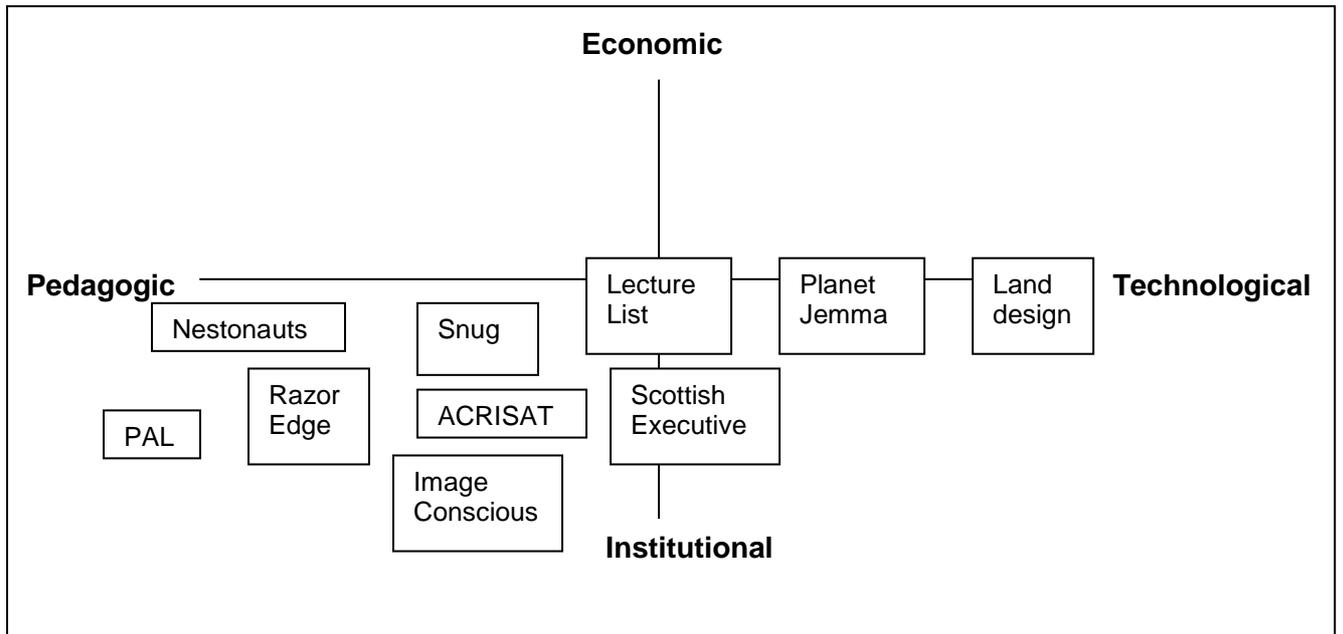
What is not included is a definition of innovation that could help to provide an indication of how 'degree of innovation' might be assessed and what dimensions of innovation exist to provide the context for rating it. Essentially then a key finding that emerges from this work is the need for NESTA to begin to map out in tangible ways the concept of innovation in the Learning programme context, to enhance future programme delivery and performance evaluation.

One particular 'cut' on innovation, used here to illustrate one of a number of ways in which innovation can be defined, situates the projects involved in the Programme in relation to four 'innovation dimensions':

- Economic innovation - the way in which projects promote novel ways of paying for learning, through, for instance promoting capital-labour substitution.
- Pedagogic innovation - for example new forms of 'constructivist' or 'scaffolded' learning approaches.
- Technological innovation - for example using immersive technologies to promote learning.
- Institutional innovation - for example new forms of public-private partnership).

The 10 case study projects can be mapped onto the innovation dimensions to provide a visual representation of their innovation position, as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 13: Innovation position of the Case Study projects using a Four-Dimension Model.



Overall on the basis of the case study data it can be argued that the Learning Programme does contribute in a significant manner to the promotion of innovation in learning policy and practice in the UK, as critically a number of the case study projects reported that the financial support of NESTA was essential in enabling their projects to run, where the high risk associated with innovation work had deterred other funders from supporting the projects.

“The original idea really was a much smaller scale initiative, a one-off but through NESTA’s interest in funding us we were able to develop the idea into a plan to manufacture a kit which schools can buy, regions can buy, and which can be the basis of all sorts of projects, a much more substantial thing. So NESTA has really made the project into what it is. What was particularly wonderful was that they didn’t give an indication of there would be such and such a limit or ceiling on the funding, it meant that we could actually think about what we really wanted to do and what we needed to do that, most funding sources are much more limiting in how they communicate about projects, that is it generally feels as though you have to go for the leanest option in order to have a chance of being funded.” (Project Director)

“With regard to funding, prior to NESTA agreeing, we tried the DfES and HEFCE, but got no where with securing statutory funding, and also had great difficulty getting funding from Trusts. The problem has been that we couldn’t guarantee that people with learning disabilities could study to the level that we were proposing, but it’s chicken and egg isn’t it, because that is why we need to do the pilot! Trying to convince funders and Higher Education that this approach will work has been and really continues to be the main difficulty of our work. ... Our course is different from a standard course and really if the innovatory funding from NESTA hadn’t arisen I don’t think we could have got the project off the ground, I mean it’s something we’ve been trying to do for years.” (Project Director)

Furthermore, NESTA was credited with holding innovation at the heart of their operations, working with projects in a collaborative manner to support the successful fruition of projects.

“The feedback from the Trustees at NESTA was that it was a very ambitious project, but that didn’t scare them, I suppose because they know that innovative projects are higher risk and they welcome that”. (Project Director)

“We’ve done fairly big projects before. But this is a huge step for us. We are artists and there are areas of the development process we lack certain skills in. But NESTA, instead of saying they wouldn’t fund us because of that, simply told us: ‘We’ll give you extra support for that part of the project’. That’s the opposite of how things usually work.” (Project Director)

However concern was expressed that NESTA’s support of innovation, in terms of the organisations culture of flexibility, openness, and partnership approach in working with projects, seemed to be diminishing, possibly due to recent organizational change.

“Innovative projects don’t fit neatly into boxes, they need nurturing, which was what NESTA seemed to be about at the start, but then that stopped!”.(Project Director)

3.6.4. Outcomes and Outputs

In considering the outcomes and impacts of the Learning Programme through review of the case study projects, it should be noted that five of the ten projects had been completed, with the remaining five being at different stages of development; that the projects selected represented different sizes of project (i.e. therefore having varying degrees of scope) - in funding terms two being classed as small, six as medium, and two as large; and that the cases varied in the degree to which they were delivery oriented (working directly with intended beneficiaries) as opposed to focused largely on research and development. Therefore, once more the task of ‘quantifying’ the data with regard to say ‘beneficiaries reached’ is problematic in terms of relevance, however, more general insights about the nature of the outcomes and impacts of the Learning Programme as illustrated by the case studies are offered here. If specific details of individual project achievements are desired, as opposed to general observations provided below, please refer to Case Study Pro Forma Appendices. Table 16 below provides a summary overview of (intended) outcomes and impacts for the case study projects

Table 16: Outputs, outcomes and impacts

Project	Project Size / Value	Target Group &/or No. Participants	1. Concrete Outputs 2. Indirect Outcomes
ACRISAT	Medium £108,210 £14,964 £25,000 £23,520	Kirklees school = 400 pupils. Brighton school = 120 pupils. Workshops with Science community had 90 reps over 4 workshops and workshops with BME groups had 62 reps over 3 workshops. Future residential workshop has about 150 people taking part.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One project produced a web site based on children work. End of Year Report on the work of the project and perceived benefits from participants. Workshops for teachers and pupils. Local dissemination event. Other schools finding funds to take up the project. 1. Another project has run meetings and workshops for the science community and separately for BME groups. There are residential events for both groups in the future. Some organisations working in partnership together on the issues. Website resource set up. Role model bank. Other funders and organisations taking up the issues. 2. Positive feedback from pupils and teachers that the school workshops had been viewed as successful and had engaged the children. There was a lot of interest at the dissemination event which subsequently lead to another school taking up the project. Teachers were asked to rate each pupil's creativity on a five point scale; two 10 minute creativity tests as well as a self esteem rating. This would indicate a significant overall improvement between the pre and post measures. 2. Raised awareness of the barriers and issues around BME representation in the sciences. New networks and resources. 75 role models engaged in one project in Birmingham which will be a new resource for the education authority.
Image Conscious	Medium £97,130	Disaffected youths: 25 participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Products" include Videos, models, photos, magazine, screen prints, exhibition, and performances by the participants. 2. Young people have been supported and have gained extra skills and self esteem. A few have been inspired and supported to consider a career in performing arts (one is singing and undertaking a sound engineering course) <p>The Arts Centre has learnt from the process and is more confident in how it can go forward with other projects for disadvantaged groups.</p>

Nestonauts	Small £35,057	Primary school pupils: One school, 156 pupils	<p>1. The construction of a moonbase and linked pieces of technology at Neston primary School which serves as a significant delivery resource in teaching in an imaginative and hands-on way the curriculum for all the school. The learning facility has a lifespan beyond the funding provided by NESTA.</p> <p>2. Professional network development: The head teacher and senior teacher represent the school as part of the Vibrant Schools Project - The Vibrant School Project (VSP) is a collaborative venture between Bath Spa University College School of Education and Wiltshire LEA advisory service. Now in its third year, VSP involves 25 Wiltshire primary schools. Each is undertaking a focused school improvement project to develop into a 'Vibrant School'. The network involves senior teaching staff exchanging ideas and best practice examples re creativity in the profession.</p>
Snug & Outdoor	£199,900 Large	Primary school pupils: Four schools of between 200 and 500 pupils	<p>1. (Intended as project still in development stage): The development of an experimental playground kit ready to be manufactured commercially. The piloting of the experimental playground kit in four primary schools with all students (approx 1,000 students).</p> <p>2. N.A.</p>
PAL	Medium £1,105,247	'Discipline-based' labs bring together specialists in their particular discipline (e.g. screenwriters). Labs of Learning bring together teachers, scientists, performing artists. Approximately 3,000 participants in 89 Labs since 1989. In NESTA funding period, approximately 2,200 participants in 62 Labs.	<p>1. 'Quantifiable' impacts can be measured in terms of 'products' and substantive outputs. For example, Dance Labs directly led to 19 subsequently commissioned performances; Screenwriters Labs directly contributed to 18 films produced. For Labs of Learning, direct outputs appear to be: teaching materials (5 examples cited in evaluation reports) and collaborative projects (6 cited including science festivals, residential courses based on the PAL model and a 'Big Bang' science musical).</p> <p>2. Impacts associated with the Labs of Learning are: i) disseminating innovative new practices into the teaching curriculum ii) contributing to improved student achievement as a result of the implementation of these new practices iii) continuing professional development for teachers iv) promoting learning support networks and knowledge exchange v) contributing to further developing the PAL generic model.</p>
Scottish Executive	£46,910 Small	Science teachers from Scottish primary and secondary schools. 140 teachers attended workshops. 161 schools submitted applications for funding. 47 were successfully funded. Website registered 3850 hits..	<p>1 Workshops have Improved success rate of applicants – BUT data suggests applications have reduced. Some participants have been able to secure matched funding (and other support) from their schools that would not have otherwise been available.</p> <p>2.Evidence of increased collaboration and knowledge transfer (inter-</p>

			regional and inter-sectoral), anecdotal evidence of contribution to improving awareness, interest and competence in science in students – but no systematic evaluation of this has been carried out.
Razor Edge	£181,574 Large	16 Learning Disabled Individuals	<p>1. (Intended as project still in development stage): The development and piloting of a two year HE diploma course in the performing arts for learning disabled. Having piloted a two year diploma in the PA in partnership with an FE college, Four newly trained learning disabled teachers to lecture on the course. Twelve learning disabled students to graduate from the course. To have agreed work experience opportunities with five performing arts employers for the 12 students to commence once the two year diploma has been completed.</p> <p>2. (Intended as project still in development stage): Increased awareness within the HE sector with regard to the new model and techniques of teaching for learning disabled, through workshops at HE establishments to demonstrate the approach. Long term aim being to increase access opportunities to HE for learning disabled. Additional long term aim is to increase employers understanding of the abilities, skills and career desires of learning disabled, so that greater opportunities develop for employment in the PA industry.</p>
Lecture List	Medium £107,350	Data not made available.	The site was built but impacts still to be evaluated
Planet Jemma	Medium £135,820	13-18 yr old female students possibly considering science as a university option: 35,000 users.	40% of users reported an improved view of physics as a career choice
Land Design	Medium £132,775	Used by 8 and 6 students in Chadsgrove and Moorcroft respectively during trials.	Neither delivery or evaluation covered by NESTA funding

Types of 'outcome' aimed at across the ten case study projects included:-

- Raising awareness of science, culture and technology amongst the general public
- Enhancing the learning capabilities of children in the crucial 'early years' stage
- Engaging 'disengaged'; 'hard to reach' and excluded groups in learning
- Enhancing the skills base of learning professionals and contributing to their professional development
- Promoting cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning
- Developing 'networks of excellence' and collaborative knowledge networks
- Developing novel technology-mediated ways of engaging people in learning
- Developing new learning models and techniques appropriate to atypical learners.
- Providing novel delivery methods to support the formal education curriculum.

Most of the projects aimed to achieve impacts in more than one type of 'outcome' area. Furthermore, most of the projects had a multiple focus in terms of the intended benefits for participants, including:-

- Educational awards.
- Skills development.
- Social development – enhancing interpersonal relationship skills and encouraging citizenship thinking and behaviours.
- Personal development – supporting the growth of independence, confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.
- Physical and mental wellbeing.

Finally, a fairly useful yardstick or indicator of the extent to which the Learning Programme is achieving its internally set goals in terms of outcomes and impacts, is the degree to which the projects it funds are achieving their objectives (on the assumption that the projects funded were selected to support specific strategic goals). In reviewing the case study data it is clear that the objectives of the majority of the projects were well defined and that for eight of the ten projects the objectives had either been fully met or were on course to be met. Only two of the projects appeared to have difficulty in executing their work plan to arrive at the objectives set, and it is judged that in one of these cases the primary objective of the project was overly-ambitious, 'a project before its time'. Interestingly data from the on-line survey of projects supports the case study findings, with 78% of respondents indicating that they were satisfied with how they kept to project milestones, and 85.7% responding that they experienced no problems meeting their outcomes and objectives.

3.6.5. Programme Management

Application process

The application process was generally praised by four of our case study respondents.

"It was a dream working with NESTA compared to other funders" (Project Co-ordinator)

"I am just so full of praise for NESTA ...I think that they really respond to ambition which is really refreshing" (Project Co-ordinator)

In our case studies, four projects were initially approached by NESTA with an idea for funding. Although the majority of projects came with ideas to NESTA, and the NESTA web site invites applications, there was a feeling expressed by many awardees, that there was some exclusivity to the funding, it was "an honour" to be given funding in this way. This was in conjunction with respondents saying that colleagues had not heard of NESTA and that the funding should have a higher profile. One project co-ordinator described this as a "best kept secret". Another thought that more schools would apply given the creativity element of the NESTA criteria if they knew about the funding. However, the same person felt that funding schools would need external project management skills to be brought in, as the schools have little resources outside teachers and school governors.

The lack of publicity and opening up the funding to a wider audience was noted by a researcher when looking at the ACRISAT projects. A consultant was commissioned by NESTA to find other ACRISAT type projects doing exemplary work that could be funded. Organisations from the science Community attending workshops were invited to put in proposals as well as projects found and encouraged by the consultant, but there was no general call for proposals. 11 proposals were put forwarded and three were funded. The NESTA officer felt there was no advert for tender because this was in the early days of the programme and there were not sufficient staff or expertise to deal with the advertising. More recent projects such as Illuminate and Future Labs have put out advertisements. Ways of working change, but it may be an area for discussion and consideration of where the focus should lie.

A few projects said they welcomed the lack of a formal application form at the beginning of the process, so they were able to explain their ideas without a great deal of effort and expense before knowing whether they will be funded. The Tavistock Institute is aware that small organisations will employ consultants in order to get through the application process in other funding programmes. The help and support given by NESTA staff to shape the project and put to the Learning committee is also appreciated by respondents. This included advice about more realistic budgets. Two projects mentioned that they increased their budgets after advice from NESTA officers.

Monitoring and Management Process

Once funding was agreed, most of the projects had some supervision element. One art based project found the project supervisor element very useful to them, "a critical friend". The reporting requirements to NESTA varied from monthly to an end of year report. One or two felt it was helpful and kept them on track. Many projects were in touch informally via telephone and emails with their project officers. NESTA officers would visit the projects, and take part in events. Generally this involvement was welcomed. Two projects felt that they had not had enough contact with the NESTA project managers. One acknowledged there had been some staff changes and that project officers were sometimes too busy to give this much time. But this was seen as a difficulty for the project and that regular meetings were helpful.

Most reports to NESTA on progress were self reporting. One consultant employed by NESTA for period of three years supplied quarterly updates on her work, but there did not appear to be any external input which may have been valuable to someone working alone and trying to make a strategic impact. The consultant was not available for comment but when questioned the project manager said that this had been raised as an issue and it was felt by the consultant that there was a need for some external supervision but the decision was made elsewhere that this was not necessary.

From correspondence on files, it appears that NESTA project managers act as supervisors and mentors from time to time. As they are so involved in the projects, it may be that external support is not warranted. Whether this is considered when the decisions about external or self evaluation are made is not known, but is raised here bearing in mind the concerns of projects who felt they did not have regular sufficient contact with their project manager. One project felt that 2004 saw a change in the attitude of NESTA in terms of accountability for funds and that some of the flexibility, supportiveness and innovation seemed to lessen. Over six months they felt they were being monitored and needed to justify their progress, which does not always go smoothly with innovative work. One project run by a small organisation had its funding released every three months according to milestones achieved. However, this proved difficult in terms of employing staff. Even when this was increased to six month payments, the reality of only providing six month contracts makes for an unstable environment for staff in small organisations. This was particular acute in this project as the staff being employed had learning disabilities. Another issue around funding was the length of time it takes to set up partnerships. One project reported it had taken over a year to get the partnership together. If the project is new, then it may be difficult to get the project up and running and find funding for the following year. One project funded by a year then had to suspend its project for over a year while it tried to raise alternative funds when the NESTA funding came to an end. Exit strategies and sustainability issues are always hard to address,

but are crucial when funding is over a short period of time and in relation to whether the project is building on existing work, attempting something new, and the ability of the organisation to fund raise as well as set up the project.

Dissemination and Support

Although there was a great deal of praise from projects about how they were initially supported, there was a mix of issues around the end of the project, around support with sustainability issues. One project felt that NESTA had connections to a huge range of contacts and organisations and that it would be useful to have more access to that resource when looking at sustainability issues and dissemination. It was seen that the NESTA project officers did have a role promoting the projects, but it could depend on the individual time given by officers to the project. Another project felt that consistency and continuity of staffing would be helpful and encouragement and support when progress is slow. Dissemination and knowledge sharing was felt to be an area that could be improved by one project. They did not feel that it happened on a collaborative and equal basis and that there were knowledge exchanges with other learning programme projects. NESTA was seen to fail to treat projects as partners and acted as an award giver and not enough as a knowledge mediator and dissemination agency. Space, protocols and mechanisms for collaborative knowledge sharing across the programme was needed. It was suggested that the learning model should be used in a more embedded formative evaluation process that enables all stakeholders in the programme to build share consensus about its mission, values and objectives. NESTA need to be more concerned with its mapping managing and utilising its learning legacy.

The ACRISAT projects were linked by virtue that they tackled similar issues and all had been supported by the same consultant. However, there did not appear to be any real links, other than the consultant. This may be because they were funded at different times and two were no longer funded by NESTA. Role models were a theme in two of the projects, yet there had been no dialogue between the two projects or awareness that one was advertising on its web site for role models. The project lead of one of these projects felt that there would have been little time for him to get involved anyway, and for some small projects, events can be difficult to attend.

Another project spoke of a NESTA event that had been attended by senior teachers in the school which had enabled them to swap ideas with other awardees and make useful contacts. Another project was put in contact with a project that could help with the provision of a web site. For some projects, these events bringing projects together appear to be useful, but would appear to be dependent on the individual project officer and the opportunities that become available depending on time to bring projects together.

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It would appear to be dependent on the individual project officer and the opportunities that become available depending on time to bring projects together.

An annual event for all project awardees would appear to be the only official event to share the learning of the projects. However, some issues around alternative funding and sustainability might be of common use to many projects and in other funding programmes, it is quite common for projects to desire some networking with each other.

One project suggested clear procedures are needed about IPR and acknowledgement by NESTA of creative contribution made by projects. One researcher felt that there were few if any comments on the closure report in her case studies and its linkages to the overall programme and its learning clusters. No look at the overall legacy of the project, dissemination past the project to other areas. So the remit of the closure report seems quite narrow when it could be an opportunity to learn without having the pressure of a live project to deal with. However, this may be dealt with informally through other systems.

Evaluation Reports

Evaluation varied across the cases studied. One project had commissioned an external evaluation by a university over the last year of its existence. The interim report looked in hindsight at what had been achieved in the first year and the difficulties encountered in the second year. Another project funded for one year had supplied an end of year report that sought to provide some “objective measurements” of achievement in what is a difficult area in which to provide hard facts about changes in learning. The data was positive about the effects of the project on participants. There was also a survey of participants.

On the one hand, evaluation allows projects to reflect on their achievements and challenges. However, a key point about these evaluations is their lack of commonality. Projects appear to be free to commission and implement their own evaluations, without reference to a common Programme template that would help to standardise data collection, and help establish baselines for more effective assessment of the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Programme as a whole. The quality of evaluation results produced across the range of cases studied was uneven and eclectic. In some cases, claims were made about project outputs and outcomes that could simply not be justified by the data or the methodology used.

4. Analysis and Conclusions

This section draws together the results of the evaluation activities, as set out in the preceding Section in order to arrive at the main conclusions of the evaluation. These are presented below in two sub-sections. The first sub-section considers the results of the evaluation from the perspective of the key questions posed in the study proposal and workplan (as set out in section 1 of this Report). The second sub-section integrates the results from the perspective of the four main objectives of the evaluation, as defined in the study proposal and workplan. These are also set out in section 1 of this Report.

4.1 Responses to the key evaluation questions

4.1.1 What is distinctive about the programme within the educational funding landscape?

What sets NESTA apart from other programmes within the educational funding landscape, certainly in the UK, is firstly its focus on innovation across the spectrum of teaching and learning sectors and, secondly, its commitment to promoting the integration of knowledge from disciplines and domains that are typically self-referencing and largely autonomous, with little knowledge transfer across boundaries. For example, in contrast to the current generation of European Commission-funded projects that take ‘learning innovation’ as their central theme, NESTA sees innovation as not solely involving the use of ICTs in the learning process, but in a more holistic way - as the development of new teaching and learning approaches which succeed in engaging learners of all ages. What seems clear is that, from the perspective of awardees themselves, the Learning Programme fills a crucial ‘funding gap’. The overwhelming majority of respondents participating in the on-line survey – some 90% - were of the opinion that their project would not have started without NESTA funding. This finding is supported by the 65% of respondents who reported that they had tried – unsuccessfully – to get funding from other sources. As one project co-ordinator commented:

“One of the things that Nesta is really good at and what they say is that they are willing to invest in innovative and therefore potentially higher risk projects and I think that that is one of the really exciting things about them”.

It should be emphasised that this does not suggest that the NESTA Learning Programme can be thought of as something of a ‘last chance saloon’ for projects that other Programmes would not touch. Rather, the key point is that NESTA provides a space for radical and creative thinking that ‘mainstream’ programmes would be unable to support because their terms of reference are necessarily more conservative. In addition, NESTA is also proactive in its strategy of promoting innovation, since a number of projects are also approached by NESTA

with funding proposals, and in some cases are actively steered through the funding process.

4.1.2 Is the programme sufficiently focused to have an impact on key strategic areas of learning?

In broad terms, the programme is positioned within, and its mission and objectives support, strategic policy, conceptual and practice areas of learning. Firstly, it supports a number of key current policy agendas and initiatives in learning, education and training, particularly strategies aimed at improving the effectiveness of the compulsory education sector, for example enhancing teacher training, for example through the Hearts project and the School Teachers Innovation Programme ; developing gifted and talented individuals - a number of projects are specifically designed to enhance creativity and talent. This focus resonates with the policies to maximise the potential and talent of such children (e.g. UK national Gifted and Talented Strategy), both at and out of school, for example the Creative Generation project.

A second strategic area supported by the Programme focuses on the use of ICTs in the learning process. The aim here is to develop models that both enhance learner engagement and foster new media learning. The range of projects ensures that the most of the “new” type of literacies and e-learning competencies deemed essential for today’s rapidly changing world are being addressed. Examples include Dreamlab Generation; Interactive Whiteboards;. Techno Games series; Sonic Arts Network.

In this context, it should be noted that the NESTA Learning Programme is not totally ‘in line’ with key strategic areas of learning, and nor should it be, since its remit is to foster innovation in areas where unconventional and experimental approaches need to be supported (for example, in the ‘land Design’ case, working with children with severe learning disabilities).

That said, there are some strategic areas in which the Programme is less well embedded. One important policy strand perhaps not so adequately reflected by the Programme centres on ‘Lifelong Learning’ and the ‘Learning Society’, as illustrated in UK Government policies like the Green Paper, ‘The Learning Age’; and various EU policy instruments such as the White Paper on Education and Training: towards the Learning Society (1994). A second key policy strand that the NESTA programme could more effectively support and feed into is associated with the development and implementation of ‘e-Society’. In the UK, key e-government targets are to ‘e-enable’ all public services and provide internet access for all citizens by 2005¹⁰. This is in turn linked to discourses and initiatives around engaging citizens in the process of developing social capital and in contributing to re-building community infrastructure through ‘active

¹⁰ See for example ‘National Strategies for local e-government’, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002

citizenship'^{11 12} (for example via the Cabinet office 'e-envoy'; the 'Government Gateway'; public information kiosks; public service Digital Interactive TV networks; UK On-line Centres; 'Active Citizenship Centres', On-line Youth Parliaments¹³). All these agendas and initiatives are underpinned by policies aimed at maximising the contribution technologies can make to expanding learning opportunities for citizens – particularly 'excluded groups', and to making education and training services more efficient and effective. Another strategic area where the Programme could arguably make more impact is in relation to bridging 'learning' with skills, competences and entrepreneurship, in line with the 2003 National Skills Strategy and the 2005 White Paper 'Skills: getting on in business; getting on at work'.

This is not to suggest that the Learning Programme does not reflect these strategic areas. Indeed, the evaluation highlights examples of projects that address a wide spectrum of key strategic policy areas. Examples include:

- disaffected and digitally excluded individuals/groups as well as those with learning disabilities and special needs. For example, *Image Conscious* ; *Living with Science*, *Razor Edge*.
- attracting non-traditional learners in the areas of arts, science and technology. For example *Acrisat*; *Science Alliance*; *Planet Jemma*; *Grandmother & Me*
- enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship among young people, e.g. *Blue Skies*; *Channel 4: Bedroom Britain*
- bringing the education and business worlds closer together, e.g. *Better Education Business Links*; *Bolton Technical Innovation Centre*
- supporting informal and/or adult learning. For example, *Bringing Scientific discoveries to life*; *Learning on the move*

However, the evaluation suggests that more attention could be given to balancing the Programme to more effectively represent and support adult learning; informal learning, work-based learning and 'social inclusion' agendas. In addition, the results of the 'Comparisons and Contexts' analysis suggests that another set of strategic areas, associated with 'joined up' approaches to learning, could be better addressed. These include: 'Regions of Knowledge', which links education and training to agendas such as regional re-generation.

We do not have sufficient data to make an informed assessment as to the main reasons underlying the apparent under-representation of certain types of participant, and learning 'sectors' within the Programme (although further research, including analysis of project proposals would shed light on this issue). This is likely to be due to a combination of:

¹¹ 'Building Civil Renewal- a consultation document', Home Office, 2003.

¹² Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector', 2004.

¹³ 'Casting the net wider: local e-democracy 2003', IDA, 2003

- The significant proportion of proposals that are either solicited directly by NESTA, or developed through existing networks, rather than through 'open calls'
- The background and 'world views' of key decision makers within the organisation
- The tendency for the non-statutory learning sector, and for excluded and 'hard to reach' groups to have a negative view of 'institutional' agencies like NESTA (for example in terms of not representing their interests)
- The effects of 'cognitive exclusion' processes, for example the tendency for excluded and hard to reach groups to lack the skills, experience and competences necessary to develop and submit effective proposals.

4.1.3 Has the programme been able to source innovative projects?

Fundamentally, the NESTA Learning Programme supports innovation in learning by promoting new thinking and practices in pedagogy. The Programme supports a number of examples of novel teaching and learning innovations. Examples include Performing Arts Labs (PAL)'s 'Labs of Learning', which promotes novel ways of cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning collaboration. This kind of innovation is consistent with current state of the art in pedagogic research. For example, the emergence of 'social' approaches to learning (Eraut, 2000); an emphasis on transformative learning rather than reproduction (Engestrom, 1996);¹⁴ a focus on interactivity rather than 'transmissive' methods in developing skills (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Dale and Bell, 1999); the importance of 'collaborative dialogue' in learning (Freire, 1972) and the role of 'sensemaking' and 'communities of values' and 'practices' (Ciborra and Lanzara, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991).¹⁵

The funded projects themselves consider that the Programme has succeeded in supporting innovation. Around 28% of respondents participating in the on-line survey thought their project was making a significant contribution to innovation in its field, and over 30% thought their project was making a very significant contribution to innovation.

However, this finding has to be qualified by the natural tendency for projects to report success. More importantly, it could be argued that the Programme sources projects that reinforce existing learning paradigms rather than promoting 'radical' alternatives. The Projects Audit suggested that only 19% of projects explicitly aim to develop what might be termed 'new forms of learning', for example by promoting new combinations of inter-disciplinary knowledge. The majority can be classified as 'enhancements' to existing pedagogic models and practices. This illustrates a key issue for NESTA. As we have pointed out, in our earlier

¹⁴ Concept that links learning to individual and social empowerment. (Mezirow,1996)

¹⁵ maintains that Learning is about participation in communities of practice; becoming engaged in socially organised activities and so about membership and construction of diverse social bonds with other participants

discussion of the results of the Projects Audit, it is possible to analyse the current Programme portfolio from a number of different perspectives and definitions of 'innovation'. For example, if we take a perspective based on the scenario or setting in which novel forms of learning are developed and implemented, then a key criterion against which to assess the degree of innovation of a project should be the extent to which the project takes learning 'outside' established learning environments. On this basis, it could be argued that the current configuration of the Programme is less 'innovative' than might be desirable, since the largest proportion – 27% - of projects operate within an existing educational establishment (typically schools). In turn, another paradigm of innovation might focus on the extent to which projects create new social models for learning. On this basis, the Programme could be said to be less innovative, since projects aimed at promoting new ways of supporting community learning, for example, are relatively under-represented. In other words, the answer to whether the Programme has been able to source innovative projects is – it depends on how NESTA wishes to define innovation.

In turn, the evaluation highlighted the relatively low level of cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary knowledge transfer within the Programme. Current state of the art in pedagogic and learning research shows that there has been a marked degree of 'mixing' of methods and practices across different settings and sectors. For example, previously 'discipline-specific' instructional methods have migrated across disciplinary boundaries – particularly the infiltration into mainstream teaching of formerly marginalised approaches from adult and community-based education. However, research suggests that the communities of research and discourse across education sectors are still quite closed and self-referencing, with poor transfer and transition across boundaries either of research or of knowledge and its application. This is a crucial problematic for learning, and one which, arguably, the Learning Programme has failed to address adequately.

4.1.4 Is there a link between the Programme's flexibility and the quality of proposals?

There is some evidence to suggest that the core commitment to innovation, which lies at the heart of the Learning Programme 'mission' allows for a broader range of projects to be funded that might otherwise be accepted in similar programmes:

"The feedback from the Trustees at Nesta was that it was a very ambitious project, but that didn't scare them, I suppose because they know that innovative projects are higher risk and they welcome that". (Project co-ordinator)

However, one trend identified by the case studies is a perception that the Programme has lost a degree of flexibility, and openness to innovation, as it has evolved:

“Innovative projects don’t fit neatly into boxes, they need nurturing, which was what Nesta seemed to be about at the start, but then that stopped!”. ”
(Project co-ordinator)

These perceptions appear to be linked to a sense shared amongst a number of awardees interviewed that the programme is becoming increasingly ‘bureaucratised’. Although this perception can be associated to some extent with changes to personnel within NESTA over the lifetime of particular projects – and the ensuing anxieties generated by the loss of ‘familiar faces’ – a common theme identified across the projects included in the case studies was that there had been a shift in Programme priorities, and in resource investment, towards the administration of the Programme and the maintenance of a ‘contract compliance’ culture. This, it is argued, has diminished the Programme’s capacity for flexibility throughout the innovation life cycle: from sponsoring novel and creative proposals, through supporting and mentoring project development, through to working collaboratively to develop sustainability strategies. How widespread this perception is remains debatable. The on-line survey showed that the overwhelming majority of project managers were happy with the way in which the Programme is managed. For example: only 3% of respondents were unhappy with the advice and support received from Programme officers; a similar proportion was unhappy with the way financial issues are handled; no respondents reported problems with project monitoring and 96% of respondents said they considered no improvements were necessary to the Programme management structure. To take another dimension of the question, it could be argued that there is neither a pre-determined nor a simple link between ‘innovation’ and ‘quality’. Quality standards and quality planning are implied rather than embedded in the Programme, whereas there is a case to support not only the introduction of more formalised quality assurance mechanisms as part of project contracts but also the introduction of support actions whose task is to promote and nurture a ‘quality culture’. For example, our review of ‘Comparisons and Contexts’ showed that in the ‘eLearning Programme’ currently supported by the European Commission three dedicated projects were funded to carry out these kinds of tasks. As always there is a choice between balancing the promotion of standards and standardisation against the imposition of too many protocols and procedures – not least because as discussed above the theme of ‘over-bureaucratisation’ was raised by a number of awardees consulted in the evaluation.

4.1.5 How effective and equitable is the assessment process and criteria?

The evaluation raised a number of issues about what kinds of projects were selected for funding and how they were selected. Firstly, there is at least a suggestion that the Programme reflects an existing preference for established players in the domains within which it operates. The Projects Audit showed that there is a significant proportion of projects within the Programme that are

extensions of previously funded projects, or are co-ordinated by awardees who have previously been funded.¹⁶ This suggestion is reinforced by a lack of transparency around the selection process and the criteria used to assess projects for funding. There is a prevailing impression amongst a number of current projects that funding is a 'mystery': Although NESTA does have a web site which makes it possible for anyone to put forward a proposal, many of the projects expressed the idea that NESTA is 'exclusive' and that NESTA would typically approach people and organisations directly. The Programme was described by one respondent as "a best kept secret" and being approached to participate was considered 'an honour'. Of the projects represented in the on-line survey, 25% said they had received an approach to be considered for funding directly from NESTA, and a further 31% said they had heard about the Programme 'through the Grapevine'.

Secondly, the evaluation highlighted some issues around representation, access and inclusion. In relation to 'inclusiveness', only a small proportion - 10% of projects- are aimed directly at engaging 'hard to reach' and 'excluded' groups within the learning process. In turn, the Projects Audit revealed a significant under-representation of projects in the adult, informal learning and work-based learning sectors. The Programme is strongly oriented towards the secondary education sector, with over 40% of projects targeting school students. Thirdly, the Programme shows a marked geographical differentiation, with a significant concentration of funded projects located in London. However it should be noted that the high concentration of London-based projects has fallen significantly in recent years.

It has been suggested, from the results of interviews with Programme staff, and from the case studies, that these patterns to some extent reflect the evolution of the Learning Programme. In its early days, the argument goes, the Programme naturally gravitated to an existing base of established stakeholders in the field, in order to 'kick start' its development. With a limited number of staff available at the beginning, the Programme had neither the time nor the resources to promote a more 'open' selection policy and to implement a policy of strategic targeting. As the Programme has expanded and gained more resources, the funding process has become more equitable. 'Illuminate' and 'Futurelab' are seen as examples of recent attention being devoted to publicising the Programme more widely.

However, the data do not appear to support this view. The results of the Projects Audit show that the proportion of projects targeting school students rose from 40% in the first two years of the Programme's operation to 56% between 2004-2005. Similarly, the proportion of projects aimed at supporting the school curriculum rose from 17% to 31% over the same period. In contrast, the

¹⁶ 29 of the 180 projects analysed – 16% - were 'awards to same project'. 73 of the 180 projects – 40% - constitute extensions to previously funded projects or new projects to awardees previously funded

proportion of projects targeting adult learners and citizens fell from 35% to 22% over the same timescale. Moreover, the proportion of projects directly targeting excluded groups has fallen from 10% during 1999-2000 to 6% over the period 2004-2005.

4.1.6 To what extent have the projects benefited their direct beneficiaries?

This question is difficult to answer, largely because it is virtually impossible to make evidence-based judgements about outcomes and impacts without reference to evaluation data that are based on extensive, long-term longitudinal studies, and which include 'control-comparison' designs. This problem is compounded by the variability of evaluation data derived from the Programme that could be used to triangulate evidence about benefits. In the absence of this type of data, our conclusions are largely based on 'self-reported' data derived from the on-line survey of project representatives; from interviews with project participants and from content analysis of available reports.

A second caveat to this question is that the intended beneficiaries – and the benefits intended for them – vary widely across the Programme. As discussed extensively in the 'Projects Audit', the Programme is comprised of complex configurations of partnerships; target users; scenarios of use; types of innovation; types of learning approach, and so on. This in turn translates into complex configurations of outputs, outcomes and impacts, and a wide variability in terms of the scale and type of benefits and beneficiaries. For example, Performing Arts Labs (PAL) features resource-intensive residential experimental workshops involving relatively small groups of people. Its immediate outputs can be defined in terms of learning gains for participants that are associated with cross-disciplinary and collaborative knowledge creation. Its short-term outcomes can be defined in terms of concrete products derived from this learning – for example new teaching materials subsequently produced by participating teachers. Its longer term impacts can be defined, in part, by new cross-sectoral knowledge networks and alliances between diverse organisations, nationally and internationally, associated with the transferability and enhancement of learning methods and practices. In contrast, 'Lecture List' can perhaps best be described as an 'information portal'. It is essentially a web-based service that categorises lectures and other similar events on the basis of variables such as type of lecture content; location and date of delivery of the event, and so on. The target user group is much broader and diverse than PAL – essentially the general public. Unlike PAL, Lecture List does not deploy an innovative pedagogic model at its core but is a simple targeted content brokerage platform. Its main outputs are therefore: a web-based content management system. Its main outcomes are: helpful information about learning content that may appeal to, and inform, people interested in science, culture and the arts. Its potential impacts might include: a more informed and aware citizenry, and the creation of new knowledge as a result of individuals thinking about new ideas after attending a lecture.

These two examples illustrate a key point: that the benefits of the constituent projects in the Programme need to be viewed to some extent in terms of their individual and particular nature, mission and objectives. Or, to put it another (fairly obvious) way, different types of project will have different benefits for different users, and need to be assessed accordingly. The nature and degree of impact associated with these benefits will to some extent be determined by the degree and nature of the innovation reflected by the project. However, a major problem here is that the Programme still needs to demonstrate 'value for money'.

Bearing these points in mind, the evaluation results enable some conclusions to be drawn about benefits – albeit within the limitations discussed above – on the basis of:

- The beneficiaries targeted by projects
- The intended outputs and outcomes projects aspire to, as reflected by project workplans
- The extent to which projects are achieving their intended outputs and outcomes
- The direct and indirect impacts associated with project activities, as reflected by the case study analysis

As discussed in section 3 of this Report (Projects Audit), the beneficiaries targeted by projects are primarily school students (43% of the programme portfolio) and the general public (24% of projects). This configuration of target groups naturally shapes the intended benefits aspired to by projects. The benefits projects aim to deliver can be grouped into two main categories: 'awareness-raising' about particular aspects of science, technology and the arts – which covers some 39% of the projects in the Programme, and 'supporting the school curriculum', which includes 21% of projects. Not surprisingly, around half the projects aiming to support the school curriculum are targeted at school students and 83% of projects aimed at 'awareness – raising' are targeted at the general public. So some initial key conclusions to be drawn from this analysis are firstly that intended benefits can be seen to be supporting to some extent enhancements of existing and established educational structures, rather than 'breaking the mould', and, secondly, they could be seen to be reinforcing sectoral 'silos' rather than promoting cross-sectoral knowledge creation.

Moving on to the extent to which projects are achieving their intended outputs and outcomes, the results of the on-line survey show that 67% of respondents considered their project to be 'very successful' and 30% 'successful'; 44% thought their project was making a significant contribution to developing the national knowledge base; 58% considered their project was making a significant contribution to innovation, and 33% of respondents thought their project was making a significant contribution to improving the lives of intended beneficiaries.

It is difficult to quantify the scale of benefits provided by the Programme, either in terms of the numbers of beneficiaries gaining some kind of outcome from the activities of the projects or in terms of 'products and services' produced. The data from the Projects Audit are limited and patchy. In addition, the wide variability in types of project represented; in terms of objectives and intended outputs makes it difficult to compare 'like with like'. However, the Audit did allow an estimate, albeit a crude one, of the broad scale of Programme 'reach' in terms of numbers of beneficiaries involved. The projects were classified according to an estimate of the numbers likely to directly benefit, according to five categories: i) small group – typically a single class or small group learning activity (around 50 participants or less in each activity) ii) small group clusters – typically a network of small groups, a single school or learning venue such as a museum, up to around 500 participants per activity iii) medium clusters – typically a network of schools, or a city-wide learning initiative iv) regional scale v) national or international scale. On this basis, 14% of projects involved working with small group beneficiaries; 10% were providing learning for small group clusters; 13% were medium-sized initiatives. The data suggest that the majority of projects could potentially provide benefits on a large scale, with 22% of projects working at a regional level and 40% working at a national/international level.

The scale and type of benefits provided is even more difficult to estimate. The Projects Audit did not provide data in sufficient detail to catalogue outputs, outcomes and impacts, and our assessment is therefore based on the limited number of projects assessed through the case studies. As discussed in Section 3 of this Report, benefits can broadly be divided into two main types: 'direct' (i.e. 'outputs') and 'indirect' benefits (i.e. outcomes and impacts). Table 17 summarises these for the projects covered in the case studies.

Table 17: Benefits associated with case study projects

Project	'Direct' outputs	'Indirect' outcomes/impacts
Acrisat	Website Workshops Reports 75 Trained 'role models'	Raised awareness of BEMG issues
Image Conscious	Videos Magazine	Developed competences of participants Personal skills and self-esteem development
Nestonauts	'Moonbase' technology	Professional development network
Snug & Outdoor	Experimental playground kit	Improved quality of teaching Better learning experience for pupils
PAL	5 new teaching modules 6 collaborative projects (science festivals, residential courses based on the PAL model and a 'Big Bang' science musical).	Disseminating innovative new practices into the teaching curriculum Improved student achievement Continuing professional development for teachers Learning support networks and knowledge exchange Further developing the PAL generic model.
SSGS	80 schools attended workshops 167 funding applications 47 projects funded	Integrating schools transitions Creating collaborative networks across schools
Razor Edge	HE Diploma course 4 disabled teachers trained	Raised awareness of disability issues
Lecture List	Website Content management system	Awareness raising
Planet Jemma	Website/on line 'Soap'	Improved awareness of physics for girls
Land Design	Interactive immersive software	Developing novel technology-mediated ways of engaging people in learning

The Table shows:

- The outputs of projects are comprised of four broad types: 'technological artefacts' (for example web portals; immersive software); teaching products (video courses; text-based courses); support services (guidelines; research results; funding brokerage); human resources (training).

- Indirect outcomes and impacts can also be divided into four main types: raising awareness of science, culture and technology; enhancing learning capabilities; (for example for ‘disengaged’; ‘hard to reach’ and excluded groups); skills, competence and personal development; developing ‘networks of excellence’ and collaborative knowledge networks.
- There is wide variation in the range and depth of benefits produced – some projects focus on intensive, small group, ‘paradigm-changing’ objectives; others on providing information to a wide audience.

The variability and range of ‘innovation’ supported by the Programme makes it extremely difficult to make judgements on the ‘quality’ of outputs produced by the Programme, on outcomes and impacts generated, and on the cost-effectiveness of projects funded. For example, PAL significantly increased the total number of ‘labs’ it delivered over the period 1999-2004 (when it was funded by NESTA) from 27 in the previous decade to 35 (an increase of 130%) but there are no baseline data available to assess whether this trend has been accompanied by an increase in ‘quality’ or ‘benefits’. Similarly, the Scottish Executive Small Grants Scheme led to 261 science funding proposals submitted by schools over the NESTA funding period, an increase of 67% on the total submitted to its (non NESTA funded) predecessor, the Science Small Grants Scheme. However, the former funded 111 proposals (a ratio of 71%) compared with the 47 proposals funded by the current NESTA-funded scheme (a ratio of only 18%). Yet these comparisons are once again meaningless without baseline data.

Turning to cost-effectiveness, Table 18 shows one illustration of how ‘cost-effectiveness’ can be considered. It provides a cost ratio for each of the projects covered in the case studies on the basis of the level of funding awarded set against the numbers of beneficiaries directly participating in the project.

Table 18: Illustration of cost-effectiveness, case study projects

Project	Funding (£K)	N. Users	Cost ratio (£)
Acrisat	171	670	255
Image Conscious	97	25	3880
Nestonauts	35	156	224
Snug & Outdoor	199	1000	199
PAL	1105	2200	502
SSGS	28	341	82
Razor Edge	181	16	11313
Lecture List	107	N.A.	N.A.
Planet Jemma	135	35000	4
Land Design	132	14	9429

The Table shows:

- There is considerable variation in the 'cost per head' of the range of projects shown, from £4 per participant in 'Planet Jemma' to over £11,000 in the case of 'Razor Edge'.
- This variability is clearly related to the nature of the innovation represented by the project; its pedagogic approach, and the delivery mechanism and setting in which learning takes place. Whereas 'Planet Jemma' and 'Lecture List' reflect 'mass audience' targeting and are delivered through web-based technologies, projects like 'Razor Edge' and 'Land Design' target 'special needs' users and involve resource-intensive and highly socially-interactive learning settings.

These findings underline the need for new models and methodologies to assess the outcomes, impacts and cost-effectiveness of new learning innovations. Clearly, the wide variability in cost-ratios in this type of Programme will inevitably lead to accusations that some projects appear to provide poor value for money. There is therefore a clear case for developing evaluation methodologies that incorporate 'social' dimensions and 'wider benefits of learning', as opposed to the dominant models based on human capital and rates of return. In turn, there is a need for further research to assess the multiplier effects associated with the diffusion of new knowledge derived from the Programme.

4.1.7 What is the quality of evidence and transferable learning produced by projects?

As suggested above, there are a number of problems and issues associated with the 'evidence base' derived from the Programme. The evaluation suggests that evaluation approaches adopted by projects, and the data obtained from project evaluations, were eclectic and of variable quality. No common evaluation framework exists at the programme 'meta-level', although some of the concepts and procedures derived from 'logic model' approaches shape how the programme is monitored within NESTA itself. There is little evidence of integration between Programme level evaluation, strategic development of the programme and programme management. Projects carry out their own evaluation, with variable efficiency and effectiveness, and the absence of a common template, standards and procedures for evaluation at the project level militate against the establishment of programme baselines and benchmarks. Moreover, the evaluation highlighted a number of issues associated with dissemination and transferability and how the Programme manages its 'learning legacy'. In general, it could be argued that the project portfolio represented by the spectrum of funded projects reinforces 'sectoral silos'. Relatively few projects are actively dedicated to promoting cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning. Most projects operate within their own disciplinary space. This is compounded by the lack of concertation mechanisms embedded in the Programme architecture. In general, aside from formal conferences, the Programme does little to promote active cross-fertilisation of ideas across projects. In turn, dissemination appears to occupy a low priority within the Programme – around a

third of projects participating in the on-line survey suggested that improvements should be made to dissemination procedures and activities.

Set against these general observations, the case study analysis did identify a number of instances of projects actively engaged in knowledge transfer. For example PAL is expanding its operations into different learning domains, and into international services.

4.1.8 Has the approach to project evaluation been robust?

As discussed above, there are a number of problems associated with evaluation in the Programme. At the macro level, there is no 'meta-framework' to guide formative learning within the Programme and bridge evaluation with strategic development. This is not to say that evaluation is absent at the meta-level. The impression however is one of a patchwork of different evaluation initiatives – for example the application of some elements of a 'logic model' approach - within the Learning Programme itself, and within related NESTA programmes, rather than a coherent and over-arching framework. The Learning Programme environment, with its emphasis on innovation and risk, is rapidly evolving and inherently unstable. It works in a conceptual and practice space that is highly contested. It incorporates a wide spectrum of projects that are characterised more by their differences than their similarities. In turn, it supports a wide range of stakeholders who have distinctive and frequently conflicting world views and perceptions on innovation and learning. The Programme requires an evaluation framework that can make sense of this complexity and turbulence. However, we would not advocate that such an over-arching framework be based on a 'logic model' approach. Logic models imply a stable and consensual set of values, perspectives and identities that are simply absent in the turbulent environment in which the Learning Programme operates. At the macro-level, the Programme requires an evaluation architecture that can accommodate the different 'constructions of reality' adopted by its wide range of stakeholders.

At the project level, evaluation approaches adopted by projects, and the data obtained from project evaluations, were eclectic and of variable quality. The on-line survey results reinforce this picture that projects need more evaluation support. 11% of projects said they had experienced problems in evaluating their projects, and 14% said improvements to monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures are required.

4.1.9 What potential lasting benefits have been generated from the partnerships the programme has developed?

There is evidence that the Programme has had some success in promoting effective partnerships. According to the on-line survey, 50% of respondents said the project partnership had worked well or very well – although 20% described the project partnership arrangements as 'very poor'. The case studies reinforce

this impression. For example, PAL has developed a complex range of collaborative partnerships with NESTA, large agencies and NGOs (e.g. the Wellcome Foundation); creative partners; schools; universities; international government departments. 'Snug and Outdoor' developed a partnership with a design laboratory and post graduate students with a view to creating a commercially viable product. They also developed links to the Institute of Education and a Local Authority. However, it should also be recognised that a number of projects are based on existing partnerships, some of which have been funded previously through the Programme.

There is some evidence that strong partnerships help projects achieve their objectives and help them develop sustainability strategies (as discussed below). However, partnerships are difficult to develop and sustain and create some problems. Setting up new partnerships is often time consuming (one project said it took a year to set up their partnership before approaching NESTA.) and if there is a dependency on one partner for aspects of the project, then problems within one organisation or with an individual in the organisation can have a major effect on the project.

4.1.10 What can be said about the sustainability of projects funded?

Sustainability always reflects a complex set of issues in Programmes whose main focus is to promote innovation. The Learning Programme is working in an environment that is subject to rapid developments in 'state of the art'; in an innovation space that is constantly evolving and in a conceptual and practice environment that is highly contestable and contested. This inevitably engenders a significant degree of 'risk' in terms of funding projects that may not survive their planned timeframe, let alone develop effective sustainability strategies. In turn, certain aspects of the programme's 'mission' and purposes – for instance those aimed at developing new partnerships intended to support the participation of 'hard to reach' groups in learning – imply engaging with new types of institutional arrangements and partnerships that are fragile and inherently transitory. A typical example is the case of partnerships involving community-based groups, for example Muzantiks.

It is therefore arguable that certain types of projects are inherently 'non-sustainable'. Their objectives may be specifically focused on short-term purposes – such as raising awareness of particularly difficult issues. This does not mean that NESTA should systematically seek to 'weed out' projects and proposals that may score high on a set of 'risk' criteria, and low on a comparable set of 'sustainability' criteria. It does suggest, however, that NESTA needs to have a view on the level of high-risk and 'low sustainability' projects it would be legitimate to fund, and what kinds of projects, and in what learning 'areas', should be supported.

Setting aside this proviso, the evidence suggests that firstly, projects recognise the importance of planning for the future and take sustainability seriously. Over 87% of respondents completing the on-line survey reported they had plans for continuing the project beyond the end of their project funding. Around 82% said they had identified opportunities for 'spin offs' associated with their project. However, the evaluation suggests that projects generally find it difficult to develop and implement sustainability strategies. Around 40% of survey respondents reported that they were 'below target' in their progress towards achieving sustainability objectives, and 36% rated the performance of their project in terms of the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Similarly, although only one of the ten projects assessed in the case study analysis had terminated without securing additional funding to continue, seven out of the ten are struggling to secure the financial and institutional stability necessary to evolve and expand. For example, Acrisat Brighton had been able to continue the project when NESTA funding came to an end, as it secured funding from another local authority to provide its workshops to 400 children. Two other local authorities were interested, included the original local authority that had piloted the project, but at the time the case studies were carried out neither of these local authorities had been able to find funding to pay for the services.

Secondly, the evidence suggests that sustainability is linked to three key factors: whether the 'lead' stakeholder in the project already has an established and strong position in the domain in which the project operates; whether any partnership developed to implement the project has the right mix and works effectively, and whether the project develops additional robust networks and partnerships as the project develops. Projects that already have an established position in the learning domain are more likely to successfully apply NESTA funding to consolidating, expanding and enhancing their 'offer' and services. A typical example is 'Performing Arts Labs' (PAL) who had established a high profile as a provider of innovative learning 'spaces' ten years prior to securing NESTA funding, and who were able to use the funding to significantly expand their operations – particularly in new 'cross-disciplinary' and cross-sectoral domains. This pattern is consistent with research on learning and innovation that highlights the role played by 'absorptive capacity' in promoting sustainable innovation (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). Absorptive capacity refers to the capability of individuals and organisations to recognise the value of new knowledge, assimilate it and apply it in new ways. The evidence suggests that absorptive capacity is a function of the level of prior related knowledge held by the individual and organisation.¹⁷

Perhaps a more significant 'sustainability issue', however, focuses on the collation, assessment and exploitation of the learning generated by the Programme as a whole. The evaluation results suggest that, to a large extent, NESTA leaves the responsibility for exploiting the learning generated by projects

¹⁷ Cohen, W and D Levinthal (1990) Absorptive capacity: a new perspective on learning and innovation. *Admin Sci Quart*, 35, 128-152

to the projects themselves. This does not appear to be a very efficient and effective way of consolidating, disseminating and transferring new knowledge. A number of project representatives who participated in the evaluation referred to the importance of NESTA's 'learning legacy' (i.e. the aggregated knowledge generated by projects as the Programme has evolved) and argued that NESTA has paid more attention to its role as a 'grant-giving agency' at the expense of its, arguably more critical role of taking the lead on 'collaborative knowledge production and dissemination' within the Programme. The evaluation results suggest that there is some basis to this argument. By focusing primarily on providing 'seeding' for projects, there is a danger that the learning generated by the Programme as a whole becomes fragmented. It is neither fed back into the Programme itself, in order to enhance it, nor is it effectively transferred externally, to add value to policy and practice. In contrast, the 'Comparisons and Contexts' analysis carried out as part of the evaluation showed that the Learning Programmes supported by the European Commission are supported by 'concerted actions' and 'accompanying measures' designed to promote transversal sustainability. Although individual projects are responsible for developing their own sustainability and exploitation plans, these support measures promote thematic clustering and encourage cross-project collaboration. They also incorporate specific transversal projects which, for example, provide assistance across programmes for activities such as exploitation development and business planning.

4.1.11 Has the learning from the projects and the programme been used to inform policy?

The preliminary evidence suggests that the NESTA Learning Programme has gained little recognition across a range of 'knowledge constituencies'. Searches across key databases representing the academic knowledge base identify only one citation for the Programme. In turn, recognition of the Programme across the broader 'public' constituency (as reflected in searches on Google and Yahoo) suggest a very low level of awareness of the Programme. Whilst this pattern generally holds true for comparable Programmes, NESTA appears to be less well-recognised than these Programmes, for example the ESRC 'Public Engagement in Science' Programme and the Wellcome 'Science Learning Centres' Programme. Similarly, the results of our consultation with the 'Expert Panel' set up for the evaluation showed a low level of awareness of the Programme generally amongst experts and a perception that the Programme was not significantly playing a role in policy formulation. Citation analysis of individual projects show a similar pattern, with isolated exceptions – for example PAL's role in providing inputs to Commons Select Committees on Learning; or the contribution of the 'Small Grant Scheme' to developing the Scottish Executive's implementation of education policy. The evidence suggests that the NESTA Learning Programme has gained little recognition across a range of 'knowledge constituencies'. Whilst 23% of respondents in the on-line survey thought their project had made a very significant contribution to developing the

national knowledge base, a similar proportion – 21% - thought their project had performed very badly in terms of its contribution.

4.2 Overall conclusions

4.2.1 The extent to which the Learning Programme informs and challenges current policy and practice in learning

In broad terms, the Learning Programme is consistent with and supports key UK and EU policy agendas, initiatives and instruments across a range of core Education, Training and Learning dimensions, as well as some peripheral, but related, policy agendas around social inclusion; innovation and competitiveness and culture. It is particularly strong in key strategic learning areas, around 'compulsory education' – including 'school based' education – and in promoting innovation in the development and utilisation of new technologies.

The Programme also supports and informs a range of related policy and practice agendas in lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship. However, these domains are under-represented and the analysis suggests a number of areas that would merit further exploration:

- The focus on young people - aspects of adult and informal as well as community-based learning not as well developed, a few projects only address these key dimensions in the broader policy environment of promoting lifelong learning
- the social exclusion aspect is not as well addressed as other areas, e.g. developing creative ways of teaching science/arts at school. Only 10% of projects explicitly include participants drawn from 'socially excluded categories'.¹⁸ This was also borne out by the NAO Report on NESTA which attributes this to the fact that there has been a lack of clarity between Department of Culture and NESTA as to what contribution NESTA can make towards tackling social exclusion.
- Work-based learning and continuing professional development

The Programme actively feeds into and contributes to the development of current state of the art in pedagogic and learning research, particularly in constructivist approaches to learning.¹⁹ However, it could perhaps be more actively engaged in current learning debates, policy initiatives and practices that focus on 'joined-up' approaches to learning, for example 'knowledge regions' and community regeneration.

¹⁸ As defined by OECD and Eurobarometer

¹⁹ *Constructivism - Theory and set of practices around learning based originally on the work of John Dewey. The term refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves---each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning---as he or she learns. Constructing meaning is learning; there is no other kind.*

Moreover, the results of the citation analysis and the 'Projects Audit' in particular, plus some of the observations from our consultations with the Expert Panel, raise further questions about the contribution the Programme makes. As discussed above, the evidence suggests that the NESTA Learning Programme has gained little recognition across a range of 'knowledge constituencies'. This could be explained by a number of factors – the 'worst case scenario' being that the Programme is considered by policy makers, experts and practitioners to contribute in only a limited way to 'state of the art'. A more palatable explanation would need to explore the ways in which the results of the programme are diffused, disseminated and exploited across the spectrum of 'learning constituencies' and how dissemination mechanisms could be improved. At the heart of these issues, however, is the fundamental question of 'innovation' itself. This is discussed below.

4.2.2 The contribution the Programme makes to promoting innovation in learning policy and practice

A core element of the 'mission' of the Learning Programme is to invest in the promotion of 'innovation' in learning, with reference to science, technology and the arts. Essentially therefore the main objective of the Learning Programme is to fund innovative projects in learning within these three sectors. Within this context, the evaluation results paint a complex and ambiguous picture.

On the one hand, the Programme supports a number of examples of novel teaching and learning innovations, and the funded projects themselves consider that the Programme has succeeded in supporting innovation. On the other, as the Audit of Projects points out, it could be argued that the current distribution of projects; the types of innovation funded, and the pedagogic and innovation models represented within the Programme tend to reinforce existing 'learning hierarchies' and power structures within the domain. According to the Projects Audit, less than 10% of the funded projects could be classified as taking a 'radical' approach to innovation. The majority of projects appear to be promoting relatively limited enhancements to existing and established educational practices. This picture, it might be argued, is reinforced with reference to factors such as user groups targeted and intended outcomes. A tentative hypothesis, drawn from these trends, could be that the Learning Programme to some extent reinforces existing 'silos' within the learning domain – for example the sectoral distinctions and demarcations between school education, adult learning, professional development and lifelong learning. Certainly what is clear is that adult and lifelong learning seems to be under-represented in the Programme. Moreover, there appears little evidence of 'joined up innovation', for example through the development of innovative learning approaches fostering community development and community regeneration.

Fundamentally, the question of how innovative the Programme, and its constituent projects are, hinges on the definition of 'innovation'. In the 'Projects

Audit' we have offered an initial starting basis for classifying projects in terms of their 'innovation model' according to the degree to which they reflect particular 'paradigm shifts' in learning. Yet it is possible to cut innovation across a range of dimensions: for example: economic innovation (the way in which projects promote novel ways of paying for learning, through, for instance promoting capital-labour substitution); pedagogic innovation (for example new forms of 'constructivist' or 'scaffolded' learning approaches); technological innovation (for example using immersive technologies to promote learning); institutional innovation (for example new forms of public-private partnership); social innovation (for example developing learning services for 'disaffected youth'). The emerging results from the evaluation underline that the way projects are interpreted against the 'dimensions of innovation' is a social construction. For example, 'The Clap' may be construed as highly innovative from the point of view of a film-maker, and of little merit from the perspective of an expert in constructivist learning approaches. Against this background, it is also revealing that interviews with Programme staff highlighted a perceived need for more robust definitions of 'innovation' and a more effective methodology for evaluating it. If it is accepted that innovation is socially constructed, then a clear conclusion from this part of the evaluation is that the subsequent phase should work towards developing a useful and effective framework for working with 'innovation' within the Programme. This would need to be developed through 'stakeholder mapping' and an 'alignment' of the different constructions of innovation.

4.2.3 The impact the programme has (on 'beneficiaries' – i.e. teachers and learners – on policy makers and on deepening and expanding the knowledge base in learning e.g. in the practitioner community)

As discussed above, the question of 'impacts' raises complex issues. The key points highlighted by the evaluation are:

- The existing evaluation data and 'evidence base' makes it difficult to make informed judgements about Programme impacts, primarily because of the variability of evaluation methods deployed (and hence the variable quality of data produced) and the lack of systematic longitudinal studies of outcomes and impacts
- 'Self-reported' data derived from the on-line survey of project representatives; from interviews with project participants and from content analysis of available reports, suggest that projects consider themselves to be making a significant contribution to improving the lives of intended beneficiaries.
- The outputs of projects are comprised of four broad types: 'technological artefacts' (for example web portals; immersive software); teaching products (video courses; text-based courses); support services (guidelines; research results; funding brokerage); human resources (training).

- Indirect outcomes and impacts can also be divided into four main types: raising awareness of science, culture and technology; enhancing learning capabilities; (for example for 'disengaged'; 'hard to reach' and excluded groups); skills, competence and personal development; developing 'networks of excellence' and collaborative knowledge networks.
- There is wide variation in the range and depth of benefits produced – some projects focus on intensive, small group, 'paradigm-changing' objectives; others on providing information to a wide audience.
- There is considerable variation in the 'cost per head' of the range of projects represented in the evaluation. This variability is clearly related to the nature of the innovation represented by the project; its pedagogic approach, and the delivery mechanism and setting in which learning takes place.

The overall picture of impacts and benefits also has to be set against an important set of issues that cohere around 'access' and 'representativeness'. As discussed above, there are a number of indications to suggest that the Programme could be seen as 'unbalanced' in certain respects. The over-representation of London-based funded projects is one illustration (although the high concentration of London-based projects has fallen significantly in recent years). . On the one hand, it could be argued that this over-representation reflects the realities of the domination by the capital of the country's cultural, creative and intellectual life. A counter-argument might hypothesise that the Programme reinforces the continuation of a 'cultural and creative mafia'. Other key issues that require further investigation include the apparent low level of engagement the Programme currently has, set against its mission and its policy environment, with 'social inclusion' agendas and practices. In addition, as discussed above, there is a suggestion from the initial evidence that the Programme is having a limited impact on contributing to developing state of the art in the learning knowledge base and in policy circles.

4.2.4 Whether the way the programme is managed is 'fit for purpose' (e.g. selection of particular projects; funding; monitoring of the projects)

In general, the evidence suggests the Programme is 'fit for purpose'. For example, none of the respondents in the on-line survey were dissatisfied with the way the Programme selects projects for funding (but this is understandable, since they were successfully funded). Projects are broadly split on the level of funding awarded. Whilst 47% of on-line survey respondents think the level of funding received from the Programme is inadequate, just over 51% consider it about right to enable them to achieve their objectives (although it should be acknowledged that every funding Programme inevitably includes a significant proportion of awardees who complain they do not receive enough funding). None of the respondents participating in the on-line survey reported any problems encountered in their funding application, nor in contract negotiation. 93% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way contract negotiations were handled; 75%

were satisfied or very satisfied with the way financial issues were handled. Only 4% of respondents reported any problems associated with management, administration and monitoring activities in working with NESTA and within the Programme.

“We thought Nesta was fantastic to start with, they were very rigorous with the application procedure, but also very supportive...there was really this sense that they would work with us to make the project happen” (Project co-ordinator)

This is not to suggest that all projects in the Programme have a happy and trouble-free life: around 44% of survey respondents said they had experienced some problems – but these were largely associated with ‘external’ issues and circumstances, rather than the ‘Programme architecture’ itself. Typical problems included: staffing and skills problems and retention of competent staff; logistical and technical problems (for example reliability of technology platforms and infrastructure); delays and similar problems leading to time and deadline pressures. Staff retention is a particular problem for small organisations and can be compounded by the funding conditions imposed by the Programme. Linking the release of tranches of funding to completion of specific milestones is seen by such organisations as stress-creating, and the uncertainty it generates about employment conditions can contribute to the destabilisation of a project.

Set against these findings, the evaluation has identified a number of issues around how the Programme is structured and implemented. These include: defining, mapping and managing innovation; assessing outcomes and impacts of the Programme; learning from the ‘Programme history’ to shape its future strategic development. As discussed above, the results of the Projects Audit, coupled with evidence from the case studies, have raised some issues around the project selection process; whether this is representative of the spectrum of ‘knowledge constituencies’ and communities of practice in the learning world; whether the programme sufficiently addresses ‘access’ issues; whether the Programme reinforces the domination of certain ‘cliques’, in the form, for example of multiple awards to ‘usual suspects’.

Areas for improvement highlighted by the evaluation include the following key areas:

- Dissemination: around 30% of survey respondents think that dissemination procedures and tools need to be improved.
- Project support: around 20% of projects participating in the on-line survey think more support could be provided from NESTA. The survey, supported by data from the case studies, suggest that attention needs to be paid to evaluation support; help in meeting deadlines; developing a sustainability strategy and preparing for closedown.

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- Managing the 'learning legacy': a number of respondents argue that the Programme needs to more effectively integrate and co-ordinate the collective learning generated from the Programme. This implies a greater degree of collaborative working within the Programme, and embedding mechanisms for continuing formative evaluation and critical reflection, for example, along the lines of PAL's 'Labs of Learning'

5. Recommendations

The recommendations are split into two types:

- ‘Technical’ recommendations – these are mainly about enhancing the way the programme is managed and can be implemented with minimal impact on organisational structure and practices.
- ‘Strategic’ recommendations – these are more far-reaching and imply more radical changes in organisational structure and practices

5.1 Technical recommendations

5.1.1 Quality issues.

‘Quality’ is implicit in the Programme and is largely delegated to individual projects. The Programme should be more explicit about quality issues and could benefit by learning from similar programmes, for example the ‘e-learning Programme’ supported by the European Commission, which embeds quality and standardisation through specific actions. These should include transversal projects and accompanying measures that provide both common protocols and mechanisms for projects to incorporate quality and support and mentoring to individual projects. A ‘quality’ initiative should make some reference to developing learning standards and interoperability, for example the use of ‘SCORM’ and ‘ARIADNE’ standards for projects that develop ‘learning objects’.²⁰ It should also pay attention to promoting the adoption of standards on ethics, gender and inclusion mainstreaming.

5.1.2 IPR and ownership.

NESTA should develop and circulate clear Guidelines about ownership rights, and where necessary, encourage partnerships to work to a ‘consortium agreement’ that clearly sets out rules, responsibilities and rights regarding ‘background’ and ‘foreground’ IPR developed as a result of participation in the project.²¹ At a minimum, contracts should support proper acknowledgement and attribution of ideas and work developed by individuals and groups

5.1.3 Dissemination.

In turn, sustainability and exploitation are inherently linked to effective dissemination. Dissemination is a significant problem for projects in the Programme. Effort needs to be put into: encouraging projects to develop effective dissemination plans; providing support through funding dedicated ‘transversal’ projects and accompanying measures to provide advice and mentoring on dissemination and business plans. The Programme could also benefit from incorporating ‘concertation measures’ – these would need to include clustering of projects; thematic meetings organised on clustering lines; links with other Programmes.

²⁰ ARIADNE and SCORM are international standards for educational metadata.

²¹ ‘Background’ rights refer to existing IPR that is brought into projects by individual actors. ‘Foreground’ rights cover IPR that is generated as a result of subsequent project activities.

5.2 Strategic recommendations

5.2.1 NESTA's approach to innovation.

Innovation lies at the heart of the Learning Programme. Yet it could be argued that its understanding of innovation is encapsulated only by its mission statement. The programme therefore requires a clear definition of how it defines innovation; what are the criteria through which it assesses 'innovative' projects; what are the procedures and protocols for incorporating different constructions of innovation within its portfolio of funded projects. The Programme's approach to innovation has crucial implications for other key operational dimensions, which are discussed below.

5.2.2 Balancing the portfolio: promoting access and inclusion.

The evidence suggests that the current Programme mix is under-representative in certain areas and sectors; notably in targeting excluded groups, and in supporting adult, informal and work-based learning. The Programme should set specific targets for re-dressing this balance and, in this case, NESTA would need to consider options about whether it needs to develop and implement specific 'positive action' policies aimed at engaging 'hard to reach' groups within the Programme. In any case, this targeting strategy would need to be explicitly linked to the definitions and protocols developed to make 'innovation' more explicit, as outlined above in recommendation 1. In turn, the choices NESTA makes about balancing the Programme portfolio will impinge on other elements of the Programme, for example the proposal evaluation and selection process (discussed in point 5.5 below).

5.2.3 Transparency in project selection.

Linked to actions associated with re-balancing the Programme portfolio are a number of possible actions aimed at improving the transparency and effectiveness of the project selection process. These should include: more effort devoted to awareness-raising about funding opportunities, aimed at a broader constituency than is currently engaged within the NESTA 'family'; a clear set of selection criteria that prospective projects need to follow in order to submit proposals (supported, for example, by the use of on-line interactive proposal forms that assist proposers in developing more effective proposals). However, the Programme should still reserve some contingency to enable 'unsolicited' ideas to be put forward for consideration. This is particularly important for some small organisations who may not have the competences and resources to comply with formal proposal protocols and procedures. In addition, the project selection process would need to be informed by any decisions NESTA make about balancing the Programme portfolio, and whether to actively seek to engage 'hard to reach' groups, for example by adapting proposal documentation and procedures to suit the needs and profiles of such groups.

5.2.4 Sustainability and transfer of knowledge.

The current Programme reflects an eclectic spectrum of projects at various stages in the innovation 'life cycle'; with different funding arrangements and

variable partnerships and organisational status. This situation exacerbates existing problematic issues around developing effective sustainability and exploitation strategies. The Programme could benefit from implementing a 'multi-stage' life cycle model that applies different contractual models, rules and protocols for different types of project (for example helping to address the problems small organisations experience when payments are linked to completion of milestones). The spectrum of types of project could encompass: primary research; applied research; research and development; demonstration and market validation projects.

5.2.5 Managing the 'learning legacy'.

Dissemination and concertation activities need to be supported by additional effort aimed at evaluating, managing and applying the 'learning legacy' generated by the Programme as a whole to: supporting the nation's policy, theoretical and practice knowledge base; encouraging reflection by individual projects in learning from their own and others' experience in the Programme; utilising the collective skills and competences of constituent projects to develop strategic improvements to the Programme. A number of existing 'collaborative learning models' could be adopted for these purposes, for example 'Action Learning Sets'.²²

5.2.6 Evaluation.

As discussed above, the current evaluation investment in the Programme, at both the 'macro' and individual project level, is inadequate. At the Programme level, any 'logic model' approach that may be adopted to promote coherence and standards across the Programme needs to be enhanced and broadened with reference to incorporating reflection, reflexivity and 'stakeholder alignment'. Evaluation needs to be integrated within a much broader 'learning organisation' infrastructure that draws on the 'collective learning' derived from the Programme as a whole, and which is explicitly linked to the management of the Programme's 'learning legacy'. The Programme should endeavour to support longitudinal studies that can provide more robust evidence than is currently available about medium and long term impacts associated with projects, and which can be used to build an evidence base of 'what works'. At the individual project level, projects would benefit from dedicated evaluation support provided by a 'transversal' evaluation project. This should provide both common evaluation frameworks and tools to support evaluation activities and consultancy tailored to the individual needs of particular projects. In addition, the wide variability in cost-ratios in this type of Programme make a clear case for developing evaluation methodologies that incorporate 'social' dimensions and 'wider benefits of learning', as opposed to the dominant models based on human capital and rates of return. In turn, there is a need for further research to assess the multiplier effects associated with the diffusion of new knowledge derived from the Programme.

²² PAL for example take the position that the inter-disciplinary learning approach developed through various 'Labs' could be effectively applied within the Learning Programme itself

Annex 1: Methodology and description of evaluation activities.

1. Overview

A key feature of our approach to the evaluation was the use of triangulation. Triangulation allows for the synthesis of evidence of different types and from different sources, drawn from evaluation activities, in order to arrive at evaluation outcomes. This incorporated:

- firstly, a stakeholder analysis: the evaluation engaged with, and drew evidence from, the key constituencies involved in the Programme: the projects (managers and researchers); funding agents and Programme managers; the User Community (e.g. teachers and learners).
- secondly, multiple sources of data. The evaluation includes three main types of 'evidence' (providing a different 'take' on the object of evaluation). These were: content (e.g. evaluation reports and other material produced by the projects); primary data (acquired, for example, through interviews with users); statistical data (for example, data on type of projects funded).
- thirdly, a multi-evaluation methodology. The research combined summative evaluation (i.e. an assessment of key outputs of the Programme, and associated outcomes and impacts) with formative evaluation indicators (for example focusing on how the Programme and its projects have been evolving). The evaluation also combines quantitative analysis (for example assessing the volume and profiles of people participating in a project) with qualitative analysis (for example observation of participant behaviours, and content analysis of the 'discourses' represented by project outputs).

The approach, methodology, data collection instruments and analysis used in the evaluation is set out in detail in Annex 1.

2. Evaluation activities and work carried out

The evaluation design incorporated seven inter-related sets of activities (work packages):

- WP1: Scoping
- WP2: Process Review
- WP3: Secondary data analysis
- WP4: Case studies
- WP5: Comparisons and context analysis
- WP6: Analysis & Report
- WP7: Project Management

The starting point for the evaluation was a **Scoping Exercise** (Workpackage 1) which was intended to enable the evaluation team to: gain an understanding of the policy environment in which NESTA and in turn the Learning Programme operates; carry out an 'audit' of relevant data sources and contacts; recruit an 'Expert Panel' to provide inputs to later evaluation tasks; 'fine tune' the evaluation approach and methodology; develop a data collection 'toolkit'. The methods used included review of relevant documentation (e.g. NESTA Portfolio Review; NESTA Business Plans) and interviews with key actors

The **Process Review** (workpackage 2) had three main purposes:

- To review the mission, vision and purposes of the Learning Programme within the context of NESTA's key purposes and those of its 'sister' Programmes
- To assess the coherence, relevance and contribution of the Programme within the broader context of current and future policy and practice agendas in learning
- To review the 'architecture' of the Programme (including its selection, funding, monitoring and evaluation procedures)

The methods used in the process review included: assessment of Learning Programme by Expert Panel ; Interviews/focus groups with NESTA staff and other key stakeholders - e.g. government agents - (face to face/telephone/email); 'Cultural logic' analysis (discourse/content analysis) of key documents.

The analysis of **Secondary Data** (workpackage 3) was intended to:

- Extend our 'background picture' of the Programme by assessing the main features of the spectrum of projects funded by the Programme
- Explore the similarities, differences and inter-relationships between projects
- Identify a sample of projects as candidates for the more detailed analysis carried out in the case studies.

The data capture methods used included: interviews with NESTA staff and project staff (face to face/telephone/email); content analysis of available documentation and website content; citation analysis of the Programme and a sample of projects, using searches of bibliographic databases. The main focus of the activity was a 'cluster analysis' of funded projects using a set of key variables to develop a 'typology' of projects (on the basis of geographical distribution; distribution of funding; pedagogic model; type of outputs; target beneficiaries; innovation type).

In tandem with the above activities, we undertook a **Comparisons and Context appraisal** (workpackage 5). This was intended to situate the programme in relation to comparable 'benchmarks'. These included: other NESTA programmes; UK Cultural and Learning Innovation Programmes – Arts Council;

Department for Culture, Media and Sport 'Culture Online' ; 'Big Lottery; New Deal for Communities – European Commission Programmes – COMENIUS; Information Society Technology; eLearning; Minerva. The methods used included: Expert Panel input; synthesis of existing evaluation reports and relevant documentation; comparison of available statistical data.

The results of these three activities fed into work package 4 – **Case Studies**. Time and resource constraints precluded the use of 'intensive' case study methods. We therefore carried out a set of ten 'mini case studies'. These were chosen as 'exemplars' or typical examples of the clusters identified in work package 3, including one which illustrated the 'life cycle' of the Programme and how it has evolved. Each case study entailed the use of a 'template' (common data collection and analysis 'toolkit') to promote standardisation of data and enable cross-case comparison. The methods used in the toolkit included: self-administered questionnaires (SAQs); Observation; Secondary data analysis; Focus groups; Content analysis of documentation. The results of the case studies, together with those of the preceding workpackages, were analysed, integrated and synthesised by the project team, working in collaboration with NESTA staff, in workpackage 6. A dedicated project management work package (workpackage 7) provided monitoring of the progress of the evaluation throughout its life cycle.

- The 'Scoping' activity combined two main purposes: to map the environment in which the Programme operates and deepen our understanding of how it works, and to set up the 'infrastructure' necessary to carry out the evaluation. The main research tasks involved preliminary interviews with key stakeholders, and a content analysis of relevant documentation. The two main outputs produced by the Scoping exercise were: a Methodology Report and Evaluation toolkit, and a dedicated evaluation website. An Expert Panel (comprised of a dozen experts in the Learning field) was set up and preliminary interviews with 4 experts carried out.
- The Methodology Report set out the purposes and key objectives of the evaluation; the main evaluation questions addressed; the approach and methodology adopted and the timetable for carrying out the evaluation. It incorporated a detailed 'Evaluation toolkit' setting out the procedures, methods and instruments used for data collection and analysis (including interview schedules; survey questionnaires; observation schedules; case study protocols and instruments).
- The website (Figure 1) provides an overview of the Learning Programme and the evaluation (including links to the NESTA website) and is structured into three elements (corresponding to three key sets of evaluation stakeholders). The first section provides a space for the Expert Panel to enter into a Discussion Forum on key issues relevant to the Learning Programme. The second section is for co-ordinators and managers of projects funded by the Learning Programme. It too provides

- a Discussion Forum (focussed on three key issues: innovation; Programme Benefits; Programme Improvements) and also provides access to the on-line questionnaire (Figure 2). The third section targets 'interested parties' (for example people who subscribe to the NESTA 'eBulletin) and provides another Discussion Forum similar to 'Project Managers' Forum.
- In order to conform to NESTA's data protection and confidentiality protocols, we have not approached the project managers and 'interested parties' directly. NESTA Programme staff were therefore responsible for engaging these stakeholders in the Discussion Fora and the on-line survey. Although project managers were directly contacted, there was no time available for NESTA staff to contact 'interested parties', and this Forum was therefore not used in the evaluation.

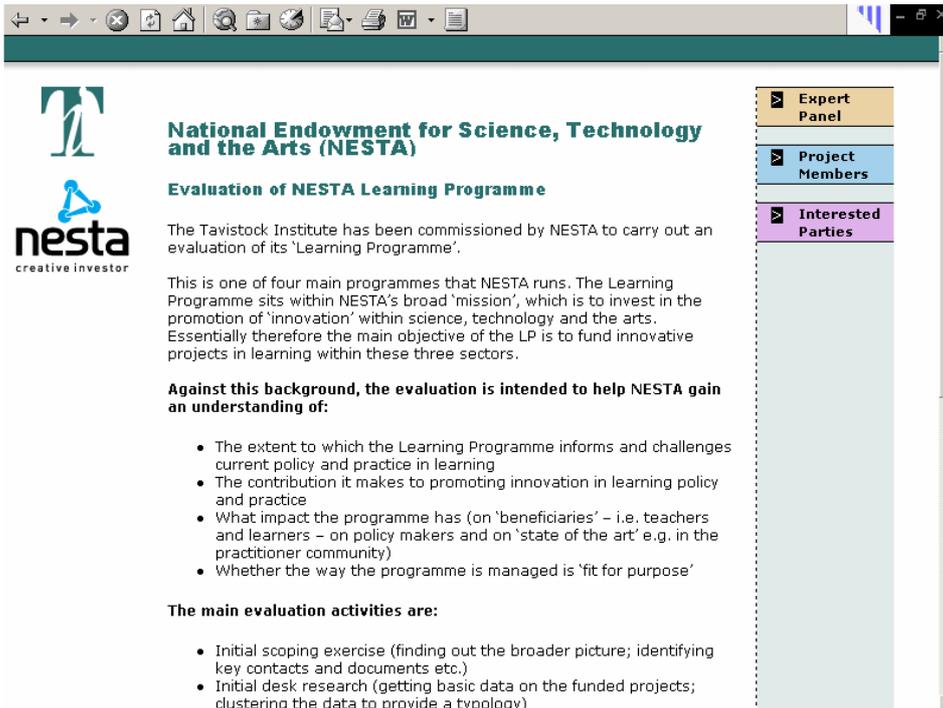


Figure 1: Website Home Page

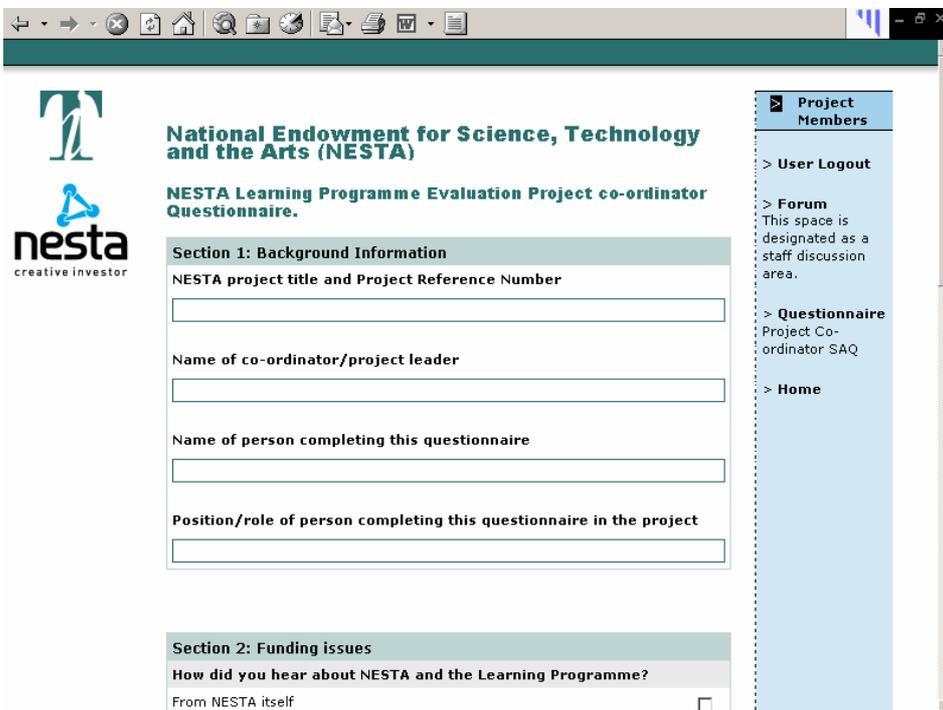


Figure 2: Online Questionnaire

- The Process Review encompassed: i) an analysis of the 'programme architecture' of the Learning Programme (its mission, purposes, values and objectives; the project selection and funding process; the management, governance, monitoring and evaluation procedures) through a content analysis of key documents ii) further exploration of how the Programme operates through interviews with Programme staff iii) a policy analysis of the broader environment in which the Programme operates with reference to key UK and EU policy on learning and education. iv) a survey of project managers' experiences of working within the Programme, obtained via the on-line survey, and through the case studies.
- The main focus of our work in workpackage 3 (Secondary Data Analysis) has been in two areas: the 'Projects Audit' and the 'Citation Analysis'. The Projects Audit combines three tasks: i) a review and synthesis of the four Learning Programme 'Portfolio Reviews', which NESTA have carried out since the launch of the Programme ii) an analysis of the data in the NESTA Learning Programme database, which contains data on variables such as duration; level of funding; referral process; type of partnership; type of activity for 180 projects iii) additional data collection on a number of other variables (including delivery mechanism; target groups; size of user base; social inclusion orientation; technology dimension; expected outcomes) drawn from an analysis of the profiles of funded projects. The Projects Audit included a cluster analysis, using the existing Portfolio data plus the data collected on the additional variables, to develop a 'typology' of projects. This provided inputs for the selection of projects for the case studies to be carried out in workpackage 4. Additional work built on the results of the Audit via two additional evaluation activities: data obtained via the on-line survey, and analysis of project deliverables carried out through the case studies.
- The main aim of the Citation Analysis was to assess the extent to which the Programme is contributing to development of state of the art in the field of pedagogy, education and training in terms of three dimensions: theory; policy and practice, and to examine how the Programme and its projects are positioned within the evolving 'knowledge base' of this 'learning domain'. The evaluation activity entailed systematic searches of relevant databases, including the main Internet search engines (Google; Yahoo) together with the specialist 'Google Scholar' search engine, and three bibliographic databases: ERIC – Educational Resources Information Centre in the U.S.A., and BEI – British Educational Index in the U.K.; the British Library. These databases include both formal and 'grey' literature, and encompass the key academic Journals currently published that deal with various aspects of 'learning', education and training. The Citation

Analysis also included searches for 'comparator' Programmes similar to the NESTA Learning Programme (ESRC programmes - Learning Society: Knowledge and Skills for Employment; Public Understanding of Science; Teaching and Learning - Wellcome Trust programmes -Public Engagement Projects; Science Learning Centres; Science and Museums Learning Centres - Arts Council programmes - Urban Cultural Programme).

- Case Studies: this part of the evaluation involved more in-depth analysis of a selection of typical examples of the projects funded in the Learning Programme. The cases were selected on the basis of the results of the 'Projects Audit', and in consultation with NESTA. Data collection was carried out using a multi-methodological approach and toolkit, combining content analysis of documentation; interviews with stakeholders; observation and focus groups. Data analysis focused on a common 'template' to enable cross-case comparisons to be carried out.
- 'Comparisons and Context analysis'. Firstly, a set of three discussion topics was activated in the Expert Panel Discussion Forum on the website. The three topics are: Where would you position NESTA's 'Learning Programme' in current European state of the art? Are there any Programmes similar to the Learning Programme and how does the NESTA programme compare with these? What can NESTA's Learning Programme learn from other Programmes? Secondly, we have undertaken a search of relevant databases to identify relevant Programmes against which to compare the NESTA Learning Programme. These include UK Cultural and Learning Innovation Programmes – e.g. funded by Arts Council; Department for Culture, Media and Sport 'Culture Online' ;Big Lottery Fund - European Commission Programmes – e.g. COMENIUS; Information Society Technology; eLearning; Minerva.

Final Report

Annex 2: Case Study Summary Reports

Case study1 : Acrisat Projects

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	To improve the take up and the perception of science and technology in education and at work among the UK residents of African Caribbean origin
Partnership arrangements	Is working with mainstream strategic organisations in the science community and with BME organisations that have a similar interest
Type of learning carried out	2001 Consultation, research and workshops on the issue Raising awareness and encouraging organisations to tackle the issues in their area or sector Exemplar projects given funding to try out new approaches and ideas Database of resources including good practice Dissemination and promotion of the project and resources
Setting of learning activities	Consultant goes to conferences, meetings, events to raise awareness and act as a catalyst for changes to practices and policies Acrisat Brighton works with schools providing web based materials and training workshops Acrisat Birmingham has set up links with role models in its area Acrisat DISC has a web based database and repository for resources, dissemination and networking and is setting up residential workshops and events to get the BME organisations and Science community working together on the issues.
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Science and technology
Profile of participants	Large organisations with influence on science and technology education such as the DfES, the science museum, the British Association for the advancement of Science and technology, The Royal society. BME organisations (List is not available yet) but championed by the African Caribbean Network for Science and technology Schools taking part in projects in Brighton and Kirklees and Birmingham
Expected outcomes	Raised awareness in the science and education sectors about barriers and good practice A greater number of organisations in the sectors undertaking initiatives to change under representation and aspirations of African Caribbean people in the sciences Joint working between the BME community and the Science Community Long term this to be seen in the numbers of African Caribbean people taking up qualifications and careers in the sectors
How participants engaged	Organisations approached by NESTA and consultant Publicity generated and awareness raising also bring s in interested organisations

Technologies used	Web sites for dissemination
Geographical coverage	National, regional and international in dissemination practice. Projects have tended to be based around local education authorities

1. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	Individual approached NESTA with the idea. NESTA gave her a grant as a consultant to undertake research and to contact those in the sector with a view to setting up some consultation events. She would also seek projects that could be funded by NESTA Web site to disseminate learning and good practice
Funding history	NESTA in first instance, but now other organisations are doing work in a similar vein and funding projects. COPUS has put in 75% of the funds for the disc project. Birmingham Project is seeking funds elsewhere for the second year of the project. Brighton had found funding from other local authorities to continue the project.
Ways in which project has changed	Is evolving as new contacts and ideas grow
Sustainability activities	Legacy of the work of raising awareness of the issues and bringing BME groups and science community together should continue after funding ends

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	No problems experienced. Brighton felt that working with nesta was better than other funders.
Funding process	Two projects given only one year of funding. Birmingham pleasantly surprised to find that nesta would fund the Local authority. Only given funding for one year and did not get further funding. But hadn't expected to get more. Has had problems finding funding. Brighton got further funding from LAs buying their services.
Monitoring process	Brighton had to give end of year self assessment report. Happy with this. I was surprised that no external assessor support for consultant over three year period. She keeps in contact and provides quarterly reports on her work. There appeared no strategic plan to how the exemplar projects would be found and how they would relate together.
Management process	No comments but my concern was that these projects could have been supported to learn together
Suggested Programme improvements	None given.

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	All project have met their objectives . Birmingham had to get extra money to finish the first stage of the project and this was given by NESTA. Brighton seem to have been very successful at attracting new participants.
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	DISC project has only just got going and how the partnerships and relationships between the BME and Science organisations develop had yet to be seen.
Coherence with workplan	Nothing significant
Innovation aspects	Role models and web sites are not innovative. Getting BME groups and Science community together in workshops and residential events may be new, even if the models of working are not innovative.
Utilisation/participation data	Good rates of participation in Brighton. 400 in Kirklees and about 120 in Brighton. Birmingham recruited 75 role models which was lower than expected. Workshops with Science community got 90 reps over 4 workshops and BME groups got 62 reps over 3 workshops. Future residential workshop has about 150 people taking part.
Usability and user acceptance	No data
User satisfaction	Data only available for Brighton which did self evaluation and this reported very positive feedback and result
Accessibility	
User benefits	Based on improving perceptions of the role of BME people in science and improving self esteem and inspiring their interest in the sciences.
Summary of Impacts	From the reports from the consultant, there has been a continuous presence at conferences and events raising awareness of the issues. The consultative workshops resulted in 11 proposals to nesta of which 4 were selected. Brighton evaluation has reported positive benefits for participants taking part in the web based resources on science for young children. DISC has a web site running for dissemination, resources and good practice 62 reps from BME groups and 90 science reps are currently working together in workshops and events looking at how they can work together to make changes
Main successes	The issues have been taken up by the BA and Birmingham. Other funders (Royal society) are providing funds for this area of work. Although hard to measure, would appear to be a raised awareness of the barriers in the sector and some energy channelled into tackling the issues.
Main issues and challenges	
Cost-effectiveness	
Sustainability	Relied initially on one individual – now this has been shared with other organisations. The African Caribbean network has now got funding and is growing as an organisation.
Transferability	The bringing together of strategic organisations to tackle an issue, providing funding for projects that tackle the issues and getting networks up and running may be transferable to other issues
Examples of input to policy	Birmingham city council in Dec 2003 agreed an action plan to improve achievements of afro Caribbean pupils, this had some contribution from ACRISAT according to one of the LA officers working on the Acrisat project.

Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	
Good Practice examples	
Impact on changing learning practices	<p>Role models being tried out in Birmingham and through DISC projects</p> <p>Some BME groups and Science organisations working together on the issues and will be reporting back in the future.</p>
Project selected the right one and fits with NESTA aims and objectives	<p>Fits in with NESTA's aims of</p> <p>Ways of learning that provide models to follow</p> <p>May help to improve practice and policy in key areas of learning</p> <p>Raise aspirations in specifically excluded groups</p> <p>Gaps or weaknesses in provision</p> <p>Bring together individuals and organisations to explore new approaches in the field of formal and informal education</p> <p>Has a strategic element and dissemination element as well as local projects</p>

Case study : Image Conscious

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	To promote youth mentoring expertise developed in the youth sector and use it within the arts centre Young people will have greater self esteem and a sense of social responsibility To give a public voice to young people with untapped creative talents Increase the use of arts by young people in Camden
Partnership arrangements	Original partner was a Youth service mentoring scheme which subsequently was reorganised and the mentoring project ended. A Youth centre and an Educational service were later the main agencies that referred young people as it could provide support to the young people attending the Image Conscious project.
Type of learning carried out	One to One collaborative work. An artist and a young person work together to create something of interest to both parties. Some of the participants have collaborated with the project over a two year period. So blend of enhancing skills and raising confidence and self esteem. The Arts Centre hopes to broaden horizons, enhance appreciation and skills in media, arts and technology. Although originally there were aims about improving social behaviour, this was to dovetail with the aims of YOT and is not really the focus of their work.
Setting of learning activities	In year one, due to refurbishment of the Arts Centre, the project took place off site, using a youth centre. In years two and three, it was based in the Arts Centre. Filming and photography has taken place on the street, in parks and in schools
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Film, media, technology, visual and performing arts
Profile of participants	13-19 year olds who are at risk and referred from the mentoring scheme or the youth centre. There have been nine artists that have participated. Mainly young artists. The profile of the mentors was not available.
Expected outcomes	Main outcomes expected are to build up the self esteem and confidence of those who participate. Tangible " products" include photos, videos, magazines, performances, screen prints. It is hoped that one outcome will be that the young people will be comfortable at the centre and use it as a resource, bring friends and continue to have contact. It was hoped that the arts centre would become one of the offers that young people at the YOT could take up, but as the mentoring unit closed down, this has not taken place.
How participants engaged	Referral from Youth mentoring project in first instance. Initially young people invited to a workshop where they were introduced to the sort of things that they could do with the artists. This did not result in any returns, so young people were approached on a one to one basis to see if they were interested. Later referrals came from the Youth Centre and these sessions involved small groups of 4-6 people.
Technologies used	On offer Screen printing, video work, sound and film, photography and publishing
Geographical coverage	Mainly Camden, but did go outside the borough boundaries when YOT no longer available.

2. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	Conference on mentoring inspired project co-ordinator and he was aware that there was a leading mentoring scheme being run in Camden. Put in proposal to NESTA as first attempt for funding.
Funding history	Approached NESTA first. Would have looked elsewhere if turned down. No other funders for this project, although the Arts Centre has other funders. The project had a limited life of three years and it is not intended to extend this particular project by looking for further funding.
Ways in which project has changed	<p>Mentoring team was small and when one person moved on, the work came to an end. This meant Image Conscious did not have a referral pathway, and so for a period were not recruiting further participants. New partner found and some new participants.</p> <p>Group sessions did not dovetail so well into the scheme and more emphasis on the one to one work. Latter part of the project did not have mentors, but the youth centre partner provided support to participants. Change of staff within the Arts Centre and partner saw disruption but also saw new ideas come into the project. Due to the small number of participants and the times when the different times they were involved in the project, peer training was not appropriate. Youth Council did not take place due to lack of take up from the young people.</p>
Sustainability activities	<p>The project ran for three years, but there was no intention at the end to continue the project as it stood. However, looking for new project that will incorporate some of the ideas about one to one working with artists, possibly linking with higher education.</p> <p>The Arts Centre will maintain contact with participants and youth groups involved.</p>

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	<p>NESTA helped write the application. NESTA required a supervisor. Camden recommended a person. They found this process valuable. "a critical friend"</p> <p>The project officer worked closely with them and they found NESTA's approach helpful. Felt that NESTA was more able to deal with risk and the dynamics of the project than some other funders such as the Arts Council.</p>
Funding process	No problems reported. Had to go back after first year with exit strategy and some evidence of commitment from the partner.
Monitoring process	External assessor provided regular reports
Management process	NESTA put them in touch with another funded project that could help them with the web site.

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	<p>25 young people recruited.</p> <p>Good relationships formed with young people and the artists as well as the Arts Centre. Young people have</p>
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	undertaken different projects from planning to final product. One young person has helped the Centre disseminate the learning at conferences with other organisations. Performances and exhibitions held. Presentations by young people would show evidence that young people's self esteem and confidence grew while taking on the project.
Coherence with workplan	Deviation from project objectives and milestones were around the lack of participants coming through in the second year and needing to divert some time to find a new partner.
Innovation aspects	Assessor's report states that "the individual elements of the project are not unique: youth mentoring, encouraging disaffected young people to use art venues, a youth art council and links to artist but what is potentially innovative is the way the project brings these elements together within an arts centre".
Utilisation/participation data	First event did not get young people interested. Subsequent work with the referrals got 12 young people over the first year. A further 13 were involved over the next two years. 25 in total.
Usability and user acceptance	Getting disaffected youth to take part is expected to be difficult. Once engaged, most have stayed their six weeks and about three have been engaged with the project on and off over two years. Only one person left without any reasons.
User satisfaction	Evaluation reports on the young people who have taken part report satisfaction with their involvement in the project. Listening to one young person giving a presentation about her work with the arts centre over two years, the focus was on collaborative working with the artists that took her interest as centre stage and pride in the quality of the work produced.
Accessibility	This project works with excluded groups. In order to work with the at risk group of young people, there needs to be a referral system so the young people and the arts centre have some support mechanism as the artists are not social workers. However, it is voluntary and so the young people have to choose to take up the project.
User benefits	Enhancing skills, broadening horizons, improving personal interaction skills through improved self esteem and confidence and collaborative working
Summary of Impacts	"Products" include Videos, models, photos, magazine, screen prints, exhibition, performances. Young people who have been supported and have gained extra skills and self esteem in the process. A few have been inspired and supported to consider a career in performing arts (one is singing and undertaking a sound engineering course) The Arts Centre has learnt from the process and is more confident in how it can go forward with other projects for disadvantaged groups.
Main successes	Response from those participants who have taken part in the project and improved their skills and confidence.
Main issues and challenges	Finding a new partner with support services for the young people Nil turnout on the first project day which lead to delays and lack of referrals when partner not available. Bringing a range of different young people together as a group

Cost-effectiveness	Difficult to estimate. The total cost of the project was small and if this has made a difference to 25 young people's lives, cost to benefits are good. However, no economic evaluation material available.
Sustainability	This was a pilot project. Learning from the experience will probably shape future work by the Arts Centre in this area. No funding sought to continue the project.
Transferability	The model needs refining, particularly the role of mentors and their input into the project. Working with the artists and the pastoral care approach of the Arts Centre may be transferable, but this was not the aim of the project.
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	The long term work undertaken with some of the young people may be unusual as most projects providing services have a limited number of sessions. There was a desire from the beginning of the project to make the centre a comfortable space for young people who would normally be associated with the arts.
Good Practice examples	The ethos of the project around having a space for young people to feel comfortable and an "insider" at the arts centre. Long term working with young people rather than having no where to go after the project ends.
Impact on changing learning practices	Impact is within the organisation itself – it was used to providing workshops for groups of people and now has tried out one to one work with more difficult participants and is now thinking about the next steps with other groups but using that one to one learning method.
Project selected the right one and fits with NESTA aims and objectives	Yes. It was a model to be tested, it aimed to raise aspirations in excluded groups. It was a local example rather than a strategic approach to new learning.

Case Study Name: Land Design Studio

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	Develop low cost model inter reactive immersive software for use with children with PM (in full) Learning Disabilities and Severe Learning Disabilities based on the type of technology used in the Kaleidoscope installation in the Play zone at the Millennium Dome. No requirement to deliver technology to schools involved in pilot.
Partnership arrangements	NESTA approached Land Design Studio. The Studio put together a group including Simple productions, and Production Science to develop idea. Negotiations and a financial arrangement were also made with ATR (is this company - put in full? or individual?) and the originator of kaleidoscope software. NESTA's interest in funding project was that it was based on royalty stake (one of three projects in learning programme portfolio based on this).
Type of learning carried out	Immersive sensory experience
Setting of learning activities	Existing institutions, in this case schools involved were Chadsgrove School (who had acquired Kaleidoscope for the school) and were interested in testing a low cost version developed by project and Moorcroft School in Middlesex.
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Technology
Profile of participants	Students in two establishments with PM Learning disabilities and Severe Learning Disabilities
Expected outcomes	Varied but dependant on a group of individuals with very different needs and characteristics and therefore difficult to anticipate. Experimental aspect of project
How participants engaged	They were put in front camera and screen with enablers and reactions to different applications observed
Technologies used	Inter re active sensory immersive technologies
Geographical coverage	Two particular schools in pilot trials

3. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	Idea to produce cheap software along lines of kaleidoscope arose from Land's involvement in Playzone and the interest kaleidoscope created in Chadsgrove students. They helped to broker acquisition of kaleidoscope for school. Unclear who made first approach but it is likely that it was NESTA who approached to Land Design Studio. Once in motion the idea was regarded favourably by NESTA.
Funding history	£132K to cover development and exploration into possibilities of producing inter reactive software
Ways in which project has changed	Main aims unchanged from beginning to recent conclusion of project. Some partnership changes and ways of commercialising product anticipated for future but not covered by project.

Sustainability activities	As stated above a number of different options with regards to marketing software.
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3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	
Funding process	Nothing to add
Monitoring process	Supervisor assigned, file contains reports and correspondence as well as recommendations to explore different platforms etc but these are outside project remit. Supervisor confirms that delivery and evaluation of impact not covered by Nesta funding.
Management process	See above. Unable to discuss in depth with as NESTA lead no longer working at NESTA. Same for other NESTA staff connected with project.
Suggested Programme improvements	None from key respondent

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	Fully
Coherence with workplan	Excellent
Innovation aspects	Inter re active immersive technology applied to learning environment such as school for Severe Learning Disabilities and PM Learning Disabilities rather than in large scale installations is cutting edge and the development of reasonably price systems for increased access is what NESTA funded and what dictated the funding basis
Utilisation/participation data	Used by 8 and 6 students in Chadsgrove and Moorcroft respectively during trials. Potentially full school populations of 100 and 65 respectively. Nationally many institutions
Usability and user acceptance	Impossible to gauge after the short trials but staff enthusiastic
User satisfaction	As above
Accessibility	N/A
User benefits	Particular to each individual user
Summary of Impacts	Neither delivery or evaluation covered by NESTA funding so N/A
Main successes	Achieved aims, developed software, enthusiastic reception, future exploitation yet to be decided
Main issues and challenges	None of note during period covered by project. Most in involved technical questions
Cost-effectiveness	Too early to say
Sustainability	A number of different scenarios to be explored.

Transferability	To other domains maybe but fairly clearly targeting particular user group
Examples of input to policy	Difficult to say
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	Not really anything to feed into mainstream learning technologies but some lessons will be learnt once evaluation of impact is undertaken and user responses analysed.
Good Practice examples	Clearly defined what funding covered. No expectations of results, more investigation research based which means it is easier to achieve goals and takes pressure off partnership to deliver. Leading expert in field of design of this sort of technology heading up the project with other members with equally long track record and contacts.

Case Study Name: Lecture List

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	Create online list of all lectures taking place throughout UK to promote attendance, through not for profit company Niminim, set up at Nesta's behest. The project was instigated by a NESTA trustee, who was surprised by difference of attendance of lectures across the UK.
Partnership arrangements	Niminim with crucially the Guardian Unlimited which offers to "skin a mirror" of the site to run on their site. Guardian key to sustainability of project post NESTA. Currently considering possible business exploitation
Type of learning carried out	None. Just information portal
Setting of learning activities	Online but it is just information not learning
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	All
Profile of participants	Lecture attendees, visitors to guardian unlimited site and resources
Expected outcomes	Increase attendance at lectures and improve delivery of information to those likely to attend
How participants engaged	Through guardian site as well as online activity of partners; also variety of traditional methods used
Technologies used	Online information portal. Not innovative
Geographical coverage	Nationwide

4. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	NESTA Trustee approached them with idea and asked them to put forward a proposal. NESTA funded project for one year. Business plan and revenue streams for second and third years worked up. Although this may have been optimistic as project currently being run in spare time for some time now, as projected income has not been realised.
Funding history	£107K for year one. A budget was put aside for supervisor but no one ever assigned.
Ways in which project has changed	Income generation not realised

Sustainability activities	Consultant (Grisleda Bear?) appointed by NESTA to look into this question
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3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	
Funding process	
Monitoring process	12 days budget for supervisor who was never appointed.
Management process	Project Manager no longer working for NESTA.
Suggested Programme improvements	

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	Figures on the impact on attendances at lectures unlikely to be readily available.
Coherence with workplan	The site was created
Innovation aspects	Little innovation. "With hindsight it doesn't hit you in the face as outstanding innovation" It seems likely that it just fit the criteria of meeting a need rather than being innovative.
Utilisation/participation data	Site statistics will be available. Lot of traffic to Guardian site will have been directed to the resource.
Usability and user acceptance	Very basic. Not particularly pretty or friendly to use from design or navigation point of view, but appears to provide the information intended
User satisfaction	
Accessibility	Good
User benefits	Delivery of information only
Summary of Impacts	The site was built but impacts still to be evaluated
Main successes	Achieving main objective
Main issues and challenges	Not particularly innovative and difficult to see why it was funded in first place. Having some problems keeping up the site (being run in spare time) as the anticipated revenue streams not materialised
Cost-effectiveness	No evaluation data available
Sustainability	See challenges above
Transferability	Good as it is basic online resource but requires a makeover to improve look and feel
Examples of input to policy	
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	
Good Practice examples	

Case Study: Nestonauts

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	<p>To consult, design and construct a geodesic 'Moonbase' in the playground. Within the dome there will be a variety of space related experiments. (Outline proposal).</p> <p>The aim of the project is to create a learning facility, to experiment, play and inspire. Neston School envisaged the project as creating a dynamic, inspiring and long lasting facility for the school and its community.</p> <p>Schools face difficulties in bringing science and engineering into the classroom. Difficult concepts can be grasped easily if pupils can see and interact with complex objects – they are literally brought to life. "We wanted to bring science to life, which sounds like a rather crass statement, but there is nothing like doing rather than talking, to really help understand concepts". The moon base and related equipment/technology will enable the children to program and control data monitoring and display equipment remotely. The separate components employed in as part of the moon base will make the resource highly flexible and numerous in terms of applications for study.</p> <p>While space is an inspiring way to interest children in science, space science is largely overlooked in education.</p> <p>Objectives:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To build a moon base, based on consultation in the design stage with the pupils. 2. To use the moon base as an integral ongoing learning resource of the school, in terms of delivering the curriculum to the kids in an innovative and imaginative way. 3. To disseminate the project idea, experiences and opportunities to a wider audience of educators and primary school children.
Partnership arrangements	<p>Westinghouse Rail Systems: A local company who provided the time and technical expertise of its Engineering and Technical Director for free. As the industrial partner, agreed to share the ongoing costs of the project post NESTA funding .</p> <p>DfES 'Vibrant Schools' Network: The Vibrant School Project (VSP) is a collaborative venture between Bath Spa University College School of Education and Wiltshire LEA advisory service. Now in its third year, VSP involves 25 Wiltshire primary schools. Each is undertaking a focused school improvement project to develop into a 'Vibrant School'. The professional network of Educators meets to exchange ideas on creativity and best practice.</p>
Type of learning carried out	<p>Educational. Delivery Mechanism: In curriculum.</p> <p>Anticipated that the following knowledge areas would be covered:- Engineering; Computer Science; Digital & Multimedia; Control Systems; Earth Science; Plant Growth and Observation; Physics; and mathematics.</p>

Setting of learning activities	Local – Primary School - Neston School in Wiltshire is a village based school of 156 pupils plus staff and governors.
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Science and Technology. Anticipated that the following knowledge areas would be covered:- Engineering; Computer Science; Digital & Multimedia; Control Systems; Earth Science; Plant Growth and Observation; Physics; and mathematics.
Profile of participants	Neston School is a primary school which caters for KS1 and 2 pupils with ages ranging from 4 – 11 from Neston and the surrounding villages. The project is designed to embrace the entire school community. All pupils, staff and governors are involved with the moon base.
Expected outcomes	A permanent educational resource in the form of a moon base at the school which will enable hands on experiences for the children in their endeavour to learn about science and technology. Dissemination of the moon base project idea and experiences to other educators and schools.
How participants engaged	All classes have been involved in all stages of the project in diverse areas as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial design ideas • Calculations for the amount of concrete required for the base • Planting of the willow tunnels • Cutting of the paths There is a schedule for which classes use the moon base and the learning objectives of each activity.
Technologies used	The project encompasses world wide weather satellites and radio /wireless technology. Equipment associated with the Moon base and its curriculum applications (from Neston School Moon base Usage Policy):- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowel software to control all the equipment, link it and program a chain of responses. • Full size set of traffic lights. • Electronic message board. • Large solar panel. • Small robot arm. • Satellite dish to receive weather data. • 3 solar powered cars. • Sound-responsive robot. • 3 web cameras. • Underwater camera, camera in nesting box. • Radio transmitter to control devices at a distance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Dak control boards with linked sensors for temperature, Ph, humidity, sound, light intensity, movement, voltage, oxygen and CO2 sensors, data logging software. Laptop computer as a portable centre for this equipment. • Electronic weather station, measuring temperature, humidity, pressure, rainfall and wind speed and transmitting a constant stream of data to a handheld unit in the school. <p>The children are able to program these pieces of equipment remotely to interact.</p>
Geographical coverage	South West. Local – The Moon base and related activities are currently only available to Neston Primary School pupils, Wiltshire.

5. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	<p>Nestonauts was launched following a visit to the States by a father of a Neston pupil, who spotted adverts for the Amateur Radio in Space Station programme. An amateur radio enthusiast himself, he returned committed to extending the link to Neston. Working with the south-west's Vibrant Schools Project, the idea for a Nestonauts Moon base was hatched following discussions about extending the planned space curriculum to include an opportunity for hands-on experiments.</p> <p>During August 2003, pupils from the school, watched by parents, press and members of the public, talked directly with the Astronauts on board the International Space Station, through the NASA funded ARISS (Amateur Radio in Space Station) programme. As the International Space Station rises in the Western sky, Neston School pupils asked the astronauts questions throughout its journey overhead. The previous year school curriculum was been centred around a space theme and the children had understood the science behind the space station, the experiments and the international collaboration that makes it successful. In addition, the children participated in another NASA programme – the polishing of Mirrors for the “Starshine” satellite.</p> <p>These initial 2 ideas came from a parent of a pupil at out school and provided the basis of the initial ideas for the moonbase. From this, the school wished to continue to expand a fantastic learning opportunity and through a collaboration of teachers, pupils, governors and parents, the concept of Neston and the Nestonauts Moon base was born!</p>
Funding history	Not applicable.
Ways in which project has changed	Very little has changed from the initial ideas. The initial concepts were expanded for example the additional of the weather satellite. We have also been able to take advantage of changes in technology.
Sustainability activities	The moon base is itself a permanent feature of the school and so provides an ongoing resource to support the delivery of the curriculum. Detailed Moon base usage plans produced documenting how the moon base will be used to deliver the curriculum for each pupil year 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. The local commercial partner continues to provide technical support and provides financial assistance also as necessary, since the funding from NESTA concluded.

3. Process analysis

<p>Application/assessment process</p>	<p>Learned of the NESTA Learning programme through the Vibrant Schools Project. The application for the grant and contract negotiations were undertaken by governors of the school, and all went very smoothly.</p> <p>On the strength of the schools outline proposal and the relatively small amount of funding requested, NESTA agreed to the award i.e. no full proposal was submitted, clearly indicating the enthusiasm generated within NESTA by the project. Some comments from the NESTA Committee members include:-</p> <p>“A lovely and delightful project. It fits with Charles Clarke's current strategy”.</p> <p>“Adored this idea. Particularly liked the idea of inviting other schools as it is important to concentrate on dissemination”.</p> <p>‘The Committee expressed enthusiasm and interest in this proposal, in particular as the school was in a rural setting and would invite other schools to visit’. (Notes from Committee Meeting).</p>
<p>Funding process</p>	<p>A very detailed cost schedule submitted, which was work within with the exception of challenges created with poor sealing of the dome and inadequate initial security. This project could not have gone ahead without the funding from NESTA and expertise from Westinghouse Rail Group.</p> <p>£35,057 over 12 months from Sept 2003. Milestones and award payments made on three monthly basis.</p> <p>The NESTA Learning team felt that the project was under-costed. The project team were advised to add realistic costs for people's time and for evaluation, and the figures are now more realistic. In-kind support will be given by the staff, parents and governors. The local company has offered to supply the time and expertise of their Engineering and Technical Director for free'. (Case Report for Outline Proposal).</p>
<p>Monitoring process</p>	<p>Project offered to do monthly progress reports, which worked well. Co-ordinator had a project management background and felt it was a really good way of helping them stay on track with the work plan.</p> <p>Milestones:-</p> <p>July 2003: Signature of contract.</p> <p>September 2003: Project starts.</p> <p>October 2003: Copy of feasibility study report and detailed project plan to NESTA. Moon base construction begun.</p> <p>January 2004: Moon base construction complete. Willow planting and buying of internal equipment begun.</p> <p>April 2004: Children's workshops begun. School usage policy and programme developed. Dissemination plans copied to NESTA for approval.</p> <p>July 2004: Copy of evaluation report to NESTA.</p>

Management process	The moon base project was a collective team made up of teachers, governors and an external technical advisor (from local company). The project was managed by the Head teacher, a senior teacher, and the Chair of Governors. No difficulties were experienced in the project management, as the Chair of Governors particularly experienced in this role.
Suggested Programme improvements	<p>Project has been delighted with the funding and support received from NESTA. No problems or deficiencies encountered working with NESTA.</p> <p>Project respondent felt they were only a few primary schools who are NESTA awardees and that it may be worth looking for ways of raising NESTA's profile in primary schools and tapping their rich vein of creativity.</p> <p>However, NESTA should be aware, when considering funding other school projects, that teachers do not have much capacity to engage in managing and setting-up a project like this as there is a lot of project management work involved, so you really do need a good set of governors to keep a project like this going. Once it's up and running, the teachers were able to engage fully with the project, but getting it in place requires strong project management, so external involvement in terms of project management is critical if such projects are to work for schools.</p>

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	<p>"We achieved our objectives and exceeded them, the project really has been a massive success".</p> <p>Objectives met fully and I would agree exceeded – the moon base is an integral sustainable resource for curriculum delivery at the school.</p> <p>Other schools have not yet visited the moon base and made use of it, but 100 head and deputy teachers from across Wiltshire did attend a presentation on the project given by the kids.</p>
Coherence with workplan	Yes.
Innovation aspects	<p>While space is an inspiring way to interest children in science, space science is largely overlooked in education.</p> <p>We are the only primary school in the UK whose pupils have had the opportunity to talk directly with the Astronauts on board the International Space Station.</p> <p>A creative approach to delivering the curriculum – capturing the children's imagination regarding science and technology and giving them atypical experience of direct hands-on participation in the domains of science and technology. Particularly impressive given the age of the children: 4-11.</p>

Utilisation/participation data	Detailed Moon base usage plans produced documenting how the moon base will be used to deliver the curriculum for each pupil year 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. All 156 pupils engage with the moon base in the course of being taught.
Usability and user acceptance	No data.
User satisfaction	No data.
Accessibility	Currently (May 2005) only available to pupils of Neston primary school.
User benefits	<p>This was an educational based project, and the major benefits have been educational, but there has also been a considerable impact in social and personal areas.</p> <p>Education & Skills: Pupils have been able to experience control technology in an exciting, practical and innovative context. Whereas the experience of most primary school children is of small scale simulations of control technology in the real world, this project has involved researching and developing the possibilities of control technology in a futuristic setting. The project has served (and continues to do so) as a superb teaching tool for other areas of the curriculum, it has enabled difficult concepts to be brought to life. A very successful design technology project was carried out, based on the geodesic structure of the moon base. A geography project centred on collection of weather data using the new equipment, and comparing this with data from another country. The dome is an ideal place for science experiments on solar power, reflection of sound, and tracking the movement of the sun. Remote cameras in the school pond and a nearby bird box provide opportunities to study living things.</p> <p>Personal Development: The Children have been able to study group dynamics in social education. By placing groups of children in the moon base with specific tasks, and observing them over a live video link, the class have been able to study group dynamics and how people respond to different situations. They have learned about team working skills and how to take on a variety of roles in a group discussion. By having other children in control of the moon base team, children have practised skills of managing and organising others.</p> <p>Social Development: News was made all the more real with the Space Shuttle Explosion. Pupils were extremely concerned that these were the astronauts they were going to be speaking to. Overall, the project has generated lots of attention from the media and outside agencies. So the entire experience has given the children invaluable experience of wider and larger audiences and a greater appreciation of the wider world.</p> <p>Professional Development: Both our head and Senior Teacher have gained from attending two NESTA funded EVENTS. This has enabled them to swap ideas with other awardees, and make useful contacts. It has helped to move their career and personal development forward, leading to invitations to give presentations to conferences of the education authority. The Senior Teacher is now engaged in a master's degree, which largely involves describing and accrediting work done in the course of the project.</p>

	<p>The Head teacher and Chair of governors have had training and lots of opportunity to develop their media handling skills.</p>
<p>Summary of Impacts</p>	<p>In a professional and organisational sense the project has given the school a huge amount of confidence, because it was a big project idea, a bid for money was made and they were successful both in getting the project funded and in running an excellent project, the outputs of which continue to support the school's educational endeavours. Now they feel more creativity and confidence about accessing money from external sources. In addition really importantly is the kudos of having been given an award by NESTA and having completed a successful big project, it gives them more status and respectability, a successful track record for next time they want to apply for something. It's really improved the school's CV for that purpose.</p> <p>For the kids it really has been and continues to be a fantastic learning resource. They are completely at ease with extremely sophisticated technology, the likes of which we know they won't come across probably in any other learning setting be it secondary or higher education. The children treat this as utterly normal, even though they are working with such sophisticated technology, and in fact feedback regarding pupils who have moved on to secondary school, is that they are considerably ahead of their peers because of the exposure they have had to this exceptional technology and also the advanced learning opportunities the moon base has provided.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced Organisational Capacity: As a school, they have been able to prove that we can bid for and bring in a project to cost. They feel they have greater confidence and kudos to take forward further ground-breaking projects. 2. Educational, Skills & Personal development for Students: They feel they have an unrivalled facility for learning for the children. 3. Professional Development: Close teamwork on this project has given many of those involved with the school an enhanced respect for and appreciation of one another's abilities.
<p>Main successes</p>	<p>No end of project Evaluation Report included in the NESTA case file, therefore below is included details of main usage activities of the Moon base during the development phase of the moon base (i.e. period during which the Moon base project was funded – Sept 2003 to August 2004):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two whole school theatrical productions on a space theme – 'The First Kids in Space' and 'The Bumblesnouts save the Earth'. • Years 5 and 6 have conducted an in-depth design technology project looking at geodesic structures, based around the building of the moon base dome. This has included building a real igloo. • As part of a study of Kenya, weather data was logged over a month. This was analysed and compared with equivalent data for Kenya, obtained from the internet. The geographical explanations for the differences referred to altitude, latitude and local geography. • Members of year 6 constructed a PowerPoint presentation describing the project so far. In June 2004 they

	<p>gave this presentation and a talk to an audience of about 100 primary school head and deputy head teachers across Wiltshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children have made movies set on an imaginary moon base, using plasticene models and animating them with specialist software. • Every child in the school took part in a sunflower growing experiment in the Summer of 2004, using the growing zone. This compared 5 different types of sunflower grown under the same conditions.
Main issues and challenges	Only very minor problems, that didn't impact in any way on achieving their goals. We have been dependant upon technological expertise from outside which has led to delays. We should have allowed more time at the front end of the project to source the technology. However this has been counteracted by changes in technology which has allowed us to achieve greater sophistication in what we have been able to provide.
Cost-effectiveness	It's extremely cost-effective in terms of all the outcomes we have managed to achieve through the project funding and are continuing to see. For example, with the satellite link they can access the meteorological links, which is utterly magical for them, it's bringing science to life for them, as an educational establishment this facility costs us only £150 a month, but if we were a commercial organisation the price tag would be £15,000 a month!
Sustainability	This is an ongoing project which will continue to grow and develop. Detailed Moon base usage plans produced documenting how the moon base will be used to deliver the curriculum for each pupil year 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.
Transferability	In the future, we would like to be able to capitalise on our technological and satellite expertise to allow other schools to benefit from it. We would like to invite other schools to use the facilities over the internet and to visit. This would build relationships between schools, and open up our pupils' awareness of the outside world. However, this would be dependant upon creating additional working space as the school is not big enough to cater for additional pupils. "We really would like the school to become a centre of excellence for other schools to be able to learn from, but at the moment we just don't have the room to have another 30 kids visiting the moon base, it's such an integral part of the curriculum delivery now that if other kids were to come our pupils wouldn't be able to use it, so we're really mulling over at the moment how we can widen access to our resource".
Examples of input to policy	Not applicable.
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	The head teacher and senior teacher represent the school as part of the Vibrant Schools Project - The Vibrant School Project (VSP) is a collaborative venture between Bath Spa University College School of Education and Wiltshire LEA advisory service. Now in its third year, VSP involves 25 Wiltshire primary schools. Each is undertaking a focused school improvement project to develop into a 'Vibrant School'. Through this coming together of senior teaching staff to exchange creativity in the profession, they have been able to inform others

	about the project work, and transfer best practice ideas.
Good Practice examples	Beneficiaries involved in the design / content of the project. (Not a new / innovative approach though – fairly standard, however unusual when you consider that the beneficiaries are aged between 4 and 11 years).

Case study Name: PAL

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	To develop and apply a collaborative learning model for cross-fertilisation of ideas and talent in film, media, technology, visual and performing arts, architecture, education and science.
Partnership arrangements	Complex range of collaborative partnerships with NESTA, large agencies and NGOs (e.g. Wellcome Foundation; Esmee Fairbanks); creative partners; schools; universities; national and international government departments
Type of learning carried out	The basis of the learning delivery platform is the 'Lab' – which brings together a range of 'talented people', either from a particular sector (e.g. screenwriting) or in a 'cross-discipline' format (e.g. Labs of Learning) in experimental 'imaginative risk-taking' learning events. The underlying pedagogic approach is primarily constructivist in orientation, scope and practice. The main aim of the exercise is to break down hierarchies that inhibit creativity, collaboration and learning. The spectrum of Labs covers: architecture; broadband; chaos; dance; family film, tv and interactive media; food; games; labs of learning; music theatre; playwrights; scriptwriters. NESTA has funded the 'Labs of Learning'.
Setting of learning activities	The Labs are normally run from 'Bore House' in Kent, which provides the setting for in-residence experiments (typically 10 days duration). This template is recreated in other settings (for example 'SCRAWL' in South Africa; PYGMALION in different European locations; MUSIC LAB, Senegal).
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Film, media, technology, visual and performing arts, architecture, education and science.
Profile of participants	Depends on the 'Lab'. 'Discipline-based' labs bring together specialists in their particular discipline (e.g. screenwriters). Labs of Learning bring together teachers, scientists, performing artists.
Expected outcomes	The main expected outcome is to equip participants with 'learning skills' – i.e. to become more creative and collaborative in their subsequent 'learning interactions'. The related outcomes are: i) contribution to enhanced and increased creative output in their field (e.g. more and better quality film scripts; better teaching methods) ii) participants act as 'product champions' and contribute to knowledge transfer in their domains, e.g. in teaching practices iii) participation incrementally builds 'communities of practice' and 'constituencies of knowledge' that further expand the knowledge base in different fields, and also facilitate cross-disciplinary learning and knowledge transfer
How participants engaged	Complex process. Recruitment to the labs is through a combination of: grapevine; referrals; 'third party' gatekeepers (e.g. Arts and Creative Industries Compendia profile and 'advertise' PAL services); unsolicited applications. 'Discipline-based' labs tend to be largely self-generating, in that they typically involve high profile practitioners in areas like dance and screenwriting. Cross-discipline labs, like 'Labs of Learning' draw participants from a wider range of constituencies. In the latter case, prospective participants are asked to set out a 'statement of interest' and are selected on the basis of their statement. There is no systematic template or 'objective' criteria for assessment of these statements. The selection process does not incorporate 'mainstreaming' or 'access protocols' (e.g. 'inclusion' criteria; active mainstreaming or so on).
Technologies used	PAL services are not technology delivered, in the sense that they use e-learning platforms. However, technology is

	emphasised in the range of services offered, and three of the eleven Lab 'sectors' are specifically orientated to 'technologies': Broadband Labs; Interactive Media Labs; Game Labs.
Geographical coverage	Residential labs focus mainly on Bore House, Kent. The catchment population is drawn from all over the UK, but has concentrations in London and the South East. There are four International 'sister' services in South Africa, Europe, Senegal.

5. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	PAL began in 1989 with three residential Labs for theatre and film writers and opera composers and librettists. Collaboration with (and funding from NESTA) began 10 years later. PAL were invited by NESTA to develop a pilot project (Choreographers Lab) to build on the experiences acquired from previous Labs and to create the groundwork for 'Labs of Learning'.
Funding history	£20,000 (Choreographers Lab, 1999); £1,105,263 (Labs of Learning, 2001-2004). Partner, 'Digital Trust' (Wellcome Trust, £100,000)
Ways in which project has changed	Continuous process of 'iterative prototyping'. Choreographers' Lab piloted model; Labs of Learning Pilot (2001) applied model in cross-disciplinary learning context; Labs of Learning Pilot Review (2002) consolidated pilot experience; 'Roll out' in successive years.
Sustainability activities	NESTA-funded projects (Choreographers Lab and Labs of Learning) are integrated within continuous PAL strategy of improving, adapting and transferring models into diversification of PAL services. These include: PAL International (e.g. SCRAWL; PYGMALION); PAL Services (research services; research labs; pilot labs; commissioned labs); continuation of non-NESTA funded labs (Dance; Playwrights; Food; Game Lab)

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	PAL approached by NESTA. Negotiation of project direction and strategy led to initial pilot project (Choreographers' Lab) followed by Labs of Learning.
Funding process	No major problems reported. PAL gets by far the most substantial funding of Learning Programme.
Monitoring process	Reflecting its size, PAL wanted regular monthly meetings with NESTA (1 business; 1 'creative'). PAL argue that this wish was not fully complied with – meetings are irregular and depend on project officer. PAL also have perception that 'knowledge sharing' with NESTA does not happen on a collaborative and 'equal' basis. They have the perception that NESTA absorbs 'PALness' and there is little reciprocal knowledge exchange, e.g. with other Learning Programme projects.
Management process	NESTA too 'top heavy' in terms of management structure. Their hierarchical structure makes it difficult to promote a true collaborative knowledge sharing culture between NESTA and awardees. NESTA fails to treat projects as 'partners'. NESTA acts too much as an 'award giver' and not enough as a 'knowledge mediator' and dissemination agency.
Suggested Programme	i) Clear procedures about IPR and acknowledgement by NESTA of creative contribution made by projects ii)

improvements	Space, protocols and mechanisms for collaborative knowledge-sharing across the Programme iii) mechanisms to build reflexivity into the Programme. PAL suggest the that PAL learning model should be used in a more embedded formative evaluation process that enables all stakeholders in the Programme – including Trustees – to build shared consensus about its mission, values and objectives iv) more effective dissemination mechanisms to ensure that knowledge created in the Programme has an influence on policy and practice – NESTA needs to be far more concerned about mapping, managing and utilising its ‘learning legacy’
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4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	Between 1989 and 1998, PAL delivered 27 Labs in total. Between 1999 and 2004 (the NESTA funding period) 62 Labs were delivered. This would suggest a substantial increase in productivity associated with the funding.
Coherence with workplan	No major deviation from project objectives, outputs and milestones.
Innovation aspects	Firstly, and primarily, the LAB concept itself is seen as a pedagogic innovation, reflecting a collaborative learning model for cross-fertilisation of ideas. The degree to which this is truly innovative is open for debate. It could be argued that PAL was already an established – and stable – model when NESTA funded the Choreographers Lab in 1999, and that the subsequent enhancements of the model and its migration to other disciplines are refinements rather than fundamentally innovative developments. PAL would argue however that the ‘Labs of Learning’ contribute to moving forward state of the art particularly since they promote cross-disciplinary collaboration and learning between previously unengaged practitioners. For example, the fusion of dance and science in the ‘Creative Science’ Labs enables dancers to explore the ‘physics of movement’ and allows science teachers to understand how science can be socially embedded in communicative practices. This is consistent with current pedagogic theory and research that emphasises the need to promote knowledge transfer between disciplinary ‘silos’. Perhaps more problematic is the extent to which the delivery mechanism of the PAL model is innovative. Residential experimental learning environments are not new (indeed some aspects of the PAL Labs are reminiscent of the ‘Group Relations’ format in their focus on breaking down power structures and hierarchies, and overcoming ‘resistance’ through group interactions – although psychodynamic and socio-technical models and practices are not explicitly formalised in the learning process). Nor is the constructivist basis of the learning approach followed particularly new, with its emphasis on well-established experiential learning paradigms (Kolb, 1984). The evidence suggests that PAL’s innovativeness lies mainly in the contextualisation of these models, paradigms and practices in novel ways, and in ways that integrate streams of knowledge and creativity that are typically separated – for example ‘Chaos’ Labs; Labs of Learning; SCRAWL and PYGMALION.
Utilisation/participation data	Approximately 3,000 participants in 89 Labs since 1989. In NESTA funding period, approximately 2,200 participants in 62 Labs (but only a proportion of these have been delivered in the NESTA-funded ‘Learning’ and ‘Choreographers’ sectors) .
Usability and user acceptance	All the evaluation reports suggest a high level of user acceptance of the PAL services.
User satisfaction	Evaluation reports highlight extremely high levels of user satisfaction expressed by participants at the ‘Labs of

	Learning’.
Accessibility	This is a potentially problematic aspect of PAL. The majority of the Labs are essentially self-selecting, in that they bring together prominent practitioners in performing arts and similar disciplines. For Labs of Learning, recruitment to the labs is through a combination of: grapevine; referrals; ‘third party’ gatekeepers. Prospective participants are asked to set out a ‘statement of interest’ and are selected on the basis of their statement. There is no systematic template or ‘objective’ criteria for assessment of these statements. The selection process does not incorporate ‘mainstreaming’ or ‘access protocols’ (e.g. ‘inclusion’ criteria; active mainstreaming or so on).
User benefits	Evaluation reports identify a comprehensive range of benefits associated with participation in Labs of Learning. These included: developing creativity and ‘multiple intelligence’; expanding and improving teaching competences; increasing motivation to teach; broadening horizons and expanding personal knowledge base through cross-fertilisation of ideas; promoting ‘risk taking’; improving communications and personal interaction skills; enhanced self-worth and confidence; developing collaborative networks.
Summary of Impacts	‘Quantifiable’ impacts can be measured in terms of ‘products’ and substantive outputs. For example, Dance Labs directly led to 19 subsequently commissioned performances; Screenwriters Labs directly contributed to 18 films produced. For Labs of Learning, direct outputs appear to be: teaching materials (5 examples cited in evaluation reports) and collaborative projects (6 cited including science festivals, residential courses based on the PAL model and a ‘Big Bang’ science musical). However, PAL’s position is that Labs of Learning is not product but ‘knowledge-based’, and the main impacts associated with the Labs of Learning are: i) disseminating innovative new practices into the teaching curriculum ii) contributing to improved student achievement as a result of the implementation of these new practices iii) continuing professional development for teachers iv) promoting learning support networks and knowledge exchange v) contributing to further developing the PAL generic model. These impacts are difficult to support and quantify. For example, one conclusion of the evaluation of the ‘Creative Science’ Lab was that “creative partnerships can make schools into true community schools” – yet there is no evidence to support this extrapolation of learning benefits from the highly bounded organisational space of the Lab environment to the complex ‘life world’ of communities in which participating teachers operate.
Main successes	Successfully migrating and enhancing the Lab concept from its ‘performing arts’ base to a cross-disciplinary ‘learning-focused’ environment. Improving teaching competences through cross-fertilisation and collaboration. Developing an evidence base for collaborative learning models and approaches.
Main issues and challenges	The dangers of ‘exclusivity’ and lack of a systematic and formalised ‘equal opportunities’ and inclusion agenda. The lack of a model and tools for demonstrating ‘value added’ and the ‘wider benefits of learning’. From PAL’s perspective, the lack of a framework and infrastructure in NESTA’s organisational structure and the Learning Programme architecture to enable the learning from PAL to be properly disseminated. Ensuring sustainability once NESTA funding has finished.
Cost-effectiveness	Difficult to estimate. On the basis of total labs delivered and numbers participating in NESTA funding period,

	average cost is £18,150 per Lab and £514 per participant. Excluding an estimate of the Labs delivered for the sectors not covered by NESTA funding (i.e. the cost for 'Labs of Learning' alone) the estimated cost is £134,000 per Lab and £3,806 per participant (as a comparator, the cost per participant at the 'Leicester Conference' residential events is £3,500). Cost-effectiveness at a broader level – for example in relation to contributing to the economy as a whole, and in terms of the 'wider benefits' of learning – are impossible to quantify. For example, it could be argued that one 'Full Monty' (the script for which was developed directly from a PAL lab) more than pays for the funding provided by NESTA. This reinforces a general conclusion for the Learning Programme as a whole – there is a real need to develop models to assess cost-effectiveness from perspectives other than 'human capital' and 'internal rates of return'.
Sustainability	PAL has demonstrated its sustainability over more than 15 years. There is strong evidence that the PAL model is stable and meets a clear market need.
Transferability	Over 15 years, the PAL model has been transferred across a number of diverse disciplines, from Dance to Food. Labs of Learning expands the model to focus on cross-disciplinary knowledge transfer within a specifically 'teaching and learning' context. PAL have plans to further transfer the model, and the learning derived from it, to other related sectors, including: 'Failing to learn'; 'Volatile and Challenging' learning situations; Labs of Learning through the senses; direct marketing to schools.
Examples of input to policy	Contribution to House of Commons Select Committees; Conseil d'Europe; input to Singapore Government's strategy for developing Creative Industries; membership of 'European Cultural Backbone', Brussels.
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	Evidence of extensive networking and collaborations across sectors. Media: BBC; Harper Collins; Guardian; BFI; Government: UK Film Council; Arts Council; Skills Council. Academia: Cambridge University; Manchester U; W Virginia State; Goldsmiths; Brussels Free University; University of the Arts, London. Funding agencies: Wellcome Trust; Esmee Fairbanks
Good Practice examples	i) PAL pedagogic model of cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge transfer ii) 'iterative prototyping' methodology – needs analysis; piloting; validation; roll out; evaluation; modification and enhancement; transfer

Case Study : Planet Jemma

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	Raise awareness and the perception of physics as a further education study choice amongst young women thinking of following a science degree course and provide attractive and positive role models for this target group through the creation of a fictional online character and engaging the users in an interactive online drama
Partnership arrangements	NESTA commissioned XPT to adapt an existing online soap Online Caroline with a science element for inclusion in the science year portfolio of projects. It was original intended to be incorporated into science year portal but never became part of it. NESTA kept close control on the way the project developed assigning two supervisors, assisting in putting together editorial group, monitoring progress at every step and made sure ownership was in their hands by meeting hosting costs and providing server hardware (this was perhaps good move given the difficulties XPT faced at a crucial stage in project). A detailed business plan was set out in the original proposal to sustain the project after initial funding period ended but in the end no revenue was generated as the learning director was anxious that the user group were not targeted by marketing or charged premium rate SMS charges.
Type of learning carried out	Raising perception amongst young women of science in general and specifically physics as option for university study by providing positive role models.
Setting of learning activities	Online
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Science
Profile of participants	13-18 yr old female students possibly considering science as a university option.
Expected outcomes	Engagement in interactive online drama involving cyber character: physics undergraduate Jemma. The aim was that users became regular visitors to site and viewed the full 14 episodes by which time their perception of physics (a predominantly male dominated field) was likely to have been raised and their interest in making it their chosen career path improved.
How participants engaged	Marketing campaigns
Technologies used	Online interactive drama; mixed and new media.
Geographical coverage	National (did include modest number of US users too but no campaign undertaken outside UK)

6. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	NESTA / Science Year coordinator approached XPT to adapt existing technology in order to reach target group and indicated that a proposal fitting brief would be favourably looked upon. XPT worked up a proposal that fitted the bill and would fit neatly into the science year portfolio of projects. It was also to become one of the flagship NESTA projects
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	associated with the NESTA brand.
Funding history	£99k award to XPT to develop, produce and deliver site; NESTA bought server hardware and hosting; budgeting for supervision (two assigned) and a contingency budget for additional marketing also used. Close control of project by (put in role rather than name) Holly Moore at all times.
Ways in which project has changed	Some features adopted against advice of some involved like SMS (in full) use and a number of possible avenues of revenue and exploitation never fully explored, (partly to do with project officer's reluctance to get embroiled in ethical issues about commercially targeting young teenage girls and partly to do with the mindset of the time that a project didn't need to produce tangible financial outcomes to be worth doing).
Sustainability activities	See above. SMS not charged for and no advertising at all on site. No revenue streams contemplated at early stages possible to follow through. Some benefits from dissemination activities for both XPT and NESTA

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	Project commissioned by NESTA / Science Year
Funding process	£99k paid to XPT over period of instalments
Monitoring process	Close management by title of job Holly Moore; two supervisors/evaluators assigned
Management process	See above
Suggested Programme improvements	None

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	Fully if the statistics from site can be regarded as reliable (40% of users reported improved image of physics as career choice). How many users went on to take up university places in physics not clear. Project became associated with NESTA brand and demonstrated NESTA ability to get involved to greater degree than in other projects: buying server etc to support other projects
Coherence with workplan	Kept close to work plan in everything except commercial exploitation; adopted features against advice such as SMS; clearly not afraid to make mistakes but closely monitored throughout and achievement for role title Holly Moore to bring such a diverse group of disciplines together to make project a success
Innovation aspects	Based on existing technology but innovative in that it contributes to change in story telling techniques by using interactive online drama mixing new media. Main criteria is to meet need of reaching target group
Utilisation/participation data	total of 35K users
Usability and user acceptance	Appears to have been good having been based on tried and tested formula.
User satisfaction	Good proportion of users viewed all 14 episodes. No significant technical recommendations for future

	products. Some felt it was light on science but involvement of editorial group guaranteed focus was appropriate for aims of project.
Accessibility	Good
User benefits	Positive role models of women in science particularly physics brought about improved perception of this field of study as real option for user group.
Summary of Impacts	As above 40% report improved opinion. Statistics detailed (see final report)
Main successes	Reaching the target group and according to statistics achieving the aim as above.
Main issues and challenges	It was always about getting the right balance between the science and the entertainment and keep the target group engaged. The other big challenge and success for the NESTA lead was to bring group of people from different disciplines together to work effectively on project
Cost-effectiveness	Big marketing push to increase user numbers at relatively late stage could be viewed as risk but had desired impact and led to increase in numbers from 20K to 35K. though this involved using contingency funds it was cost effective.
Sustainability	Dealt with above. No revenue would be created without advertising or charging for messaging etc. Some further funding resulting from dissemination
Transferability	Technology fairly easy to adapt for different languages or content
Examples of input to policy	Unable to track with NESTA staff that were involved at the time. Difficult to say without talking to some of NESTA staff involved at time
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	Unclear as learning element not really at forefront
Good Practice examples	Management of project seems to have been undertaken with enthusiasm and dedication by role? Holly Moore in particular with regard to working with editorial board and finding solutions when things got tough with XPT financial situation; appointment of two supervisors seems excessive and background of Sheila in broadcasting meant that some creative conflicts occurred with XPT team when shooting and production started; also seems unwise in some ways of NESTA project officer? to disregard advice and go with the SMS option without exploring possible partnerships to make thing pay.

Case Study: Razor Edge – Theatre Initiative for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties

1. Characteristics of the project

<p>Aims and objectives</p>	<p>Objective: To set up a <i>pathway</i> for people with learning difficulties for a career in the performing arts through developing and running a higher Education course, which would be recognised by employers in the performing Arts Industry. The aim is to develop a progression route for those with learning difficulties in the field of P.A. and to address their right to both quality higher education and employment.</p> <p>Text from Full Proposal (Nesta Case File):-</p> <p><u>Aims</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new multi-sensory model of learning that will nurture the abilities and potential of talented people with severe learning difficulties, enabling them to exceed usual expectations and access higher education in the performing arts. • Create a national blue-print for the inclusion of students with severe learning difficulties in he in the performing arts. • Create a national blueprint for the inclusion of lecturers with severe learning difficulties in he in the performing arts. • Enable artists with severe learning difficulties, wjo are currently underrepresented, to enter the cultural industries and become change agents. • Enable artists with learning difficulties to become leaders in their field. <p><u>Project Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 highly-skilled new artists with learning difficulties will enter the cultural industries. • 4 artists with learning difficulties will for the first time develop the skills to deliver a performingarts curriculum at degree level. • 10 employers will develop their policies and practice regarding the involvement and employment of learning-impaired artists. • 10 HE institutions will develop their policies and practice regarding training of/relating to people with learning difficulties. <p>The whole point of the project is to provide learning at a HE level for a group who up until now have been totally excluded from this learning environment and who also are largely excluded from <i>paid</i> employment in the P.A. industry i.e. may be given a present for undertaking work, but paid work is rare because there is often the difficulty and anxiety re losing benefits - a significant disincentive with regard to finding paid work; plus employers in the PA industry often simply don't perceive those with learning difficulties as professionals, because up until now there has been no pathway for the learning disabled to develop a career in the PA.</p>
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	<p>At the heart of the project is the message that learning disabled people have a right to access quality learning at a higher education level and the right to aspire to and work towards a career/profession which will involve proper pay and status. At the moment there is no pathway for these people, there is no were for them to go to in terms of jobs, so our project will pilot a pathway for them to become trained performers, and we are also providing jobs for the current team members – they will be lecturers in higher education, although formally they won't be 'qualified' lecturers, but they do have contracts that are equivalent to HE lecturers in terms of salary scale and conditions.</p> <p>An intended wider benefit of the project is to actually create a model of teaching and learning to allow atypical learners to take their place in higher education.</p> <p>Key Activities:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a team of learning disabled teachers, who will with the two project managers develop team-teaching non-verbal performing arts teaching techniques / approaches to be used with learning disabled students in HE. 2. In partnership with a college of FE offer a two year diploma course in the performing arts for learning disabled individuals. 3. Recruit 12-15 learning disabled students and pilot the two year H.E. diploma in the performing arts. 4. Following completion of the course (post Nesta funding) the students will have another year in which they gain work experience with employers in the PA industry and continue to gain support and skills classes from the teaching team. It is anticipated that five employers will be involved with this stage of the course (so far three have agreed: the Oval House Theatre; the Oily Cart Children's Theatre Company; and the Bubble House). 5. Dissemination and awareness raising amongst HE establishments regarding access for the learning disabled to HE and the learning model and techniques currently being developed by the team. Links have already been made with Roehampton University, Exeter University, and the Central School of Speech and Drama. <p>Current stage of project: 2 and a half days a week the team meet to work on developing the new learning model, which focuses on an approach that uses a team of teachers working collectively to teach, rather than a single teacher providing instruction; and also largely operates on the basis of non-verbal teaching techniques – which the team are having to develop. And also the four trainee teachers with learning difficulties are developing their own performing arts skills and also individual teaching skills.</p> <p>Recruitment for students to begin the course will begin shortly, with a view to the course commencing September 2005.</p> <p>Mike explains the force that drives the professional training programme: "Artists with learning difficulties are rightfully demanding new opportunities to train to a professional level. We are establishing the Razor Edge rogramme because artists with learning difficulties are currently not gaining access to appropriate higher education</p>
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	<p>and training in the performing arts. It's time these artists were more widely recognised for the contribution they can make to the cultural life of the UK."</p> <p>Educating and empowering people with learning disabilities: The opportunities for vocational training for people with learning difficulties (eg people with Down's Syndrome), particularly in higher education, have historically been extremely limited.</p> <p>The industry itself needs educating to understand and value the contribution these individuals can make and how far they can contribute to the cultural life of the UK. There is a tendency for employers to have low expectations, which has led to a degree of stereotyping of artists with learning difficulties.</p> <p>Mike sees the learning process as being two-way, with non-disabled people learning from people with learning difficulties. He wants to build on his experience of workshops where "employers and academics are taught and challenged by people with learning difficulties".</p> <p>The course will have strong links with employers from the outset. Students and staff will build relationships with future employers. On completion of the course, participants will act as 'change agents' within the cultural industries, challenging current employment and artistic practice.</p>
<p>Partnership arrangements</p>	<p>Razor Edge: The team of 6 co-teachers: Mike and Irene (Project Managers) + 4 trained teachers, who themselves have learning difficulties.</p> <p>Partner = Mount View College of FE is the educational establishment through which the diploma will be offered.</p> <p>Having approached various HE and FE colleges to partner with us on this project, we finally found a partner in the Rose Bruford College and built a relationship with a very senior member there. The agreement was to deliver a pilot of a three year degree in performing arts for learning disabled. However, our contact left the College, and we found ourselves left at sea as we had had the relationship mainly with him, almost as if he had kept us at arms length from the rest of the college for whatever his own agenda was. Anyway, we talked with others at the College, and to be honest they were pretty horrified by the promises that our contact had made to us, but nonetheless we worked together with them to try and make the project a more realistic and viable goal. At this point of course we had to speak to Nesta and say actually, sorry but we can't deliver a three year degree programme, instead we are now thinking of a foundation degree. The college doesn't validate its own courses, so through discussions with the Arts Learning Partnership we got in contact with London Met university to try and get our course accredited. In actual fact Rose Bruford undertook all the negotiations with London Met, but in the end London Met said that they couldn't validate it because of resources, this was in April 2004. At this point we had already deferred the project for one year, we'd managed to keep the team on board, but really felt that we needed to make progress now, as otherwise it just wasn't</p>

	<p>fair on the team. So since we were in possession of funding, since June 2004 the team has been working on the model of teaching, and the trainee teachers have been receiving pay. However, we still had the problem of our course not being accredited and progress with Rose Bruford seemed to be at a standstill. So, thankfully in November 2004 one of our Board put us in contact with the Principle of Mount View College, who even before meeting with us started to lay the groundwork for our course to be delivered through them. He spoke with Middlesex University, but unfortunately they won't accredit our course either, but in partnership with Mount View we have now decided that a two year diploma course is far more realistic and manageable for a pilot and that for the time being it will simply have to run as a non-validated course, a pilot.</p>
Type of learning carried out	<p>Skills: performing arts skills for learning disabled. Educational / Qualifications: wanted the 'HE diploma' course to be formally accredited / validated, but as yet it is not, however it will be delivered in association with Mount view College of FE. Social: Professional – creating awareness amongst employers of the capabilities of learning disabled as paid employees, but also the issues around paid employment / benefits for these individuals. Also raising awareness amongst the HE community with regard to access for those with learning difficulties, and the methods/techniques to be used in a new teaching model for the learning disabled. Personal: For the learning disabled teachers and the students – independence, confidence, social relations, increased sense of self-worth and place in the community, aspirations to go further and be in paid work.</p>
Setting of learning activities	<p>Multiple. Current base is the Oval Theatre where the learning disabled team members are becoming 'teachers' and the team as a whole are developing the new model of teaching appropriate for learning disabled individuals. The diploma course will be based at Mount View College. In addition, the students will undertake work placements with different performing arts employers.</p>
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	<p>Discipline: Performing Arts</p>
Profile of participants	<p>The team of learning disabled teachers who are currently working on developing appropriate teaching methods for those with learning difficulties studying the performing arts = 4.</p> <p>Aiming for 12 learning disabled students for the first cohort, but will probably try and recruit 15 in case of drop-out.</p> <p>Those with severe learning difficulties – that is in H.E and F.E. learning difficulties is often used to describe those with say dyslexia, but this project focuses on those individuals with more extreme learning difficulties, such as the down syndrome condition, where individuals experience considerable difficulty with the traditional teaching/learning forms of the written and spoken word, so we look to teach using non-verbal techniques.</p>

	The four trainee teachers are all male – late twenties to early forties. It is hoped that the students will involve a gender mix. No age range is specified. The students will be from both music backgrounds and acting backgrounds.
Expected outcomes	<p>At time of proposal and agreed for the original contract, <u>Project Outcomes were to include:-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 highly-skilled new artists with learning difficulties will enter the cultural industries. • 4 artists with learning difficulties will for the first time develop the skills to deliver a performing arts curriculum at degree level. • 10 employers will develop their policies and practice regarding the involvement and employment of learning-impaired artists. • 10 HE institutions will develop their policies and practice regarding training of/relating to people with learning difficulties. <p>From information gathered in the interview, it now appears that the Intended outcomes include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development in terms of raised aspirations, confidence and independence of the students (12) and learning disabled teachers (4). • Skills development in the PA for students and the learning disabled teachers. • Having piloted a two year diploma in the PA in partnership with an FE college, for 12 learning disabled students to graduate from the course. • Increased awareness within the HE sector with regard to the new model and techniques of teaching the learning disabled being developed, through workshops at HE establishments to demonstrate the approach. Long term aim being to increase access opportunities to HE for learning disabled. • To have agreed work experience opportunities with five performing arts employers for the 12 students to commence once the two year diploma has been completed. Long term aim is to increase employers understanding of the abilities, skills and career desires of learning disabled, so that greater opportunities develop for employment in the PA industry.
How participants engaged	<p>As the only course of its kind in the UK, the act of participating / being a student on the course will confer its own kudos and sense of importance for the students. In addition it is still hoped that the course might be formally validated, but if not, it is none the less the case that the diploma will be being delivered mainstream at Mount View College of FE.</p> <p>Word of mouth / referrals and application.</p>
Technologies used	None.
Geographical coverage	The southeast.

7. Initiating circumstances and evolution

<p>How originated</p>	<p>While there have been huge successes along the way, establishing the Razor's Edge initiative has been a 20-year journey for Irene and Mike. One early trigger was their involvement in (GYPT) Green Jam project, which was inspired by a youth theatre tour to Jamaica, by a group of young people with learning difficulties. Bolstered by Green Jam's success and driven by the clear need for people with learning difficulties to have significant new vocational training opportunities, Irene and Mike devoted the early 1990s to writing the course plan for the Theatre Arts Course, Greenwich which ran from 1995-1998.</p> <p>To Irene Kappes and Mike Ormerod, two theatre and education practitioners whose paths first crossed at the Greenwich and Lewisham Young Peoples Theatre (GYPT) in the 1980s, it was apparent that there were no progression routes to a degree-level professional training for this group of atypical learners.</p> <p>They began to work with a group of talented artists with learning difficulties, and alongside these artists started to develop a new model of learning. The new model would enable other learning-disabled individuals to progress beyond usual expectations, become leaders in their 'field' and help establish positive role models for the talented artists among the 160,000 adults with learning difficulties who live in the UK.</p> <p>Trying to convince funders and HE that this approach will work has been and really continues to be the main difficulty of our work. And yet, learning disabled are excluded from HE not just because the teaching methods do not match their requirements, but also because although theoretically they could get into HE, their benefits are organised and released pretty much in a way that precludes them financially from participating. Our course is different from a standard course and really if the innovatory funding from Nesta hadn't arisen I don't think we could have got the project off the ground, I mean it's something we've been trying to do for years.</p> <p>Having approached various HE and FE colleges to partner with us on this project, we finally found a partner in the Rose Bruford College and built a relationship with a very senior member there. The agreement was to deliver a pilot of a three year degree in performing arts for learning disabled.</p>
<p>Funding history</p>	<p>Already was in the process of applying for funding from Esmee Fairbairn</p> <p>Overall the project from conception has been most problematic with regard to 1. securing a partner in HE; and 2. prior to securing the Nesta funding, basically getting it funded.</p> <p>With regard to funding, prior to Nesta agreeing, we tried the DfE and HEFCE, but got no where with securing statutory funding, and also had great difficulty getting funding from Trusts. The problem has been that we couldn't guarantee that people with learning disabilities could study to the level that we were proposing, but it's chicken and egg isn't it, because that is why we need to do the pilot!</p>

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<p>Ways in which project has changed</p>	<p>Overall the project from conception has been most problematic with regard to 1. securing a partner in HE; and 2. funding.</p> <p>With regard to funding, prior to Nesta agreeing, we tried the DfE and HEFCE, but got no where with securing statutory funding, and also had great difficulty getting funding from Trusts. The problem has been that we couldn't guarantee that people with learning disabilities could study to the level that we were proposing, but it's chicken and egg isn't it, because that is why we need to do the pilot!</p> <p>Trying to convince funders and HE that this approach will work has been and really continues to be the main difficulty of our work. And yet, learning disabled are excluded from HE not just because the teaching methods do not match their requirements, but also because although theoretically they could get into HE, their benefits are organised and released pretty much in a way that precludes them financially from participating. Our course is different from a standard course and really if the innovatory funding from Nesta hadn't arisen I don't think we could have got the project off the ground, I mean it's something we've been trying to do for years.</p> <p>Having approached various HE and FE colleges to partner with us on this project, we finally found a partner in the Rose Bruford College and built a relationship with a very senior member there. The agreement was to deliver a pilot of a three year degree in performing arts for learning disabled. However, our contact left the College, and we found ourselves left at sea as we had had the relationship mainly with him, almost as if he had kept us at arms length from the rest of the college for whatever his own agenda was. Anyway, we talked with others at the College, and to be honest they were pretty horrified by the promises that our contact had made to us, but nonetheless we worked together with them to try and make the project a more realistic and viable goal. At this point of course we had to speak to Nesta and say actually, sorry but we can't deliver a three year degree programme, instead we are now thinking of a foundation degree. The college doesn't validate its own courses, so through discussions with the Arts learning Partnership we got in contact with London Met university to try and get our course accredited. In actual fact Rose Bruford undertook all the negotiations with London Met, but in the end London Met said that they couldn't validate it because of resources, this was in April 2004. At this point we had already deferred the project for one year, we'd managed to keep the team on board, but really felt that we needed to make progress now, as otherwise it just wasn't fair on the team. So since we were in possession of funding, since June 2004 the team has been working on the model of teaching, and the trainee teachers have been receiving pay. However, we still had the problem of our course not being accredited and progress with Rose Bruford seemed to be at a standstill. So, thankfully in November 2004 one of our board put us in contact with the Principle of Mount View College, who even</p>

	before meeting with us started to lay the groundwork for our course be delivered through them. He spoke with Middlesex University, but unfortunately they won't accredit our course either, but in partnership with Mount View we have now decided that a two year diploma course is far more realistic and manageable for a pilot and that for the time being it will simply have to run as a non-validated course.
Sustainability activities	<p>Liaison with HE establishments regarding the work that Razor Edge is doing, to try and raise awareness and interest in the teaching approach being pioneered and looking to the future of the course in terms of it being validated post piloting.</p> <p>Dissemination and awareness raising amongst HE establishments regarding access for the learning disabled to HE and the learning model and techniques currently being developed by the team. Links have already been made with Roehampton University, Exeter University, and the Central School of Speech and Drama.</p>

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	<p>'Introduced' to Nesta by a colleague of significant status. Don't think that we would have had a chance of getting funding from Nesta without having been introduced to them by our contact, who is well respected and known. Nesta don't solicit projects do they.</p> <p>We thought Nesta was fantastic to start with, they were very rigorous with the application procedure, but also very supportive. It really felt as though they thought our project was a worthwhile project and there was really this sense that they would work with us to make the project happen and be successful. They weren't like other funders in terms of being secretive and withdrawn with regard to the whole process, rather they were engaged and openly discussed what we needed to do with the proposal to take it workable and so on, they were just much more open and honest. The message at the start seemed to be, it's a good project, get the planning right in terms of what you can deliver and then we will fund it, which they did. The feedback from the Trustees at Nesta was that it was a very ambitious project, but that didn't scare them, I suppose because they know that innovative projects are higher risk and they welcome that. In the early stages they really did help us to clarify our thinking, gave us useful advice and were just very supportive.</p>
Funding process	<p>Already was in the process of applying for funding from Esmee Fairbairn Following the Esmee Fairbairn and Nesta awards, also secured some funding through True Colours.</p> <p>Extremely good, in that through the process of applying we actually increased the budget, so that it was greater than in our first draft of the proposal, and really they were quite supportive of that. However, I think that we were a bit short sighted in not asking for a greater amount for the teachers, saying that though there is a contingency fund of 10% of the total budget, which we haven't used yet, so I probably will speak to Nesta about directing this to the teachers costs – that flexibility is good.</p>

	<p>Part of the problem for us was having continuous cash flow problems – we are a small charity organisation, but up until recently Nesta had only been releasing funding on a three monthly basis and it was released on the basis of us having achieved milestones, which is understandable, but was causing huge amounts of stress and difficulty with regard to the learning disabled members of the team financial situations (problems re benefits). Things are a bit better now – Nesta are releasing funds for six month periods, but we are still in the position of only being able to give short term contracts to our learning disabled teachers, so there is still a constant worry for them about their future, for example we are in mid May now and they don't know whether they will still have a job in July. Basically it would really help us if the milestones weren't at the same point as reporting and release of funding – it involves too many crunch points in a short space of time. Total funding (181K) is for 3 years (it has worked out as 1 year set up and training of the teachers and next two years piloting of the diploma course).</p> <p>With regard to funding, prior to Nesta agreeing, we tried the DfE and HEFCE, but got no where with securing statutory funding, and also had great difficulty getting funding from Trusts. The problem has been that we couldn't guarantee that people with learning disabilities could study to the level that we were proposing, but it's chicken and egg isn't it, because that is why we need to do the pilot!</p> <p>Trying to convince funders and HE that this approach will work has been and really continues to be the main difficulty of our work. And yet, learning disabled are excluded from HE not just because the teaching methods do not match their requirements, but also because although theoretically they could get into HE, their benefits are organised and released pretty much in a way that precludes them financially from participating. Our course is different from a standard course and really if the innovatory funding from Nesta hadn't arisen I don't think we could have got the project off the ground.</p>
<p>Monitoring process</p>	<p>Basically it would really help us if the milestones weren't at the same point as reporting and release of funding – it involves too many crunch points in a short space of time.</p> <p>We were granted the funds and started working with our project officer who was great, very straight with us and rigorous, but also very supportive and enthusiastic.</p> <p>However, just as we hit the really big problem in our project in April 2004 (when we heard that the Foundation Course wasn't to be approved and our relationship with our original FE college Rose Bruford was at an all time low), our project officer left, there was a big reshuffle at Nesta internally (the then chair or CEO was leaving etc), and the endowment from the government either stopped or was significantly reduced. The result was that we had a temporary project officer appointed who had an extremely heavy workload and didn't know our project, and it felt to us as if there was a lot of tightening up at Nesta in terms of money watching and accountability. So basically the feeling of flexibility, supportiveness and innovation that had been the key characteristics of Nesta</p>

	<p>seemed to disappear. We were in a very tricky situation with the project in terms of how it could proceed, that is our original partnership had pretty much fallen apart, we weren't going to be accredited and in fact the foundation course was felt to be a non-starter by ourselves and our HE colleagues, so we were feeling really really vulnerable. In addition, we had to put a case to Nesta and also Esmee Fairbairn as to why they should continue to fund our project and how we were going to achieve what we had set out to. Because of the new project officers problems with their caseload, an additional person was brought on board to 'manage us', so another new relationship to try an establish, but the impression we got from our communications with them was that basically we were on report and it was a case of have you done this yet, have you sorted that out yet, why not? So from June till December 2004 we were in fact on report to Nesta, as you can imagine it was pretty miserable. A new project officer was appointed again and the temporary one phased out and things have now improved again. But it was a really tough period for us and really just when things were rocky in our project and we needed most support suddenly Nesta seemed to pull the plug on being supportive and acknowledging the difficulties on innovative work and instead started to get heavy and it was like prove to us that you deserve this money!</p> <p>Consistency and continuity regarding staff and also the support given to a project. "The course of innovation doesn't run smoothly, if it does then it's probably not very innovative, therefore to get heavy just when a project is getting into problems and is at it's most vulnerable and most in need of constructive support and encouragement, is really pretty short-sighted". As projects we need consistency and continuity from our funders in their support of us, because without that security our job is made a lot more difficult, for example even in terms of having to think about alternative funding.</p>
<p>Management process</p>	<p>The Razor Edge Board of Trustees (8) – they operate as a management board, although obviously Mike and I have the lions share of authority, but the board are ultimately responsible for the Razor Edge charity.</p> <p>Because of the new project officers problems with their caseload, an additional person was brought on board to 'manage us', so another new relationship to try an establish, but the impression we got from our communications with them was that basically we were on report and it was a case of have you done this yet, have you sorted that out yet, why not? So from June till December 2004 we were in fact on report to Nesta, as you can imagine it was pretty miserable.</p>
<p>Suggested Programme improvements</p>	<p>Innovative projects don't fit neatly into boxes, they need nurturing, which was what Nesta seemed to be about at the start, but then that stopped!</p> <p>Consistency and continuity regarding staff and also the support given to a project. "The course of innovation doesn't run smoothly, if it does then it's probably not very innovative, therefore to get heavy just when a project is getting into problems and is at it's most vulnerable and most in need of constructive support and encouragement, is really pretty short-sighted". As projects we need consistency and continuity from our funders in their support of us, because without that security our job is made a lot more difficult, for example even in terms of having to think</p>

	<p>about alternative funding.</p> <p>Basically it would really help us if the milestones weren't at the same point as reporting and release of funding – it involves too many crunch points in a short space of time. Overall more consideration should be given to the needs of individual projects in terms of how to agree the release of funds, because in the case of learning disabled it can be extremely tricky to ensure continuity of finances between periods when they are working are periods when they receive benefits, and even for us, having to claim back their travel expenses having paid them out of the Razor Edge funds puts pressure on our finances.</p>
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4. Outcomes and impacts

<p>Extent to which objectives have been met</p>	<p>The project schedule (September 2002 – August 2003 to be set-up year in preparation for the course to commence; September 2003 start of actual HE degree course to run for three years; August 2006 end of the degree is marked by an International conference) has been blighted by a range of delays - problems include trying to arrange for validation (failed), Razor Edge's original FE partner dropping out, financial complications. So considerable time and energy has been spent addressing these issues and subsequently having to revise the original project plan and contractual agreements with Nesta. The extremely ambitious objectives outlined in the original proposal have now been revised to a more attainable level (see aims and objectives section).</p> <p>A significant miscalculation in the work schedule not noted by Razor Edge or Nesta (in its Assessment of Razor Edge's application) – the failure to include in the diary the time necessary to achieve the primary aim of the project 'Develop a new multi-sensory model of learning that will nurture the abilities and potential of talented people with severe learning difficulties, enabling them to exceed usual expectations and access higher education in the performing arts'. That is, in the full proposal 'Appendix: Schedule for the start/development of the project', there is a long list of activities to be carried out in the year prior to the course commencing in September 2003, which includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted employers identified. • Targeted HE institutions identified. • State benefits position clarified and strategy in place to support students and families. • Recruitment of staff June-July 2003. • Recruitment of students June – September 2003. • Run-in period June-September 2003. • Research re stakeholders and the projects impact. • Research re the learning process. • Steering Committee set-up.
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	<p>Not included in the list above is the actual task of developing the techniques, approaches, and overall new model of learning to be used with the learning disabled students, and the training of the learning disabled teachers who will be teaching the course. On my visit in May 2005, this significant activity was in progress, and taking 2.5 days a week. Given that the team has been working together on the model since June 2004, it is clear that this activity is a very big part of the overall project workload.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the three 'achievements' listed below in terms of meeting objectives, were actually in progress before the start of the project anyhow, so really overall the project has to date made poor progress.</p> <p>Liaison with HE Establishments: Dissemination and awareness raising amongst HE establishments regarding access for the learning disabled to HE and the learning model and techniques currently being developed by the team. Links have already been made with Roehampton University, Exeter University, and the Central School of Speech and Drama.</p> <p>Team of employed (by project) learning disabled teachers: Have established a team of four learning disabled teachers, who with the two project managers are developing team-teaching non-verbal performing arts teaching techniques / approaches to be used with learning disabled students in HE.</p> <p>Liaison with employers in the performing arts industry: Following completion of the course (post Nesta funding) the students will have another year in which they gain work experience with employers in the PA industry and continue to gain support and skills classes from the teaching team. It is anticipated that five employers will be involved with this stage of the course (<i>so far three have agreed 3: the Oval House Theatre; the Oily Cart Children's Theatre Company; and the Bubble House</i>).</p> <p>As yet the 'model of teaching and learning for those with learning difficulties' is not 'completed' – still in progress and the content / approach for the 'diploma' not yet finalised. Recruitment of the 12-15 learning disabled participants not yet underway, despite the fact that Razor Edge plan to begin the course in September.</p> <p>A significant objective of the project which will not be achieved is that originally the plan was to deliver a <i>validated, three year HE degree</i> course, instead the project will now be piloting a two year non-validated/accredited 'diploma' to be delivered in partnership with an FE college.</p>
<p>Coherence with workplan</p>	<p>The original partnership agreement with Rose Bruford FE College collapsed, and so Razor Edge is now working with Mount View FE college - originally the plan was to deliver a <i>validated, three year HE degree</i> course, instead the project will now be piloting a 2 year non-validated/accredited 'diploma' to be delivered in</p>

	<p>partnership with an FE college.</p> <p>A significant miscalculation in the work schedule not noted by Razor Edge or Nesta (in its Assessment of Razor Edge's application) – the failure to include in the diary the time necessary to achieve the primary aim of the project 'Develop a new multi-sensory model of learning that will nurture the abilities and potential of talented people with severe learning difficulties, enabling them to exceed usual expectations and access higher education in the performing arts'. That is, in the full proposal 'Appendix: Schedule for the start/development of the project', there is a long list of activities to be carried out in the year prior to the course commencing in September 2003, which includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted employers identified. • Targeted HE institutions identified. • State benefits position clarified and strategy in place to support students and families. • Recruitment of staff June-July 2003. • Recruitment of students June – September 2003. • Run-in period June-September 2003. • Research re stakeholders and the projects impact. • Research re the learning process. • Steering Committee set-up. <p>Not included in the list above is the actual task of developing the techniques, approaches, and overall new model of learning to be used with the learning disabled students, and the training of the learning disabled teachers who will be teaching the course. On my visit in May 2005, this significant activity was in progress, and taking 2.5 days a week. Given that the team has been working together on the model since June 2004, it is clear that this activity is a very big part of the overall project workload.</p>
<p>Innovation aspects</p>	<p>Creating the role of <i>learning disabled teachers</i>. Challenging the status quo and <i>pushing the boundaries of access for all</i> to HE, through developing a HE diploma in the Performing Arts for those with learning disabilities. Creating a progression <i>pathway</i> for learning disabled to join the <i>professional</i> world of the performing Arts. Developing <i>teaching methods and techniques</i> appropriate to learning disabled people, which involves <i>team based non-verbal teaching</i>.</p> <p>In many ways, this course is like no other, as all students and some lecturers have learning difficulties. While having lecturers with considerable experience of a subject would be considered to be fundamental in the rest of academia, it is a new departure to employ artists with learning difficulties who have experience in the subject of performing arts and also expertise as individuals with learning difficulties. "One of the very exciting aspects of this initiative is that I will be working alongside colleagues who are talented artists and educators, who also bring their experience of what it is to have learning difficulties to the creation of the new learning</p>

	<p>model."</p> <p>The course looks at a multi-sensory, multi-disciplinary approach to learning that is relevant to the learning styles of the student group. Mike says: "This is a new model of learning that is not dependent on the ability to read or write. Our students have a high level of artistic potential. It is our intention that students will become thinking practitioners." The course is being seen as a blueprint for a new model of learning for the rest of the UK.</p>
Utilisation/participation data	Pilot course not yet commenced.
Usability and user acceptance	Pilot course not yet commenced.
User satisfaction	Pilot course not yet commenced.
Accessibility	The course will only be for 12-15 students, but the long term aim of the work is to increase both access to HE education and also provide a progression route to professional, paid employment, for the learning disabled population.
User benefits	<p>Intended Benefits:-</p> <p>Educational: performing arts skills for learning disabled.</p> <p>Qualifications: wanted the 'HE diploma' course to be formally accredited / validated, but as yet it is not, however it will be delivered in association with Mount view College of FE.</p> <p>Social: Professional – creating awareness amongst employers of the capabilities of learning disabled as paid employees, but also the issues around paid employment / benefits for these individuals. Professional – raising awareness amongst the HE community with regard to access for those with learning difficulties, and the methods/techniques to be used in anew teaching model for the learning disabled.</p> <p>Personal: For the teachers and the students – independence, confidence, social relations, increased sense of self-worth and place in the community, aspirations to go further and be in paid work.</p> <p>For the teachers it's the social engagement of working in a team, having a real job, with proper wages and the status and confidence that comes with having an occupation. For the students it will be having the right to train alongside non-disabled peers, a proper education, the vision of a career and personally an increased sense of independence and real freedom, increased expectations and aspirations for themselves and of course skills training in the performing arts.</p> <p>FEEDBACK FROM 3 OF THE 4 TRAINEE TEACHERS: The project is important to them because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps them to develop their performing arts skills and abilities. • Supports them in achieving a professional role – that of teacher (+ of course the skills of teaching!). • Has meant that they are in paid employment which they are rightly proud of – self-supporting, no longer on

	<p>benefits (self-development and fulfilment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are part of a committed, supportive team and they enjoy each others company. (interpersonal relationships) • As a <i>teacher</i> and a <i>professional</i> in the PA their status is higher in the eyes of the outside world – as such they feel more confident in their own abilities and want to communicate. • They are happy – happy to be doing something they enjoy, happy that they will be helping others to develop themselves, happy in their independence and new life style of coming to <i>work</i>, happy in the additional opportunities they have to engage with and speak to the world e.g. raising awareness in HE establishments re access through visits to demonstrate the team and non-verbal forms of teaching more appropriate to those with severe learning difficulties. <p>At the moment there is no pathway for these people, there is no were for them to go to in terms of jobs, so our project will pilot a pathway for them to become trained performers, and we are also providing jobs for the current team members – they will be lecturers in higher education, although formally they won't be 'qualified' lecturers, but they do now have contracts that are equivalent to HE lecturers in terms of salary scale and actual conditions.</p>
<p>Summary of Impacts</p>	<p>Four learning disabled individuals are in paid employment though the project as 'teachers' – for them the project has meant the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps them to develop their performing arts skills and abilities. • Supports them in achieving a professional role – that of teacher (+ of course the skills of teaching!). • Has meant that they are in paid employment which they are rightly proud of – self-supporting, no longer on benefits (self-development and fulfilment). • They are part of a committed, supportive team and they enjoy each others company. (interpersonal relationships) • As a <i>teacher</i> and a <i>professional</i> in the PA their status is higher in the eyes of the outside world – as such they feel more confident in their own abilities and want to communicate. • They are happy – happy to be doing something they enjoy, happy that they will be helping others to develop themselves, happy in their independence and new life style of coming to <i>work</i>, happy in the additional opportunities they have to engage with and speak to the world e.g. raising awareness in HE establishments re access through visits to demonstrate the team and non-verbal forms of teaching more appropriate to those with severe learning difficulties. <p>Professional development for non learning disabled: Two pieces of research are in fact being undertaken in relation to the project, which you could say are spin-offs – I'm undertaking a PhD through Sheffield University</p>

	<p>concerning inclusive education, it's about working as a colleague with performers/artists who have learning difficulties, so that's quite innovative and obviously involves my own personal development in terms of learning and professional development. In addition we've had someone from the Institute of Education involved who is basing his PhD on our work, he's looking at the impact of higher education.</p> <p>It has also helped the project to be taken more seriously, as Mike points out: "The influence and esteem that NESTA is held in has helped give this project a credibility that has and will contribute to it getting more funding."</p>
<p>Main successes</p>	<p>Razor Edge 8th February 2005: Recent progress on this project – aimed at developing a new multi-sensory model of learning to nurture the abilities and potential of talented people with severe learning difficulties – includes a useful strategy meeting with Baroness Genista McIntosh (November 2004), and the signing up of Mountview Academy of Performing Arts as a Higher Education partner with whom Razor Edge will be developing a two-year pilot to create a model for course validation.</p>
<p>Main issues and challenges</p>	<p>Overall the project from conception has been most problematic with regard to 1. securing a partner in HE; and 2. prior to securing the Nesta funding, basically getting it funded.</p> <p>With regard to funding, prior to Nesta agreeing, we tried the DfE and HEFCE, but got no where with securing statutory funding, and also had great difficulty getting funding from Trusts. The problem has been that we couldn't guarantee that people with learning disabilities could study to the level that we were proposing, but it's chicken and egg isn't it, because that is why we need to do the pilot!</p> <p>Trying to convince funders and HE that this approach will work has been and really continues to be the main difficulty of our work. And yet, learning disabled are excluded from HE not just because the teaching methods do not match their requirements, but also because although theoretically they could get into HE, their benefits are organised and released pretty much in a way that precludes them financially from participating. Our course is different from a standard course and really if the innovatory funding from Nesta hadn't arisen I don't think we could have got the project off the ground, I mean it's something we've been trying to do for years.</p> <p>Having approached various HE and FE colleges to partner with us on this project, we finally found a partner in the Rose Bruford College and built a relationship with a very senior member there. The agreement was to deliver a pilot of a three year degree in performing arts for learning disabled. However, our contact left the College, and we found ourselves left at sea as we had had the relationship mainly with him, almost as if he had kept us at arms length from the rest of the college for whatever his own agenda was. Anyway, we talked with others at the College, and to be honest they were pretty horrified by the promises that our contact had</p>

	<p>made to us, but nonetheless we worked together with them to try and make the project a more realistic and viable goal. At this point of course we had to speak to Nesta and say actually, sorry but we can't deliver a three year degree programme, instead we are now thinking of a foundation degree. The college doesn't validate its own courses, so through discussions with the Arts learning Partnership we got in contact with London Met university to try and get our course accredited. In actual fact Rose Bruford undertook all the negotiations with London Met, but in the end London Met said that they couldn't validate it because of resources, this was in April 2004. At this point we had already deferred the project for one year, we'd managed to keep the team on board, but really felt that we needed to make progress now, as otherwise it just wasn't fair on the team. So since we were in possession of funding, since June 2004 the team has been working on the model of teaching, and the trainee teachers have been receiving pay. However, we still had the problem of our course not being accredited and progress with Rose Bruford seemed to be at a standstill. So, thankfully in November 2004 one of our board put us in contact with the Principle of Mount View College, who even before meeting with us started to lay the groundwork for our course be delivered through them. He spoke with Middlesex University, but unfortunately they won't accredit our course either, but in partnership with Mount View we have now decided that a two year diploma course is far more realistic and manageable for a pilot and that for the time being it will simply have to run as a non-validated course.</p> <p>However, just as we hit the really big problem in our project in April 2004 (when we heard that the Foundation Course wasn't to be approved and our relationship with our original FE college Rose Bruford was at an all time low), our project officer left, there was a big reshuffle at Nesta internally (the then chair or CEO was leaving etc), and the endowment from the government either stopped or was significantly reduced. The result was that we had a temporary project officer appointed who had an extremely heavy workload and didn't know our project, and it felt to us as if there was a lot of tightening up at Nesta in terms of money watching and accountability. So basically the feeling of flexibility, supportiveness and innovation that had been the key characteristics of Nesta seemed to disappear. We were in a very tricky situation with the project in terms of how it could proceed, that is our original partnership had pretty much fallen apart, we weren't going to be accredited and in fact the foundation course was felt to be a non-starter by ourselves and our HE colleagues, so we were feeling really really vulnerable. In addition, we had to put a case to Nesta and also Esmee Fairbairn as to why they should continue to fund our project and how we were going to achieve what we had set out to. Because of the new project officers problems with their caseload, an additional person was brought on board to 'manage us', so another new relationship to try and establish, but the impression we got from our communications with them was that basically we were on report and it was a case of have you done this yet, have you sorted that out yet, why not? So from June till December 2004 we were in fact on report to Nesta, as you can imagine it was pretty miserable. A new project officer was appointed again and the temporary one phased out and things have now improved again. But it was a really tough period for us and really just when things were rocky in our project and we needed most support suddenly Nesta seemed to pull the plug on being supportive and acknowledging the difficulties on innovative work and instead started to get heavy and it was</p>
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	<p>like prove to us that you deserve this money!</p> <p>Nesta's Assessment of Razor Edge's Application recommended that 'Nesta support this proposal in full with specific conditions. The project is innovative, well grounded, timely and has the potential for great impact..'. In addition the Case Report for the Full Proposal stated 'The Committee discussed the organisation's management capabilities in regard to the project, acknowledging that this was an ambitious and exciting proposal. The Committee agreed that Razor Edge was an experienced company that would be able to take on such work..' In November 2004, the First Project Supervisor Report made the following observations:- 'It must be acknowledged that this project at the point of funding and support through Nesta was by many described as being 'before its time' (pg.2). 'Over the last few years, the project has been impeded by a number of factors:- a. interested and at times committed education partners who for various reasons....have pulled away from the collaboration; b. lack of capacity within the project itself and the demanding and at times unpredicted inherent support needs re project design infrastructure and the support needed to manage the benefits framework for lecturers with learning disabled; and c. an unconscious shift in focus away from the project development objectives i.e. the development of the pith of the project itself, its qualities and attributes and its placement in the sector generally' (pg.3).</p>
Cost-effectiveness	Cannot comment.
Sustainability	<p>Following the two year diploma that is being part funded by Nesta, the learning programme will continue for the first cohort of students through work placements with employers in the PA industry and some further skills classes and support offered by the Razor Edge team.</p> <p>The intention having piloted the diploma course and proven that it 'works', is for the course to be formally accredited and to continue to run, and critically for the teaching model to be adopted in other HE establishments, so that access to HE for the learning disabled population increases.</p>
Transferability	An intended wider benefit of the project is to actually <i>create a model of teaching and learning to allow atypical learners</i> to take their place in higher education.
Examples of input to policy	This project is intended to go some way to addressing the very very limited opportunities that currently exist for the learning disabled to access HE, through developing and piloting a diploma, which it is hoped will 'convince' HE and funders that learning disabled individuals can study at this level. However, whilst the greater aims of the project are to change policy and practice in the HE sector re access for the learning disabled population, the activities of the project in terms of impacting upon existing policy and practice are extremely limited. Considerable dissemination and campaigning activities would need to be engaged in as part of the project (which is not the case), rather the three year project is only the first building block to achieving the greater

	<p>project aim of policy and practice change.</p> <p>Text from Nesta's Assessment of Razor Edge's Application:- 'As a piece of action research into innovative approaches and outcomes it has the potential to make an impact on inclusive education policy' (pg.6).</p>
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	N.A.
Good Practice examples	<p>Good practice, but not innovative – the two below can be considered to be standard good practice elements for such projects (those trying to create progression routes for socially excluded groups).</p> <p>Following completion of the course (post Nesta funding) the students will have another year in which they gain work experience with employers in the PA industry and continue to gain support and skills classes from the teaching team. It is anticipated that five employers will be involved with this stage of the course (so far three have agreed: the Oval House Theatre; the Oily Cart Children's Theatre Company; and the Bubble House).</p> <p>Dissemination and awareness raising amongst HE establishments regarding access for the learning disabled to HE and the learning model and techniques currently being developed by the team. Links have already been made with Roehampton University, Exeter University, and the Central School of Speech and Drama.</p>

Case Study: Scottish Executive Small Grants Scheme

1. Characteristics of the project

Aims and objectives	Promote better transition in science between primary and secondary education and support teachers in making productive links between schools. To stimulate children's' enthusiasm for science and improve their attainment by enhancing their science experience
Partnership arrangements	NESTA; Scottish Executive Education Department; Careers Scotland (plus outside consultant)
Type of learning carried out	Science teaching in schools. N.B.: project does not carry out direct learning – NESTA funding is to encourage schools to apply for 'Science Small Grants'.
Setting of learning activities	Actual project is delivered through workshops; one-to-one advice and consultancy
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Science – particularly 'transition' between primary and secondary school teaching.
Profile of participants	Science teachers from Scottish primary and secondary schools
Expected outcomes	30 funded projects per year (Scheme has 3 annual rounds)= 90 projects funded.
How participants engaged	'Ideas Workshops'; one-on-one meetings with consultants
Technologies used	Website provides advice; downloadable application forms; feedback questionnaire. But main engagement is through workshops
Geographical coverage	All Scotland

8. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	The idea emerged from the Science Strategy. The Strategy is the Scottish Executive's agenda for developing innovation in science, supporting school science education and enhancing the role of science as a means of economic development. Ministers had set aside funding (£18 million) for science education in schools. The model of a small grants scheme had been used in "Science Year" and had demonstrated some successes. Chief Exec of SEED developed the idea into the scheme that is now operating, and made contact with the NESTA representative in Scotland as he knew about the organisation from an earlier involvement in the National Lottery and its links to science.
Funding history	NESTA contributed £28,000 – but bulk of funding for the scheme - £280,000 – is provided by Scottish Executive
Ways in which project has changed	No fundamental change. Adjustment to management and administration of scheme – e.g more support to applicants in best way of applying; better explanation of meeting 'creativity' funding criteria. The number applying to the scheme has dropped, partly due to the bad organisation and low numbers funded compared to applications received in the first round, which has put people off. However, there was a marked improvement in the quality of the applications received in the

	second round. The 'mission' has remained the same but the approach was changed after round 1. The scheme's objectives and aims were made clearer in the literature. After consulting <u>with</u> the participants the timing of the scheme was moved from <u>December</u> -January to September-November. In round 1, briefing sessions were held to inform applicants about the scheme. In round 2, to improve the quality of applications, Ideas Workshops (where participants are briefed about the scheme, generate project ideas and consider an application as the panel) were held
Sustainability activities	Scottish Ministers unlikely to further fund beyond March 2006 – but SEED is exploring ways of packaging funding to continue initiative.

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment process	No problems
Funding process	No problems
Monitoring process	No problems
Management process	NESTA appointed consultant as main link between them and SEED. SEED unhappy that this has led to less hands on involvement by NESTA than expected
Suggested Programme improvements	NESTA could do more to highlight the benefits of the scheme in its own literature and dealings with education agencies.

4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	<p>Workshops: Round 1: 52 schools attended workshops. 17 projects successfully funded (75% success rate). Round 2: 28 schools attended; 16 applied; 13 successful (62% success rate)</p> <p>Overall: Round 1: 190 applications; 17 funded (17 secondary schools linked to 68 primary) Round 2: 71 applications; 30 funded (30 secondary schools linked to 164 primary) Note: Predecessor to this project was Science Small Grants Scheme. Round 1 (March 2002): 59 applications 44 projects funded. Round 2 (October 2002): 97 applications, 67 projects funded.</p>
Coherence with workplan	All milestones in workplan achieved so far. Lower level of funded projects in Round 1 than targeted (17/30). Target achieved in Round 2 (30/30)
Innovation aspects	Primarily 'institutional' innovation. Creates space for collaboration between primary/secondary education sectors. Instead of setting up a working group to look at what schools are doing and come up with ideas for streamlining the science transition process. <u>Ideas are being sought directly from teachers</u>
Utilisation/participation data	Round 1 applications represent around 50% of the total schools in Scotland. Website registered 2000 hits in Round 1. Website registered 1851 hits in 1 st month of Round 2.

Usability and user acceptance	i) website generally positively reviewed by users. No major technical problems recorded ii) 'Ideas workshops' – 94% of attendees said they were useful
User satisfaction	Criticism at the early stages about administration of the scheme: slow to get up and running. Criticism from teachers about low rate of success of funded projects vis a vis applications (e.g. only 1 of 9 cluster applications funded in Dumbarton). Applications require significant time investment. Perception by teachers that low success rate will de-motivate and reduce future applications (This perception appears to be supported by reduction in applications from 190 in Round 1 to 71 in Round 2).
Accessibility	The scheme is open and advertised to every school in Scotland - both state and independent schools. Specifically targeted at schools. No specific 'inclusion' strategy. Evidence of significant investment in promotion and advertising. Only access problem identified is geographical – remoteness of some Highland regions made it difficult for schools to access workshops.
User benefits	i) Better success rate for funding applicants ii) Opportunities to joint up the curriculum between primary and secondary in creative ways. Iii) Potential for longer-term links between teachers to be established beyond the grant. Iv) Participants are more aware of what is being done by other schools to address the transition issues using science and have improved communication and working relationships with their cluster group, if successful or not.
Summary of Impacts	i) Workshops have Improved success rate of applicants – BUT data suggests applications have reduced ii) Some participants have been able to secure matched funding (and other support) from their schools that would not have otherwise been available. iii) evidence of increased collaboration and knowledge transfer (inter-regional and inter-sectoral) iv) anecdotal evidence of contribution to improving awareness, interest and competence in science in students – but no systematic evaluation of this has been carried out Note: this could be a generic problem for the Learning Programme as a whole – little evidence across the board of impacts analysis (e.g. control/comparison groups; cohort studies)
Main successes	Project currently on line to complete objectives and milestones to plan. Ideas workshops and website generally favourably received. Linked to increased level of grant applications in Round 1 – but not sustained in Round 2.
Main issues and challenges	Main issue around partnership working. Evidence that SEED expected more commitment and strategic collaboration with NESTA. NESTA sub-contracting of consultant to act as liaison not well-received by SEED. Possibility of 'displacement effects' – raising enthusiasm through support for applications; creating disappointment when projects not funded. One of the major problems is the lack of a dedicated administrator for the scheme.
Cost-effectiveness	Good value for money. NESTA put in £28,000 to £200,000 SEED money – very good leverage ratio.
Sustainability	No concrete plans or strategy developed. SEED unlikely to receive further funding from March 2006.
Transferability	The model could be transferred to other elements of the curriculum as well as science.
Examples of input to policy	The Scottish Office are aware of the type of projects funding is being sought for and the level of secondary and primary involvement in the project applications. Direct participation by Scottish Executive Education

	Department.
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	Scheme itself does not directly contribute to pedagogic development since its main purpose is to facilitate. However, the project has directly contributed to 47 innovative ideas for streamlining the transition between primary and secondary school
Good Practice examples	i) Promoting collaboration between the primary and secondary sectors ii) as a result developing 'clusters' of secondary/primary schools which can form basis of future knowledge transfer infrastructure iii) use of web site for advice, proposals and feedback iv) use of 'Ideas Workshops' to raise interest and improve quality of applications for funding

Case Study : Snug and Outdoor- Experimental Playground Kit / 'Making the Most of Playtime'

1. Characteristics of the project

<p>Aims and objectives</p>	<p>Aim: To make school playground throughout the country creative places for play and learning.</p> <p>Objectives:- Design an experimental playground kit that can be manufactured and used by schools throughout the UK. Pilot a prototype in four primary schools in year 2 (2005/6). Evaluate and record the impact of the kit in year 2. Create teaching resources to accompany the kit in year 1 and 2. Train one team of four artists / teachers in year 2. Find industry partners in year 2 to manufacture all elements of the kit for sale to schools throughout the UK. Host a conference on the Experimental Playground approach for educators and policy makers at the end of year 2. Promote the kit nationwide at the end of year 2. N.B. Some reference to activities to be undertaken post Nesta funding, not included as beyond the time scope of the actual project. 'This is initially a two year project and our aim is for the EPK to become self financing in year 3'.</p> <p>The main objective of the project is to design, build a prototype and test an experimental playground kit, which will consist of between four and nine different elements. The word kit probably gives the wrong impression because it makes it seem like it can just be put into a bag and take it off, but kit means family of materials and equipment.</p> <p>So it's a two year project funded by Nesta (from October 2004), an action research project, because it takes us up to the point where we have built the prototype, tested it and then the funding stops and we'll need to bring it to market, and so the next stage will be getting a manufacturer involved.</p> <p>We will be piloting the kit in primary schools in Hampshire and Camden.</p> <p>The prototype will be built this autumn, tested and refined, and then it will go into the schools this time next year and during the course of a year the kit will be tested at the school, then be refined again and we might do another testing depending on how it is all going. We will be evaluating how useful and effective the kit is in the schools, during the pilot stage.</p> <p>This two years is not going to see the roll out of the kit, rather this two years sees us designing and testing the kit, so that it is then ready for roll out post project. The two years is to try and take us up to the point where we can then think about mass producing and taking the kit to the market, we need to have something of value that will sell.</p>
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	<p>We wanted to do a purpose made kit, because we want to introduce to schools quality materials, so the kit itself won't just be introducing ways to change the playground environment, but it will also be talking about materials. Schools are used to just coping with cast off materials and making do, and a lot of the time the materials they have are either steel or wood, but part of what we want to do is change the range of materials schools have available to them.</p> <p>But also it is to help the whole school to think about the playground environment, and that was one of the starting points, realising how hard it is for children and staff to imagine how their playground could be any different and school playgrounds particularly tend to have a very very low expectation, they are just left, so part of the aim of the kit is to show schools that the playground can be a different more imaginative, interesting, attractive place.</p> <p>That's a key reason for us doing this, so that a playground kit can be mass produced and is cheaper for schools to actually acquire, because the way we've worked previously on a single school basis has been very expensive for the school.</p> <p>... with the help of NESTA's award, Snug and Outdoor will develop the Experimental Playground Kit in the hope of producing a commercially affordable design that schools all around the country will be able to use. "We'd like schools to adapt the Experimental Playground Kit continually to their own needs," says Hattie. "One year they might use it to change the design of their playground. The next they might use it to stage a science or drama week."</p>
<p>Partnership arrangements</p>	<p>The process of designing and prototyping, involves us very closely with the 'Design Laboratory' based at Central St Martins, and their postgraduate students. The Design Laboratory is a really interesting set up, basically they select the best postgraduate students from St Martins MA and BA courses, and the Design Laboratory is like a unit really, and they work with the permanent staff there on innovative and creative projects, which are commercially viable. So we are working with a team of 6 or 7 designers, 2 of whom are the Director and the Creative Manager of the Design Laboratory and then 5 other designers who have come through St Martins. So it's a very nice situation, particularly as the Design Laboratory has an international intake, so we are working with Spanish, French, Thai, Polish. Sarah at Nesta was quite keen on and recognised the fact that this link with Central St Martin's means that our project is supporting and involving professional learning for postgraduates. For us what was most important was the quality of the design we would get, which with the Design Laboratory we are definitely getting.</p> <p>We are also working with the Institute of Education, with the staff and students in two departments there – from the primary PGCE course, and the art and design secondary PGCE course.</p> <p>All of these relationships were in place when we applied to Nesta, but really it took me a year to set it up before Nesta. Then the Hampshire County Council is the other partner.</p>

	<p>The pilots are starting this time next. At the moment we are thinking of having two schools in Hampshire and two schools in Camden to pilot the kit. The main selection criteria will be the commitment of the staff, so in terms of numbers it could be primary schools that have anything between 150 and 500 pupils, on average schools are between 3 and 500. The commitment of the staff is most important because we won't be running a straightforward experimental playground project, we'll actually be needing a lot of feedback and input from the staff because these will be pilots for the kit.</p> <p>One of the things that slightly changed was that originally Snug & Outdoor have done a lot of work with Camden, with the environment and education department and the planning department, so originally the idea was for us to continue working with them and that schools in Camden would be the focus, but tragically the woman we were working with died so there is still a senior landscape in the environment department who is very keen to continue with it who is now our contact there, but actually what's happened is that the IOE students, a lot of their placement schools are in Camden, so it seems to be making more sense to choose the schools on the basis of where the students will be going to anyway and to use that contact. But at the same time we do have the contact at Camden and she is very keen to keep up that relationship, so our relationship with Camden Borough is still there, but primarily we will be getting to the schools through the IOE.</p> <p>Snug and Outdoor, which is me and Tim, the Design Laboratory which is 7, the Institute of Education which is two staff and then probably about 15 students. Then there is Hampshire County Council, the borough of Camden, the actual pilot schools, those are really the key players in the project, but obviously there is also the whole side of the people who will be making the kit. We're also setting up a mini-advisory network, so for instance there are two Deputy Head Teachers that we have worked with a lot before on experimental playgrounds so they understand the whole process and they have agreed to be part of this informal advisory group, also there are two officers in the QCA (Qualifications Curriculum Authority) who will be involved, and a couple of other people as well. So we are trying to make sure that the kit will be as useful as possible for teachers.</p> <p>The only thing that I am disappointed with so far is the Institute of Education, that's not been as full-on as I'd hoped, and I think it comes down to the fact that like with schools the people at the loE are under such pressure as are the students, that ours is an extra project to deal with, so the commitment from the students in that respect is amazing because it is demanding them to give up their free time, but overall so far the loE is the partner that I feel least happy with, but it may change as we move into the next stage. It's just that they seem not to have a lot of time for the project although they are funded partners, and I just feel that they could/should be doing a bit more.</p>
<p>Type of learning carried out</p>	<p>Learning through play is a key concept. We know that the experimental playground is very good for socialising children, encouraging all sorts of imaginative and active play, and it can really provide a concrete way of making sense of what the teachers are trying to teach in the classroom, the kids respond very well to that particularly kids who normally find academic study difficult. So we recognise that and have observed that, but we are also aware that</p>

	<p>there is a huge potential to the kit that we are not aware of in terms of how learning can occur, but that is why we have the IOE on board to try and access and articulate this.</p> <p>Play is at the heart of creativity and both our temporary playground projects and permanent playground designs encourage children's participation and imaginative play.</p> <p>Our temporary Experimental Playground Projects help children and adults think in fresh ways about their everyday environment and creatively imagine how it could be different.</p> <p>Our playground designs bring together what is learnt through this process to construct original play environments that are inventive, safe and fun.</p>
Setting of learning activities	The piloting will be in Primary Schools.
Domains and sectors (arts; science; technology)	Cross. Science and Art. Learning specialisms: Creativity in Learning; Professional Development; and Design and Technology.
Profile of participants	<p>The children are the primary learners intended for the kits, but obviously there will also be the potential for learning through the kits and the project itself for staff, parents, ourselves, and our partners. The staff will be using the kit hopefully to help them actually deliver the curriculum, that's the idea. There will be a lot of professional learning for those of us involved in the project, and also because we will be talking to different professional bodies about what we are doing. But principally the project is about children's learning and also extending teachers skills and confidence.</p> <p>No targeting involved = Generally we have tended to work with schools that are on special measures, in deprived communities for example, because that's where funding exists, but for this we don't need to do that, rather what matters most is to test the kit in an environment that is very stable, a well functioning school rather than one which is hanging on by a thread, where the staff can give their full commitment to it, an environment where because there are no problems they can give their full support and time to the project. Originally we had thought that we would like to work with a special needs school, although now a lot of schools are integrated, but really what is most important is that the schools have to be well run and the staff are committed to the project.</p>
Expected outcomes	<p>Where it starts from is the idea that you can change your playground, you can change your own environment, so the kids have the opportunity to do this that they've not had before, and then it's also to help teachers to teach. The kit is there to help in all sorts of ways, but because its physical, it's something that is to be interacted with and negotiated, and that can happen at break times in a more informal way involving play and the support staff, and then also helping the teachers to extend what they are teaching in the class, by taking it outside, being able to use the objects to illustrate what they want to impart, whether it's to do with art, or materials or forces. But also it is to help the whole</p>

	school to think about the playground environment, and that was one of the starting points, realising how hard it is for children and staff to imagine how their playground could be any different and school playgrounds particularly tend to have a very very low expectation, they are just left, so part of the aim of the kit is to show schools that the playground can be a different more imaginative, interesting, attractive place.
How participants engaged	<p>The environment is designed to encourage the kids participation.</p> <p>The pilots are starting this time next. At the moment we are thinking of having two schools in Hampshire and two schools in Camden to pilot the kit. The main selection criteria will be the commitment of the staff, so in terms of numbers it could be primary schools that have anything between 150 and 500 pupils, on average schools are between 3 and 500. The commitment of the staff is most important because we won't be running a straightforward experimental playground project, we'll actually be needing a lot of feedback and input from the staff because these will be pilots for the kit.</p>
Technologies used	N.A.
Geographical coverage	At the moment an inner city borough (Camden) and a county council (Hampshire), we wanted to not just do London. It will be four sites.

9. Initiating circumstances and evolution

How originated	<p>We are artists, I'm a sculptor and I think that that is quite key to how we approach learning and we have done a lot of work in schools, primary and secondary, although this project focuses on primary, but we can see how the kit can be developed for secondary schools. This project comes directly out of the work that we have been doing for many years in schools, which is basically to do with doing temporary experimental physical projects in playgrounds that enable the children and the staff to work in three dimension on a large scale, to understand the playground environment by altering it physically themselves and then out of that we realised that there is a fantastic amount of learning that happens there, I mean there is all sorts of learning that happens and interaction between teachers and kids, all sorts of things that we've been told and also observed, that couldn't happen in any other way, certainly not by sitting at the desk in the classroom. So we are very aware that there is a physical action, learning through doing type of approach, but what was frustrating was that the projects we were doing were very expensive and they had to be funded by outside agencies on the whole (rather than the schools themselves) and also the equipment that we were using each time had to be created each time or hired in, and anyway it wasn't coping with the weather or what have you, and it was just basically each project was a one off project, so that made us think that although really interesting, it could be so much better and so that is what we are designing the kit to do, to provide the opportunity for all schools to introduce an experimental playground. That's a key reason for us doing this, so that a playground kit can be mass produced and is cheaper for schools to actually acquire, because the way we've worked previously on a single school basis has been very expensive for the school.</p>
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	<p>... in March 2000, Snug and Outdoor were commissioned by the Hackney Wick Public Art Programme to redesign the playground of Daubeney School. Having worked in several schools in inner city areas, Hattie knew she had to come up with a way of transforming the playground that would make sense to the children who used it.</p> <p>For one week, Snug and Outdoor transformed the entire school playground into a large-scale experimental space that gave all 485 pupils the chance to experiment with the design of their everyday environment and experience how it could be different.</p> <p>Daubeney School, Hackney, London: The new design of the playground has transformed an aggressive and bleak environment into a sociable and playful place. Following on from the success of the Experimental Playground Project, our aim was to create a flexible environment for children to play in that they could alter and re-shape for themselves.</p> <p><i>"This project has completely changed the psychology of the playground"</i> - Teacher</p> <p><i>"When the children are fighting you think that's all they know. But to see how creative they were, they have all got something special about them. It's just to bring it out of them"</i> - Lunchtime Supervisor</p> <p>Winner in the Hackney design awards 2004. Awarded for innovative design in the built environment. <i>The Hackney Design Awards.</i></p>
Funding history	N.A.
Ways in which project has changed	The whole project started a month late, which was just to do with a delay in signing the contract with Nesta. But we're pretty much on schedule, so it's not really changed in terms of the timescale, planned activities, who is involved and so on, but what has happened is that the potential of the project feels like its grown and also the relationships within the project have become established, particularly with the Design Lab and that could lead in all sorts of exciting directions, I mean I just feel that we are getting more ambitious.
Sustainability activities	<p>What we are doing over these two years is developing a business plan for bringing the kit to commercial reality. I don't know whether Nesta will fund a spin off project, so really it would actually be quite useful to have Sarah to signpost to us whether further funding can be made available, and to give us some help thinking about this issue.</p> <p>The great thing about this project is that we are thinking all the time about how to develop this project, who we can link up with and so on, really instead of having to get from A to B in the shortest possible time, which is what the original project would have been, what this project has allowed us to do is to really take a great big leap and open it all up to its many possibilities.</p>

3. Process analysis

Application/assessment	It was from somebody at the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation who actually suggested that I contact them. We were
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<p>process</p>	<p>already applying to Esmee Fairbairn for funding, and I had heard on Nesta but only the innovation unit not the Learning Programme because you have to more or less be invited to apply to it, because it's not a public programme. So I was talking to Esmee Fairbairn and she said you ought to contact such and such at Nesta about this so I did.</p> <p>The Nesta application process is so much better than any other I've ever done and it's partly because they treat you as a professional rather than as someone that's trying to con them out of money. The basis is that you know what you are doing, there is mutual respect and both parties are in it to see that the project really works well. I found the whole process very positive, and having that two stage proposal process is also a really good idea, so you don't put too much effort and detail into the first step, before they indicate that yes they are quite interested, you know when you get invited to do a full proposal that you have got quite a good chance of getting it because they are behind your idea.</p> <p>"We've done fairly big projects before. But this is a huge step for us. We are artists and there are areas of the development process we lack certain skills in. But NESTA, instead of saying they wouldn't fund us because of that, simply told us: 'We'll give you extra support for that part of the project'. That's the opposite of how things usually work."</p>
<p>Funding process</p>	<p>Good, very good, I am just so full of praise for Nesta in all sorts of ways, I think that they respond to ambition which is really refreshing. Originally we were going to apply to Esmee Fairbairn and the Arts Council to make a small scale version of the kit, a one off and individual kit which we could then take around to schools, so that was the original proposal, but then when we got in contact with Nesta it made us realise that what would be far more useful would be to have the chance to work with the Design Laboratory and others to actually create a prototype kit that could then be manufactured, which would then have the potential to be available to all schools and basically be a much better product. The original idea really was a much smaller scale initiative, a one-off but through Nesta's interest in funding us we were able to develop the idea into a plan to manufacture a kit which schools can buy, regions can buy, and which can be the basis of all sorts of projects, a much much more substantial thing. So Nesta has really made the project into what it is. What was particularly wonderful was that they didn't give an indication of there would be such and such a limit or ceiling on the funding, it meant that we could actually think about what we really wanted to do and what we needed to do that, most funding sources are much more limiting in how they communicate about projects, that is it generally feels as though you have to go for the leanest option in order to have a chance of being funded. All Nesta did say was that if it goes over £200K they governors have to consider it, basically it's a different process, but they weren't saying that it couldn't go over £200k. It meant that we weren't having to think about cutting corners, things like making sure that you have the intellectual property rights for things, lawyers, all that kind of stuff that we didn't have in the budget before and they (NESTA) were quite good on all of that because their form is quite useful because it does take you through aspects of production, because I suppose they are used to being involved in inventions. I mean we're used to as</p>

	<p>Artists having copyright on things, but that's really not of any use on this type of project.</p> <p>What we are doing over these two years is developing a business plan for bringing the kit to commercial reality. I don't know whether Nesta will fund a spin off project, so really it would actually be quite useful to have Sarah to signpost to us whether further funding can be made available, and to give us some help thinking about this issue.</p> <p>It wouldn't have happened on the scale that we have been able to achieve, so us looking to manufacture the kit rather than produce a one-off, that wouldn't have been attainable without their funding. I think that's actually another good thing about Nesta, the commercial aspect, they're not frightened by the commercial, in fact they like the fact that the project is to do with commercial potential.</p> <p>Additional funding = Yes, Esmee Fairbairn (before Nesta) and also the Arts Council (during application to Nesta).</p>
<p>Monitoring process</p>	<p>The only thing I'd say is that it would be nice to be able to have more contact with the Nesta project officer, Sarah is really busy so sometimes it can take her a while to get back to us, although if it's urgent she will get back to us more quickly. I'm sure she would like more contact with us and we would like to have more contact with her.</p> <p>I think the other thing that would be useful would be to have regular meetings with her, whether it's every three months or whatever, but basically an agreement that you will have the opportunity to meet with your project officer on a regular basis. It's just more project oriented, valuable really, to meet face to face, both for the project officer to really focus on the progress and development of our project and for us to do the same, through dialogue together. As I said though the problem seems to be that the project officers have a lot on their plate in terms of workload.</p> <p>Release of funding on a three monthly basis subject to meeting agreed milestones (quarterly interim reports submitted). Detailed workplan undertaken, which includes milestones for each month. (Nesta Case File).</p>
<p>Management process</p>	<p>Our discussions with Nesta haven't really focused on exploring the type of learning that will occur through the experimental playground, it's been much more grounded in terms of the project scope, management and where we can make useful links with others.</p> <p>I don't actually know what the project officer's role is, she is our point of contact and also she suggested that we have a project supervisor because it is quite a large project, so she added to the budget that aspect, so that we could have a project supervisor who could help oversee the project and give advice and stuff, but that's not actually started yet. The project supervisor would be someone external to Nesta and I know Sarah has been looking into possibilities, but it is quite a difficult one as they will need to understand education, design and so on, so she is finding it difficult to find one person with all the necessary qualities, so now we've agreed that it may be</p>

	<p>more than one person.</p> <p>What I like about Nesta and our project officer is that they are very open and supportive without actually trying to run and control our project. So it is a balance that needs to be struck because on the one hand you want to be left alone to get on with it, but on the other you want somebody who is really supportive and really enthusiastic about the project, who does promote it.</p> <p>One of things that Nesta is really good at and what they say is that they are willing to invest in innovative and therefore potentially higher risk projects and I think that that is one of the really exciting things about them. But if they are going to do that well they do need also to put a certain amount of support in and I think with this project, which is a big project, well I'm quite used to managing big projects anyway and it's going fine, but I imagine someone who wasn't quite so used to doing that, but had a fantastic project idea, that support would be really really important and I can imagine at times it might be helpful for us as well.</p>
<p>Suggested Programme improvements</p>	<p>The only thing I'd say is that it would be nice to be able to have more contact with the Nesta project officer, Sarah is really busy so sometimes it can take her a while to get back to us, although if it's urgent she will get back to us more quickly. I'm sure she would like more contact with us and we would like to have more contact with her. But she has put us in contact with people who are potentially useful to the project so that's been very helpful.</p> <p>I don't actually know what the project officer's role is, she is our point of contact and also she suggested that we have a project supervisor because it is quite a large project, so she added to the budget that aspect, so that we could have a project supervisor who could help oversee the project and give advice and stuff, but that's not actually started yet. The project supervisor would be someone external to Nesta and I know Sarah has been looking into possibilities, but it is quite a difficult one as they will need to understand education, design and so on, so she is finding it difficult to find one person with all the necessary qualities, so now we've agreed that it may be more than one person.</p> <p>The potential for Nesta is that it has this fantastic group of people with all sorts of skills and connections to a huge range of different people and organisations, and I think I'd like to have more access to that and I think Sarah is trying to make that happen, and to some extent it has but it would be great if it could happen more. I've sort of got a taste of this notion that there is a Nesta family, that it's not just that you get money from them and that's it, but that there are all sorts of other ways that Nesta can support you and put you in touch with other people and I think that that is one of the really exciting things about Nesta is the fact that they have fantastic people on their board and have brilliant links that could be explored. So I think it would be good to have the officer be more proactive in helping projects to tap into the links and contacts that Nesta can offer, for instance bringing the project to the attention of relevant bodies and organisations, it would be great for example for us to have a link with the DfES. I'm sure that if I went to Sarah and said specifically this is what we need, she would try to help, but it would be</p>

	<p>great if it was done more proactively by the officer rather than us requesting. It's about the strategic linkages, it's on that scale, because you know we can make links with all sorts of people and we do all the time, but Nesta has got access to some pretty important people on a different level really. I think they do promote our projects when they can, but I would like Sarah or someone to have more time to dedicate to making the strategic links and promoting us.</p> <p>They do actually have a description of what project supervisors are intended for and so effectively what you can expect from them, but they don't have such a description for project officers, although it would be quite useful if they did, but I'm not really sure what we can ask Sarah for.</p> <p>I think the other thing that would be useful would be to have regular meetings with her, whether it's every three months or whatever, but basically an agreement that you will have the opportunity to meet with your project officer on a regular basis. It's just more project oriented, valuable really, to meet face to face, both for the project officer to really focus on the progress and development of our project and for us to do the same, through dialogue together. As I said though the problem seems to be that the project officers have a lot on their plate in terms of workload.</p> <p>One of things that Nesta is really good at and what they say is that they are willing to invest in innovative and therefore potentially higher risk projects and I think that that is one of the really exciting things about them. But if they are going to do that well they do need also to put a certain amount of support in and I think with this project, which is a big project, well I'm quite used to managing big projects anyway and it's going fine, but I imagine someone who wasn't quite so used to doing that, but had a fantastic project idea, that support would be really really important and I can imagine at times it might be helpful for us as well.</p> <p>What we are doing over these two years is developing a business plan for bringing the kit to commercial reality. I don't know whether Nesta will fund a spin off project, so really it would actually be quite useful to have Sarah to signpost to us whether further funding can be made available, and to give us some help thinking about this issue.</p>
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4. Outcomes and impacts

Extent to which objectives have been met	Not applicable yet, as the project is only part way through. However, it can be said that the project is on target in terms of meeting its milestones.
Coherence with workplan	The project is on target with its milestones and has encountered no problems as yet with regard to the workplan, so it would all seem to be coherent at this point and running smoothly.
Innovation aspects	It's never been done before; it's bringing artists designers and educators together; the reason playgrounds are so dull is because it is hard to do anything other so what this project is trying to do is to push against this current barrier to introduce more excitement in playgrounds, so it's innovative because it's pushing against boundaries, for example trying to address the challenge of health and safety issues.

	<p>The children will for the first time have control over their landscape, they can manipulate it, they will be having a new experience and thinking in a new way, that is yes I can change what this space looks like, and none of them will have experienced that before on such a big scale or in a community or shared environment.</p> <p>So it is innovative in that the projects ambition is to change the way children think and help them imagine what isn't there. We are artists and I think that's where it comes from, because the way I tend to understand things is in quite a physical way, and the kit has that at it's heart, it's promoting a way of understanding things, be that another word for learning, through the physical world, through physical activity, which is not typically how children are expected or helped to learn in school.</p> <p>Another thing is that it introduces for children the idea that there is a place in the school that is changeable, flexible space, the trouble with schools or rather a key feature of them is that they tend to be quite static, so this is an environment that the children can change and take responsibility for themselves.</p> <p>What's so radical about the Experimental Playground Kit is that it puts the ability to change and design the school environment straight into the hands of those it's going to affect. This, Hattie says, is crucial to inspiring children's imaginations:</p> <p>"Instead of asking the children what they wanted to be different about their playground, we realised that the Experimental Playground Kit allowed them to show us. You can design all you want on paper, but it has little relevance to the 3-D time-based emotional place that a playground really is."</p>
Utilisation/participation data	Nothing to report as yet given that the four pilots haven't yet commenced.
Usability and user acceptance	Nothing to report as yet given that the four pilots haven't yet commenced.
User satisfaction	Nothing to report as yet given that the four pilots haven't yet commenced.
Accessibility	That's a key reason for us doing this, so that a playground kit can be mass produced and is cheaper for schools to actually acquire, because the way we've worked previously on a single school basis has been very expensive for the school.
User benefits	Previously when we've done playground projects in schools, parents just get involved, the process we go through is to have a whole series of meetings initially and that always involves parents in different ways and then often some parents will become part of a team that supports the project and that is fantastic, because then it's also been a real learning thing for parents. For instance, one of the schools that we were at one of the parents she was unemployed, she didn't know what she wanted to do, so she got involved in the project at a very depressed time for her and the project was really important to her, she just threw herself into it and through that she started to think about welding and then she signed up for a welding course, this was one of the bigger projects, the Daubeney school that took over three years, so in that time she completed her welding

	<p>course and then we put her in contact with Steve who did a lot of the steel work for the playground, so quite often the projects can become a focus for all sorts of people including parents.</p> <p>Social would be the primary in terms of playing together and managing the equipment and space together, that's what play is about, the maturing of children in terms of their relating and socialising with others.</p> <p>But then also personal in terms of confidence in their own imagination and also quite simply making the children happier, what I mean by that is that hopefully the playground will be a positive imaginative place rather than a negative, boring, stressful place. Playgrounds can be very bleak and aggressive for children, but hopefully the kit will make it into a happier place, in fact one of the motivations that schools often have in wanting to change their playground is a problem of bullying, because a bare bleak playground can be stressful for the children and it seems really generate bullying. So for the least popular child we have thought well how do you design an environment that they can not feel isolated or left out, and that's where having a physical thing that you can pick up and bring to the circle really helps, or even just having something to lean against that protects your back.</p> <p>Physical also because the kit demands that the kids interact with the objects.</p> <p>And as I said for those to whom academia does not come easily, the educational benefits could be significant if the teacher is able to illustrate through the equipment key ideas that she or he is trying to impart, it's just more gratifying for those children and really helps build their confidence, the idea is learning through doing and moving away from the A4 piece of paper.</p> <p>Learning about height, weight, distance, space, it's about the teachers being able to demonstrate things rather than just talk about things. What we want the kit to be used for as well is as a focus for all sorts of activities, so for instance you might have an artist coming in and they could use the kit as a basis, a starting point, or you might have musicians or you might have a science week.</p>
<p>Summary of Impacts</p>	<p>Nothing to report as yet with regard to the intended participants, given that the four pilots haven't yet commenced.</p> <p>In terms of spin-offs, my view is that getting funding from Nesta automatically gives you credibility and that has been very very useful for us, because we are a company rather than an institution, so Nesta giving us such a vote of confidence has been really useful to us in increasing our status in the eyes of other potential supporting bodies or partners. It's raising our profile.</p> <p>What NESTA's award will allow Snug and Outdoor to do, above all, is to collaborate with design graduates</p>

	<p>from the Design Laboratory at Central St Martins College of Art and Design in London, giving them access to the very best expertise in product design. “We’re a small organisation, not an institution,” Hattie explains. “NESTA’s validation is fantastically important to us. It’s given us a unique opportunity to work with designers we wouldn’t otherwise be able to: people who are leaders in their field.”</p> <p>Originally we were going to apply to Esmee Fairbairn and the Arts Council to make a small scale version of the kit, a one off and individual kit which we could then take around to schools, so that was the original proposal, but then when we got in contact with Nesta it made us realise that what would be far more useful would be to have the chance to work with the Design Laboratory and others to actually create a prototype kit that could then be manufactured, which would then have the potential to be available to all schools and basically be a much better product. The original idea really was a much smaller scale initiative, a one-off but through Nesta’s interest in funding us we were able to develop the idea into a plan to manufacture a kit which schools can buy, regions can buy, and which can be the basis of all sorts of projects, a much much more substantial thing.</p> <p>... what has happened is that the potential of the project feels like its grown and also the relationships within the project have become established, particularly with the Design Lab and that could lead in all sorts of exciting directions, I mean I just feel that we are getting more ambitious.</p> <p>There will be a lot of professional learning for those of us involved in the project, and also because we will be talking to different professional bodies about what we are doing.</p>
Main successes	Nothing to report as yet with regard to the intended participants, given that the four pilots haven’t yet commenced.
Main issues and challenges	Only been running for six months and apart from commencing the project one month behind schedule there have been no other problems. The only thing that I am disappointed with so far is the Institute of Education, that’s not been as full-on as I’d hoped, and I think it comes down to the fact that like with schools the people at the IoE are under such pressure as are the students, that ours is an extra project to deal with, so the commitment from the students in that respect is amazing because it is demanding them to give up their free time, but overall so far the IoE is the partner that I feel least happy with, but it may change as we move into the next stage. It’s just that they seem not to have a lot of time for the project although they are funded partners, and I just feel that they could/should be doing a bit more.
Cost-effectiveness	
Sustainability	Yes, part of what we are doing over these two years is developing a business plan for bringing the kit to commercial reality. I don’t know whether Nesta will fund a spin off project

	<p>This two years is not going to see the roll out of the kit, rather this two years sees us designing and testing the kit, so that it is then ready for roll out post project. The two years is to try and take us up to the point where we can then think about mass producing and taking the kit to the market, we need to have something of value that will sell.</p> <p>That's a key reason for us doing this, so that a playground kit can be mass produced and is cheaper for schools to actually acquire, because the way we've worked previously on a single school basis has been very expensive for the school.</p> <p>In terms of spin-offs, my view is that getting funding from Nesta automatically gives you credibility and that has been very very useful for us, because we are a company rather than an institution, so Nesta giving us such a vote of confidence has been really useful to us in increasing our status in the eyes of other potential supporting bodies or partners. It's raising our profile.</p>
Transferability	<p>The equipment can be used by a big age range, from infant to primary, that is the same materials can be used by children of different ages, if you get the equipment right then all children can interact with it in the way that suits them.</p>
Examples of input to policy	<p>N.A. But an awareness of relevant policy issues by the PM as illustrated: Learning through play is a key concept, and I do think that the pendulum is now swinging back towards that, away from the very rigid targeted classroom structure. There are now guidelines about how much time children ought to spend outside in the playground and a whole new emphasis on learning outside and so certainly in the early years it is supposed to be 20% and I have heard that it is going up to 50%, so there is a really big shift to thinking about the outdoor environment as a place to use far more as a learning opportunity. The other slight change in terms of what's happening in the outside world is that the building schools for the future programme, the massive amounts of new building that is going on, is now going to include primary schools, and there is definitely a general sense that the new buildings, that the DfES has not given the outdoor space the priority that it deserves. There is a House of Commons Education Committee report that has just come out on the outdoor report exactly saying that and this has literally just come out, saying that the DfES has to get its act together in terms of the outdoor space and that the new buildings are a big disappointment because although the interiors are fantastic, the exteriors are worse than the schools that they knocked down.</p>
Examples of contribution to learning state of the art	<p>Nothing to report</p>
Good Practice examples	<p>Nothing to report</p>

