

PRESS RELEASE
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For further information contact Lisa Gaskell on 0207 023 3979

'Modest' teachers keep quiet about successes, finds report

Highly innovative schools give teachers confidence and encouragement to spread great ideas beyond their own classrooms so more pupils benefit. Without this encouragement, many teachers may be too modest to share these successes, finds a report out today. The report, *Teachers as Innovative Professionals*, was commissioned by the General Teaching Council for England and The Innovation Unit.

Teachers may not even realise that what they are doing is particularly innovative or successful – but just see it as part of ordinary teaching.

However, the report also found that teachers saw innovation as the very point of the job as it produced interesting lessons which helped pupils learn. As such, innovation taps into a core skill of teaching and is intrinsic to teachers' professionalism. Responding to individual pupils' needs within the context of the curriculum and making subjects accessible is difficult, but a vital part of teachers improving their practice.

Teachers said innovating in this way increased their own job satisfaction. They were also motivated to be innovative if supported by peers and managers.

Teachers as Innovative Professionals, which drew on telephone interviews with teachers, in-depth visits to schools and a literature review, outlines the barriers to innovation and solutions to overcoming them. The research was carried out to follow up results in the GTC Annual Survey of Teachers 2006, which found that 84% of teachers believe they have the opportunity to innovate in the classroom.

The overwhelming requirement for innovation in teaching is strong school leadership. The whole-school ethos made a huge difference to teachers' willingness to innovate and to share their ideas. Particularly innovative schools tended to have formal structures in place for teachers to do this.

As innovation always brings an element of risk, teachers need to feel they have the encouragement to innovate and the support to manage the risk. In addition, they need to be given the opportunities to talk and to share practice.

Really innovative schools involved pupils in developing, testing, evaluating and sharing ideas to an extent that innovation was almost a 'co-production' between staff and pupils.

One school, used as a 'Case Study School' in the report, Halton High School in Runcorn, Cheshire, saw a boost in exam results, attendance and morale, as a result of employing a more innovative approach.

GTC Chief Executive Keith Bartley, said:

“This report shows how truly innovative teachers can be given the right conditions. The GTC has experienced this in working with schools through its Teacher Learning Academy, which puts structures in place for teachers to share their learning.

“There is a wealth of inspirational ideas out there. We just need to make sure that they move beyond the classroom in which they were conceived so more teachers and pupils can benefit.”

Mike Gibbons, Chief Executive of The Innovation Unit said:

“We are very pleased to be working with the GTC on this study which explores innovation in a crucial area of the public sector services and the creativity of our practitioner colleagues. We believe it is this creativity of public service practitioners, working collaboratively and with service users, that is the way to transform public services as we have been exploring through our Next Practice programme.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The research was carried out by OPM on behalf of the General Teaching Council for England and The Innovation Unit.

Copies of the report are available from the GTC Press Office on 020 7023 3959 or by emailing lisa.gaskell@gtce.org.uk or press@gtce.org.uk

About the Innovation Unit

The Innovation Unit works as an innovation intermediary in public services. It is devoted to stimulating, incubating and accelerating innovation to achieve transformed services with better outcomes for citizens.

The Innovation Unit has made a key contribution to the evolution of public service innovation and improvement through the development of a new, disciplined approach to stimulating, incubating, and accelerating innovation (the [Next Practice Innovation Model™](#)), which is strongly driven by users' needs. This approach is known as Next Practice. Next Practice, has been developed from the evidence base on innovation in public services and from the pioneering work The Innovation Unit undertook with OECD and other parties on Futures Literacy.

The Innovation Unit believes passionately that the creativity of public service practitioners, working collaboratively and with service users, holds the key to this transformation. They support the process by bringing evidence-informed, disciplined methods to innovation.

www.innovation-unit.co.uk

About the GTC

The General Teaching Council for England is the independent professional and regulatory body for teaching in England. 540,000 qualified teachers are registered with the GTC.

Its principal statutory remit is to contribute to improving standards of teaching and the quality of learning and to maintain and improve standards of conduct in the public interest. It works for children, through teachers. www.gtce.org.uk