

Sample CfE Survey Comments

Q. 10. In preparation for the Senior Phase in relation to CfE implementation, has workload increased over the last year? Please identify the main cause(s) of this increase.

1. The exemplars given in history and modern studies for Nat 4 and 5 are vague in terms of the types of questioning which will be in the proposed exam structure. Publishing the final draft in April 2012 does not give us much time to prepare a course which is meant to reflect the experiences and outcomes, whilst also undertaking further development in the junior school. East Renfrewshire may have the ability to delay for a year but not many LA's are doing this, workload is only going to increase because the resources we currently have are dictating the themes we study e.g. Germany will be popular as will World War One.
2. Making new resources that incorporate the Experiences and Outcomes for the subject. Reading documents in relation to CfE. Making sure that other experiences and Outcomes such as those related to Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well-being are also incorporated into our courses. Much discussion in department amongst colleagues with regards to how courses should be structured. Work has had to be re done due to lack of information about how courses and assessment should be structured.
3. Trying to make sense of the vague and woolly "directives" coming from LTS and the SQA. Reading up on all the various bits of paper emerging from these sources. Attending meetings, conferences, etc., which purport to give information about the changes but in fact don't. The underpinning rationale that it is TEACHERS who will develop as well as deliver the new courses - we have to re-assess all our teaching materials to ask: how flexible are they if they need to change?
4. Quite a lot of pressure put on a small department to produce curricular support materials. This has taken time away from quality lesson planning, marking, reporting etc. There are not enough members in the department to spread the workload as there would be in a larger department
5. Very high. The causes are due to the fact that the information is coming to us too late for planning. Teachers do not really understand the curricular frameworks. Schools are not confident about taking forward their own models when they hear the school up the road is doing something different. There is no time to evaluate courses already implemented. We are in year 2 of CfE in secondary and I find it hard to see how schools can abandon CfE in favour of existing courses. Reassurance from HE and FE as to how they view the new qualifications but that is well-nigh impossible as the drafts are only just out. That is the real issue! Also HMIE are suggesting that all of the experiences and outcomes need to be covered and there is little time available in schools to discuss all of this. LAs have no cover available!
6. Need to revisit every aspect of every course. Decide whether to retain, adapt or rewrite both content and assessment strategies...
8. Reading/discussing new documents on all courses. Comparing old courses to new and attempting to deduce what is meant from vague information provided by SQA/Government. Developing new courses for S1 Developing new courses for S2 Developing new courses for S3 Creating new assessments for S1 Creating new assessments for S2 Creating new assessments for S3 Collecting evidence for an example to be put on NAR All this on top of workload including main priorities of helping pupils achieve SG & Higher still certificates to

enable them to be competitive in the job markets. This will be less relevant with National 4 qualifications which will not be worth the paper they are written on.

9. Assessment and reporting has become much more time consuming and that is only for S1 and S2 so far. The perceived need to do something new and different to assess pupils for CfE has led us to much more time consuming ways of assessing pupils, that does not leave teachers and parents any better informed as to how pupils are doing. Writing the new courses for S3 and S4 will be very time consuming for us. This is not helped by the need to rewrite our S2 CfE history course. When we saw the topics for Nat 4 and Nat 5 History we realised we were already doing the best ones in S1 and S2 so are now going to have to rewrite our whole S2 course to avoid repeating a topic. If only the Scottish government had got it together to release the topics earlier, this would not have happened.

10. Trying to implement a new curriculum with an existing one 2. Lack of support provided by authority 3. Scottish government offered 5 Local authority places for a national conference on the new qualifications. This is OK if subject managers have regular meetings in the authority for 'cascading' the information. 4. I have 3 subjects to manage - the workload is too much plus having to teach classes from s1 to S5/6. 5. CfE reports for children take a lot longer to complete - cuts down on time for everything else. 6. Confusion about when children should be beginning the preparation for these new qualifications - depends on the school timetabling and curriculum design.

11. Preparation of courses while carrying on with the day to day job. Staff are/ or have been willing to engage with change but too much is happening at the same time! Complete lack of direction from the government, too many questions still remain unanswered due to the lack of clarity of the experiences and outcomes and the mixed messages received at various CPD events. It really looks like nobody knows what they are doing any more! Isis days are now taking place on moderation, should this not have taken place 4 years ago? We feel that we are going round in circles and all this time, work, energy and good will have gone to waste.

12. The disjointed staggered and confused release of information masked as 'draft' has resulted in a chaotic approach to planning. If teacher's lessons were delivered to pupils as poorly as the CfE has been communicated to teachers by SQA and government, our children's education would be doomed to failure. I suspect overworking and a teachers' loyalty to pupils will save the day while the government and SQA will try to take the credit.

13. Trying to figure out exactly what is going on and second guessing the Government/LTS intentions. They are not giving us enough information.

14. No real guidance has been given regarding the course content or assessment. By laying the responsibility for 'tailor-making' courses to suit the needs of our students, All interested parties from government to HMIE and SQA, have grossly underestimated the impact to staff.

15. The main concern has been the amount of work that myself and other colleagues have had to do due to the lack of direction from our Local Authority, LTS, SQA and particularly the Scottish Government.

16. There is no transition period for this phase. We are still working through 'old' courses and expected to deliver quality programmes while trying to fathom out what we are supposed to be doing for CFE. The school and BOS are being non-committal about we are to be

delivering in August. The SQA, Education Scotland, the Scottish Government etc. are not working cohesively and we are constantly getting conflicting information, which again is frustrating us and holding us back on the work we are trying to develop. It seems that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. A lot of work we have already undertaken has been a complete waste of valuable time - all the workshops, network meetings, conferences etc. have proved worthless and we are still no further forward.

17. Lack of time set aside at INSET for development. Less time to share practice with colleagues across Scotland. Lack of clarity on new qualifications and very late timescales for release of information from SQA meaning that teachers have to take more time to decipher Government's plans. No central support from LTS/HMIE/SQA as to the content. Resources on the NAR are not vetted and quality assured.

18. There is a very serious information gap and a great deal left to guesswork. The pace of change and development needed for the Senior Phase combined with the on-going implementation and development of the Broad General Education is fearsome. In over 32 years of teaching experience and having experience of many changes there has never been quite such a whole scale change in the education system and structure. The on-going development workload for teachers is unprecedented and if rationally considered is actually quite unmanageable and a serious risk is being taken with the future of pupils, never mind the pressure on teachers. At the same time there is very conflicting advice and mixed messages coming from various sources and it seems that political dogma and fear of failure from the government are starting to boil over. This is ludicrous at the stage and simply indicates how poorly considered most of the changes have been. The recipe is not well mixed!

19. Although there is a significant amount of material describing the aims of the new Curriculum there is little in the way of actual examples of work at the specified levels. It has fallen on schools themselves to work where possible with cluster colleagues to establish moderation groups. The lack of clear detail from the SQA of what the new exams entail and exemplar material means it is difficult to plan properly or to report satisfactorily to parents.

20. Developing new courses, whilst attempting to make alterations to the recently introduced S1 and S2 CfE courses and continuing with the normal demands of teaching on a full timetable.

Do you think that additional resources will be required to support the Senior Phase in relation to CfE implementation and to reduce workload in your school/department?

1. More of a 'classroom teacher' approach than a large wordy document. A focused page with what is required and who is assessing it...internal/external. A clear direction on which level pupils should be performing at for Nat 4/5 Music.
2. Well, the SQA and LTS are leaving it very late to give us definite structure, information about the new qualifications, the NABs, the assessment process, and so on. They are bound to contain elements we have not fully thought through and need to adapt to. ANY change takes time to adjust to!
3. Paper based or on-line learning materials. Higher still was a minor change compared to this and I remember the school being given money to purchase resources, including text books which was of great benefit. Time is the biggest resource that is going to be lacking
4. Exemplar materials for each aspect of the course(s). A central 'bank' of materials to avoid everyone having to 're-invent the wheel'.
5. SQA sessions on new NQ qualifications National exemplar materials/ standardisation exercises other than just at a local level
6. Now more than ever! Currently we are facing pressure to develop a huge quantity of resources to ensure pace, challenge and personalisation and choice and this is a huge workload, particularly in a small department such as mine. TIME is needed! What is more, even before these changes our current photocopying budget is in the red and this will only get worse with the need for support materials. Modern Studies textbooks go out of date fast at the best of times and I am fearful that we will have neither the books, nor the copying budget to be able to supply senior pupils with the resources they need for home study/consolidation. There is also a lack of ICT resources within school to cope with pupils carrying out "added value" units simultaneously in all subjects. Although I understand that this will not take the form of an investigation in all subjects, in many it does and access to computers is already very limited. I am interested as to how this will be managed in schools - particularly if we are to avoid a social divide, whereby well-off pupils with a personal computer at home will have a distinct advantage over pupils with no/shared family computer.
7. Provision of specific in-service courses relating to all levels - Nat 4/5 Higher and Advanced Higher. New materials to facilitate teaching of the new courses. Time within departments to allow departmental development of the new courses (non-existent at the moment).
8. Anything that can be provided to us would be a great help, at the moment we only have a rough idea as to what we should be teaching.
9. More timely publication of documents to ensure complete understanding way ahead of time. CPD events needed, unlike junior phase of CFE where there has been no training and ineffective guidance on the teaching etc. To the extent that inconsistency and uncertainty abound.
10. Supply cover to allow staff to develop courses and articulate continuity and development between phases.

11. Collegiate time to develop a consistent understanding of Assessment procedures and standards, as well as to develop new approaches for new assessments
12. The government and the SQA need to be more prescriptive with their documentation so as to ease the work load of teachers. Arrangements documents similar to those for Standard Grade and Higher have worked in the past and would work again if produced.
13. Teaching materials and clarification on implementation of the Senior Phase to avoid the first year group which passes through it from becoming guinea pigs.
14. As the N4 and N5 curricula are not finalised yet, we have not made progress yet but very soon it will be frantic. We need draft courses, resources, homework and assessments in place as examples for departments to follow. It is not good enough to leave everything to be flexible.
15. Due to lack of specific detailed content and exam format, it's been difficult to plan and prepare for the new courses. Once we know what the exams will look like and if the content is different from previous exam syllabus, then time will be needed to adapt materials or money if commercially produced materials are available. Examples of how the new courses "look" in practice would also be very useful.
16. Funding for commercially produced materials such as texts etc.; development time to produce learning and teaching resources; training on assessment, national standards and moderation procedures
17. We need help with finding good resources. There is no way that we are going to be able to do it all ourselves. The pupils are suffering as we cannot supply them with enough resources e.g. a GOOD text book
18. We need at the very least, a starter course which we can develop over time to suit our own needs. It is ridiculous that in every secondary school in Scotland teachers are duplicating work and effort.

Have you any additional comments on CfE Implementation?

1. In my opinion. I believe that CfE implementation should be deferred for at least one academic year. I think this would benefit staff, giving them more time to develop resources and also more time to understand what is expected of them in the delivery of the new curriculum. I also think it would be beneficial for the pupils as they would be gaining a better education through the extra experience that the staff would be gaining. I also think that we need more specific information about what the new courses should contain. Although a framework has been produced this needs to be more specific to allow colleagues to plan what the courses will contain.
2. Farcical. CfE is an excellent idea unbelievable badly implemented. Schools scared to hold their hands up and say they're not ready. Immeasurably glad I don't have a 12-13 year old who is going to be a guinea pig for National 4/5.
3. This department is very concerned as to the speed of the implementation and to the "wooliness" of the assessment. What will a parent make of a report in which all their child receives for every subject is - your child is consolidating - it says nothing constructive in our opinion.
4. I am 100% behind the new qualifications and the Senior Phase; however, timescale and workload is a huge issue.
5. The truth of the matter is that there is not enough information available to ensure we are ready for the senior phase. I feel sorry for the kids. This system is completely letting them down.
6. I agree in principal to what CfE is trying to do, however the lack of clear information is frustrating and the timings are completely unrealistic. There is a case of chicken and egg in that we are still unclear of the end point of assessment yet supposed to start teaching material, doesn't add up and will probably involve pulling something together which will more than definitely need continual tweaking which will add yet again to people's workload as the parameters keep changing. Also I have concerns for children moving schools as even with P&K every school seems to be doing things differently let alone thinking about how schools are doing things in different authorities.
7. I believe that local authorities should take a leaf out of East Renfrewshire's book. They are implementing this later so that if there are courses produced, they can use them/adapt them to their needs. This makes so much sense - and after all, they are Scotland's flagship council, so why argue with them. CfE implementation is being rushed through, is ill-prepared and causing so much stress across departments. I have never known staff morale to be so low!
8. I am all for CfE. I like the freedom it gives and that pupils can investigate and learn. However I do not see that this will happen. Nat 4 is a great course (biology) it would really be creative for the pupils. Nat 5 looks great too. But if I have to teach both

together. I cannot allow for such creativity. I can only see worksheet learning working as I "spin plates" moving between both groups. It will not be the lessons envisaged by CfE. I love using Assessment for Learning and cooperative learning. However teaching both courses? Surely this is not how it was intended?

9. I like the idea of having more say in courses but with little time to develop them means that the quality that should be developed is just not there. Each school tend to do its own thing even in one authority with a rumbling of working more together coming too little, too late. It has been challenging enough to develop the resources for S1 & 2 and as a Science (Chemistry) teacher we have a great many outcomes to cover but at least we have been able to divide the development work between the teachers in the faculty. In S4 we will be developing Nat 4 & 5 Chemistry courses and assessment for Nat 4 in their entirety which is totally unrealistic with only 1.5 Chemistry teachers. I have the feeling of being a learner teacher again having to familiarise myself with so much new information.
10. I have a daughter in S1 and am terrified as to her prospects in S4. I am not at all confident that the National 4s and 5s will provide her with the necessary CV for employers and further education, particularly when other authorities are not fully embracing the new courses.
11. Mr Russell needs to ask take the concerns of teachers seriously. Many Directors of Education may genuinely believe they are well-placed to deliver the new qualifications because headteachers tell them that is the case. Headteachers either don't know or won't admit that they really don't know if their school is or is not.
12. We are operating in a difficult climate in schools where there are changes afoot with regard to management structures, posts and terms and conditions. The likely outcome of these changes will involve staff working harder for less pay and less time to do their jobs. Throughout this we are expected to introduce and run a new curriculum for S1 to S6. And to add to this there are issues with our pension arrangements which look likely to negatively affect us in the long term and throughout all this it is the children who are under our care in schools that are affected by all these changes that seem to be running concurrently. All in all the situation is unsatisfactory and it's likely we'll see more and more teachers off work with stress related issues affecting their physical and mental health.
13. We have worked very hard to embrace the principles set out in all BTC documents. We are committed to delivering. However, there are some contradictions. We are offering more choice and more service in the shape of support whilst at the same time as having our conditions and pay reduced in real terms. This idea behind CfE feels like an idea born out of a service with money and time, but it has to live in a world with a diminishing well of both. There is some headache and challenge ahead. The differing systems of 2+2+2 and 3+3 means this system is not equitable across regions. We can now add to that; different regions starting at different times. Another year's delay and some decisive planning seems to be the only way to salvage what is fast becoming a burden rather than the saviour of Scottish education.