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Inspirational teachers abound in Higher Education: Just ask the students who they are!

Sally Bradley, Sheffield Hallam University

Students at Sheffield Hallam University have told the university, using its internal Student Experience Survey, how much they value the inspirational teaching they have experienced. Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students were asked to nominate staff and describe, using no more than 200 words, how their student experience is being transformed by inspirational teaching and by exemplary learning support. Research students and final year students were also asked to nominate an inspirational research or project supervisor.

Sally Bradley introducing the scheme to the Vice-Chancellor, Deans, winners and students

2600 students took the opportunity to share their thoughts with us using this optional survey question. Students nominated 1000 members of staff or staff groups, ranging from the Security Officer in the Learning Centre to an Assistant Dean of Academic Development demonstrating that inspiration is found in the whole student experience of university and not just in the lecture theatre.

Representatives from the Students' Union at the reception

The 1000 nominees were recognised and acknowledged through letters or emails from the Dean of their Faculty or Directorate Head. However, this overwhelming response confirmed the need to initiate a teaching recognition award. The nominations were shortlisted to 31 inspirational teachers through a Faculty selection panel process and sent to a University selection panel consisting of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching and the Student Experience, the Education Officer of the Students' Union, an external National Teaching Fellow, an Assistant Dean (Academic Development) and a member of the Innovation and Professional Development Team. The selection for the Research Supervisor Awards was made by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor

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for Research and Knowledge Transfer, the Head of the Research Development Committee and the Students' Union Education Officer. Twenty-three University Inspirational Teaching awards were finally made. Those awarded included an Associate Lecturer and Emeritus Professors together with seven Research Supervisors and two exceptional Outstanding Student Support Staff.

Three 'Inspirational Teachers' talking with the VC and their Head of Learning and Teaching

The Vice-Chancellor announced that the University Award holders would be recognised at Graduation, where many received standing ovations from their graduates. Later, an informal celebratory dinner was held where the Vice-Chancellor presented the certificates to the award winners.

It was important that the awards were not perceived to be a popularity contest based on numbers of nominations; selection was made solely on the students' comments. Analysis of the student comments identified all the inspirational staff had personal qualities which made them stand out; enthusiasm and passion for their subject and their teaching were mentioned consistently. This was usually prefaced with the words 'always' or 'genuine', demonstrating that this was their regular approach to teaching. The award winners had an ability to make topics, which the students considered dry or difficult, 'come to life' and/or the ability to 're-ignite interest'. Yet staff were also seen to be friendly and approachable, showing a genuine interest in their students and being willing and able to listen. The support provided was often seen as going 'above and beyond' expectations. That is not to say that the staff did not challenge or question their students, rather they stimulated and motivated them. Students had a respect for the wealth of knowledge held by the staff and the way they were able to communicate this and encourage the students without intimidating them. The staff were often referred to as a role model or as someone they aspired to emulate in their future careers. To many students the nominee was a unique character and a powerful ambassador for the university. What came through from the student comments was that the awards were not about students being spoon-fed information; staff were stretching students through the ability to make difficult concepts accessible and students were challenged to think beyond what was being taught.

Having spoken to the Award winners, there is another common trait which they shared – their humility in what they do. Few, if any, would have nominated themselves for a learning and teaching award. The student-nominated awards have provided the opportunity for the *only* people who really know what happens in the classroom, lecture theatre, laboratory or workshop to have their say in a positive way. If we are genuine about the rhetoric of the student experience, then this is a powerful message. But we should not overlook the 1000 members of staff, academic and support, who have had a similar impact on one or more students – which is why they were acknowledged too.

This was the first time Sheffield Hallam had run a student-nominated award. It stems from a constructive and co-operative forward-looking relationship between institutional leadership and the student body, represented in the backing of Professor Philip Martin, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching and the Student Experience and the Students´ Union Education Officers, Ben Dowen and Scott Storey.

Was this a one-off? No. More than 2300 students have already made their recommendations for the 2012 Student Nominated Inspirational Teaching Awards.

Sally Bradley is a Senior Lecturer in the Innovation and Professional Development Team at Sheffield Hallam University.

Designing and Implementing an online PG Cert TLHE

Louisa Sheward and **Lesley Hamilton,** University of the West of Scotland

Background

The PG Cert TLHE has been offered as a part-time blended programme at the University of the West of Scotland since 2001. Like many programmes of this type it is divided into three modules which are completed over three trimesters and consists of seminars, tutorials and teaching observations, all of which are complemented by online activity (using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)). This online activity, until recently, mainly consisted of Discussion Forums, access to seminar materials, Programme and Module Handbooks (which were also given out as hard copies), links to resources and submission of assignments via Turnitin.

Earlier this year, validation of an additional online PG Cert TLHE was approved. This is the story of how we designed and implemented the online option, how this impacted on the blended option, some of the challenges we faced and how we attempted to overcome them. The first online cohort commenced in September 2011. This small pilot cohort has allowed us to try out new teaching and learning approaches and begin to evaluate this option based on Jackson's (1998) three stages of evaluation of learning technology: intentions, implementation and outcomes.

Intentions: Designing an online programme

In designing the online option, we were keen to provide a learning experience which would be equivalent to the blended option. Feedback from current and previous programme members consistently reported that a main strength of the programme was the interaction, networking and subsequent sharing of good practice. Feedback from the Programme Liaison Group also supported the use of more technologies for all programme members, not just for those choosing the online option.

To provide equivalent interactive online experiences we were keen not to overwhelm programme members with too many different technologies, but at the same time not to limit interaction to discussion boards. Achieving an appropriate balance was important. We anticipated that numbers choosing the online option would be low, at least to begin with, so we also had to consider the potential lack of capacity for sharing and interaction. The blended option was already supported by a single VLE site which incorporated all three modules of the programme. This site is accessed by programme members from two intakes per year, programme tutors, personal tutors and mentors (whom programme members choose from their own discipline). All can access and contribute to the same resources, discussions and feedback blog within the VLE. This includes resources for mentors.

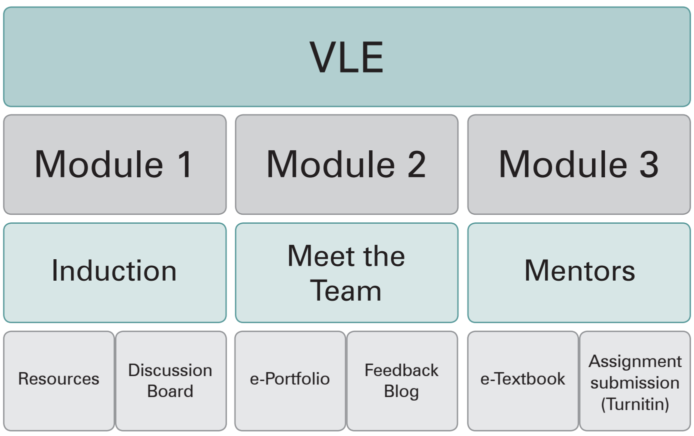

Figure 1 One Community of Practice

Our intention was to develop a site which would include all of the above as well as the online participants. This larger community of practice (see Figure 1), we hoped, would enhance interaction and provide new and innovative ways to interact and learn. This had to be well managed with clear signposting.

The intention was to replace the seminars with webinars. A webinar is a Web-based seminar and can be a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar transmitted over the web (Webopedia, 2012). We considered a number of possibilities to do this, including recording narration with presentations, the virtual classroom and discussion forums. But these did not offer the opportunity for interaction that we envisaged. We wanted the equivalent learning experience to be more innovative, collaborative, and productive. In the end, Voicethread (2012) was chosen as the main method, though not the only method; it would be complemented with other activities, for example, wikis. Voicethread and wikis encourage participant-generated content and are easy to use – no software has to be downloaded.

To replicate the tutorials which were up until then delivered either face to face (F2F) or occasionally by phone or email, we chose Nefsis and/or Skype as the main methods. We concluded that these would be appropriate additional methods for the blended option also.

We were also keen to encourage the exploration of a wider range of technologies and so included activities that linked to other technologies, for example, watching a YouTube on how to use Smart Boards. We also provided tutor-generated resources in different formats. For example, we used Wimba Create to convert materials created using Microsoft Word into a set of self-navigable web pages. Both the Module Study Materials and the programme Handbooks were already available online in this format. Of course, different formats, including paper, are provided on request. We also introduced the use of the core textbook as an e-book for all programme members. We hoped that all of these approaches would encourage a critical awareness of a wider range of technologies to enhance learning.

We also wanted to ensure the continued constructive alignment of teaching, learning and assessment within modules. This was crucial as the learning outcomes and assessments for both options are the same, though the teaching and learning strategies differed in places. A shift to a more technology-enhanced learning focus for all programme members seemed relevant to ensure a continued equivalence and alignment.

Developing procedures for the remote observation of teaching (see Figure 2) was one of the biggest challenges. We had previously piloted this with a flip camera. The arrangements for the recording of teaching, including seeking necessary permissions, would be the responsibility of the programme member. The recording would be streamed to the programme member's e-portfolio from a private host account. Our e-portfolio is based on a Campus Pack Wiki. The programme member would give permission to the tutor observing the teaching to view the e-portfolio so that feedback could be provided. The programme member would also evaluate their own teaching. This would mean those choosing the online option would have the added benefit of being able to watch the recording rather than relying on memory! Of course, others could choose to record their teaching also if they wished. This feedback could then be discussed by desktop conferencing using either Nefsis or Skype and additional comments added to the e-portfolio comments section as required. This aspect of the programme potentially seemed the most technologically challenging part for all concerned.

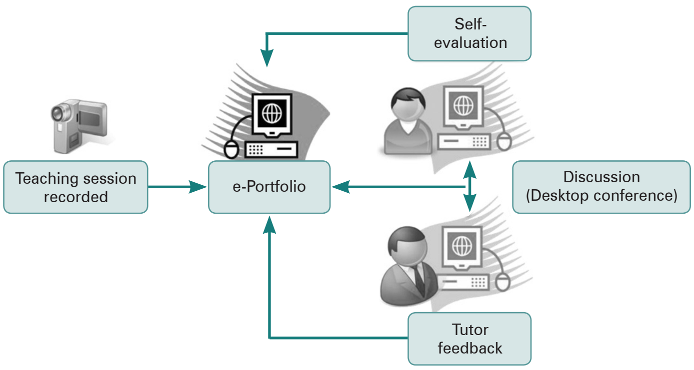

Figure 2 Remote observation of teaching

It should be apparent by now that we wanted to help our programme members become more aware, confident and competent as well as become critical users of digital technologies, that is, to enhance their digital literacy skills. In turn we hoped this would encourage greater use of technologies with their own students and enhance *their* digital skills. However, we did not want to overwhelm participants by excessive early active use of technologies and instead aimed to build skills gradually by introducing these over a period of time, starting with an induction to the VLE.

In addition, we wanted to provide flexibility so that programme members could benefit from the teaching and learning approaches used for both the blended and online options. For example, on missing a face to face seminar, we envisaged that programme members could 'catch-up' by engaging with the online equivalent. Likewise, those choosing the online option could choose to attend face to face aspects of the programme.

Although we wanted to use innovative technologies, we were a little hesitant about using facilities outwith the VLE – we were concerned that external links may lack sustainability and support, and perhaps be more prone to hacking. Hence, where possible, the technologies used were from within the VLE, embedded within the VLE and/or supported by our institution. We were fortunate in that a member of the development team was an e-learning developer. The development would have been difficult without this expertise. In addition, the Director of our Unit provided resources such as software licences and time for creativity.

Furthermore, we incorporated good practice from our own institutional policies, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC, 2009) and the Quality Assurance Agency Standards (QAA, 2010).

Implementation

The following section focuses on the suite of activities and software implemented to date.

Pre-Induction

'Just in case' information regarding computer, internet, plug-in requirements and the minimum computer skills for participation in the programme was provided to all programme members.

Induction to the VLE

Everyone had to engage with the Induction to the VLE. This included a number of activities, such as 'meet your personal tutor' via Nefsis or Skype. All programme members, whether choosing the blended or online option, had opportunities to interact and get to know each other via the Discussion Forum and Voicethread. In addition, each set up their own personal e-Blog which would be used to reflect on activities throughout the programme. Most of the activities during the induction (and the programme) could be completed at the members' own pace and time. To provide experience of a live chat, a scheduled discussion was arranged using Instant Chat. This was informal and provided an opportunity to share how everyone was getting on with the induction activities.

This induction was important as, despite the growth in available technologies and increasing use in many contexts, including Higher Education, not all learners (including new lecturers) have the skills to undertake this type of learning. This induction aimed to help the participants become more familiar with a variety of technologies as well as how and where to access support to resolve any issues. Support links were provided within the VLE. This early exposure also aimed to ensure that any technical barriers were resolved before teaching began, that is, 'just in time' support. Figure 3 shows a screenshot of a Voicethread used during induction to the VLE. Voicethread (2012) is a tool for having conversations around various media. These can include images, text, documents, videos and web links. One page can hold many conversations (based on video, voice or text comments) and is achieved by more people simply appearing around the image. Many pages can make up a Voicethread. In this example, participants were asked to choose one or more image and comment on how this related to their educational philosophy. This activity was adapted from a seminar activity using postcards (based on work by Daphne Loads (2009)). This screenshot shows Louisa leaving a video comment. The unique metaphors and new technology combined to produce an innovative means of getting to know each other!

Figure 3 Example of Voicethread used during induction

Induction to Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA)
The Induction to TLA is offered as a three-day face to face induction, or online over a two-week period. This induction introduces a number of topics considered in more depth later in the programme and builds on skills introduced in the induction to the VLE.

Module Teaching
A summary of the teaching and learning activities for both the blended and online options can be seen in Figure 4. The programme is designed so that the 'blend' agreed on between the programme member and the tutor can range from mostly F2F through to completely online.

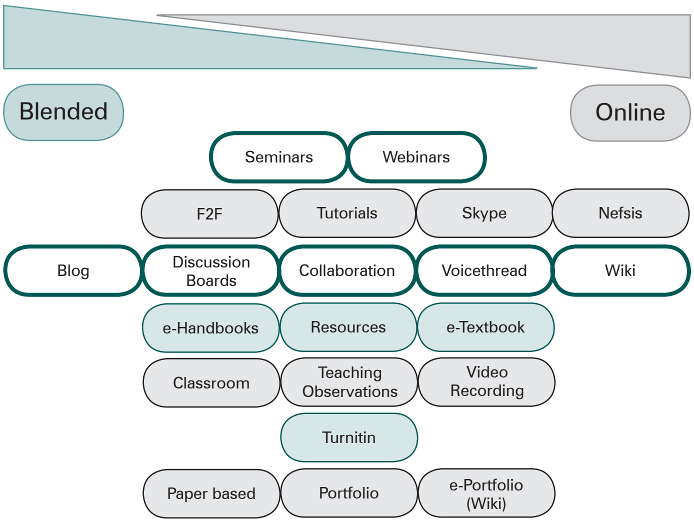

Figure 4 Blended and Online Options

Evaluation to date

Our evaluation is at an early stage. Feedback has been informal and focused on ease of use, attractiveness and preferences of the technologies (Jackson, 1998). These initial responses suggest that not all participants have yet used some of the technologies, which is perhaps to be expected. Responses are quite mixed with not all respondents embracing the use of technologies as anticipated.

So far, our intention to create interaction, networking and subsequent sharing of good practice has not been achieved to the extent we had hoped. For example, although participants seemed to enjoy Voicethread during induction, thereafter engagement reduced to fewer than anticipated. Participants were viewing these, but comments were infrequent. This may be because few thought questions or comments were necessary. We have a well-established tutorial system and so many questions can and are asked via the Personal Tutor. However, the lack of online interaction did not reflect the collaborative community we hoped to achieve. On the positive side, when participants did leave comments, it was possible to pick up on visual and voice clues (where relevant) as to how participants were receiving materials, which is not as obvious from text-only comments. Another benefit of Voicethread is that if there are technical difficulties these do not need to be resolved immediately as the flow of delivery is not affected. It can be watched any time and still has the feeling of being a live recording.

But further amendments are required to encourage more interaction. Strategies being considered are to develop more participant-generated content activities rather than tutor-generated ones, for example, we have introduced a Resource Wiki. This means programme members are encouraged to add references and resources as well as tutors. Another example will be to encourage wider sharing of resources developed within wikis, e.g. to develop good practice on a specific topic which could be shared across the institution. Perhaps a more fundamental way to encourage participation is to provide on-going opportunities for co-creation of the curriculum (Bovill *et al.,* 2011). Programme members on this type of programme are in an ideal position to be more actively engaged in the design of their 'work based' learning.

Reflecting back on our intentions, we were keen not to overwhelm participants with too many technologies and with a 'too busy' VLE site. Informal feedback would suggest that this has not been achieved for all programme members. However, in September 2012 the institution will have moved to a new VLE. This will result in a more contemporary look and feel to the VLE which will encourage us to rethink how to continue with the concept of one community of practice. There may need to be another way to approach this.

With regards to Voicethread, this seems to have many advantages that perhaps need to be articulated more fully. For example, all participants can listen to the Voicethreads as many times as they wish which can be particularly useful to those whose first language is not English. In addition, all participants can leave questions after a seminar, where they may not have thought of a particular question at the time.

Finally, everyone can listen to the responses to any questions/ comments.

In general terms, updates to computers were required (for some programme members and tutors) to ensure some technologies worked. This highlighted the need to have in place IT support to ensure that necessary plug-ins are always up to date (e.g. Adobe Flash Player).

On a more personal note, using technologies such as Voicethread encouraged more self-evaluation, in terms of being more conscious of what was said and how it was said, as it could be watched again and again!

Other strategies will include sending more reminders to programme members of the activities on the VLE and trying to recognise need more quickly. This may help to develop confidence and competence. We will also emphasise the benefits of participation, and make more explicit the journey that participants are expected to engage with to develop their digital literacy skills, whilst still trying not to overwhelm anyone by using too many technologies.

Another area requiring further deliberation is the teaching observations. These were expected to be a challenging aspect, and this was the case. There were technical issues with providing access to observe the recorded teaching. This again highlights the need for more support. Recordings, although within the requested time frame of 50 minutes, were still difficult to work with. Help was required from technicians to stream the large files into the VLE.

On a positive note, the use of a wiki for an e-portfolio has helped make access to these easier and has provided a route for continuous dialogue about the portfolio as it is developed. The owner can also be more creative than in a paper copy by, for example, adding links to WebPages and adding recordings of teaching.

In conclusion, the intentions of achieving a collaborative, interactive, flexible and innovative learning environment have been achieved to some extent but not as spontaneously as or at the scale imagined. The positives are that as a result of the new technologies introduced for the online option we feel there have been a number of benefits to all participants, including more active use of a wider range of teaching and learning approaches. Further amendments are required and we will continue to enjoy exploring these and developing our own digital skills as we proceed.

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Jackson, B. (1998) 'Evaluation of learning technology implementation', in Mogey, N. (ed.) *Evaluation Studies, LTDI Resource* (tinyurl.com/7fe4hvc).

JISC (2009) 'Effective practice in a digital age', HEFCE (tinyurl.com/mnyzzs).

Loads, J. D. (2009) 'Putting ourselves in the picture: art workshops in the professional development of university lecturers', *International Journal for Academic Development* (14) 1, pp. 59-67.

QAA (2010) 'Code of practice: collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)' (tinyurl.com/83wks72).

Webopedia (2012) (tinyurl.com/4out3b)

Resources

Nefsis: www.nefsis.com

Skype: www.skype.com

Voicethread: voicethread.com/about/features/

Wimba Create: www.wimba.com/products/wimba_create

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The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education

Nigel Purcell, Higher Education Academy

The revised UKPSF (HEA, 2011) was published on the 2 November 2011 and in general appears to have been well received by the sector. In this article I am going to explain the characteristics of the Framework, its strengths and its potential uses. I hope to show that it can be an invaluable tool in the drive to raise the standard of teaching and learning support provision in higher education. The framework's central purpose is to help those seeking to enhance the learning experience of their students, by improving the quality of their teaching and learning support. If you have a substantive role in the education of students or staff, it will be relevant to your situation. The Framework provides a means to comprehensively benchmark, develop, recognise and reward teaching and learning support roles within higher education.

It has been developed by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) on behalf of the sector as a whole and so it is the property of all of those with a direct interest in the HE sector.

What is the Framework?

The Framework document consists of a description of the professional role of 'teaching and supporting learning' within the higher education environment written from the perspective of the practitioner. This description is expressed in terms of three 'Dimensions' of practice which are used to construct four 'Descriptors', which are intended to comprehensively cover all teaching and learning support roles within the HE environment.

The Dimensions of Practice

The Dimensions consist of three sets of statements outlining the:

1. Five *Areas of activity* undertaken by teachers and supporters of learning within HE
2. Six aspects of *Core knowledge* that are needed to carry out those activities at the appropriate level
3. Four *Professional values* that someone performing these activities should embrace and exemplify.

The three Dimensions focus respectively on the practice of teaching and supporting learning in HE, how it should be done and the values that should underpin it. They reflect the complex and multi-faceted nature of the professional role of staff teaching and supporting learning. This complexity is highlighted in the Framework document by embedding them within a diagram (Figure 1), intended to illustrate the ways in which these three aspects interact with each other. This contrasts with the linear format of the previous Framework.

All three dimensions will be operating within any actual performance of teaching and supporting learning. So, any particular activity will involve the application of appropriate knowledge and commitment to the relevant values as illustrated in Figure 2 below right.

No one dimension has primacy. Each one describes a key aspect of the professional role of teaching and supporting learning in the HE context. They are all high-order and very general statements which are deliberately written in accessible language. Each Dimension is intended to provide a clear and comprehensive description which can be used to interrogate relevant practice.

The Areas of Activity

The five Areas of Activity are:

A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study
A2 Teach and/or support learning
A3 Assess and give feedback to learners
A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance
A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices.

A1, 2, 3 and 5 trace a natural and intuitively recognisable path through the characteristic practice of teaching and supporting learners. A4 relates to all stages, as captured in Figure 3 overleaf.

Core Knowledge

The six aspects of Core Knowledge are:

K1 The subject material
K2 Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)
K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies

Areas of Activity

A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study
A2 Teach and/or support learning
A3 Assess and give feedback to learners
A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance
A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices

Core Knowledge

K1 The subject material
K2 Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)
K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies
K5 Methods of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

Professional Values

V1 Respect individual learners and learning communities
V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners
V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development
V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

Figure 1 UKPSF Dimensions in Practice

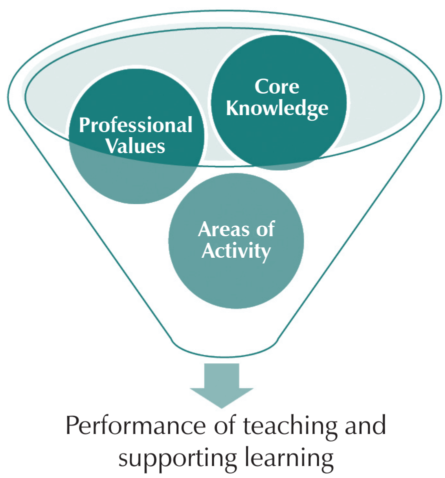

Figure 2 Application of the Dimensions of Practice

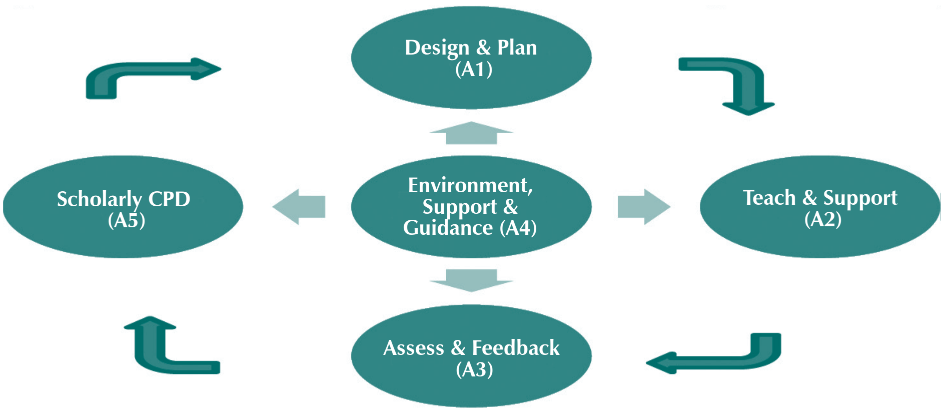

Figure 3 Relationship of the five Areas of Activity

K5 Methods of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching.

The term 'knowledge' is intended to be understood in the widest sense of both 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' so that theories derived both from public propositional knowledge and from personal experience have been incorporated into practice through reflective processes (Eraut, 1993).

Key emphases within the elements of Core Knowledge are:

- the importance of the discipline both in terms of the content and also the particular appropriate pedagogies
- a balanced view of the role of learning technologies – clearly these are important but the Framework does not mandate engagement with the latest technologies for their own sake
- the ability of staff to gather evidence about their own practice and a contextualised understanding of the QA and QE processes within their institution.

Professional Values

The four professional values are:
V1 Respect individual learners and learning communities
V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners
V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development
V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

The Core Values have changed more than the other Dimensions, with the former V1 and V3 merged to form the new VI, the former V4 revised to become the new V2, the former V5 moved to V3 and a new value, V4, added. This is perhaps the most difficult area to interpret and give evidence for, but is essential to effective practice. The key principle in evidencing these values is to recognise their highly contextual nature. For example, the way in which someone might evidence their commitment to 'V2 Promote participation…' depends on their particular role. It might be that they are involved in the recruitment process and would be able to show how they have sought to encourage and facilitate the entry into higher education of new categories of applicants not traditionally associated with higher education. However, it might equally be that their commitment can best be shown in the specific ways that they teach and support a particular group of learners to remove obstacles to their success. The aim should always be to interpret the Framework according to its spirit rather than the letter.

The Descriptors

The Descriptors are closely based on the Dimensions and outline the characteristics of someone performing four broad categories of teaching and/or learning support role within Higher Education. Why four Descriptors? They are intended to provide coverage of the full range of teaching and supporting learning roles within higher education, and since these roles are highly diverse, it was necessary to create a number of descriptors to cover them all.

Each Descriptor begins with an introductory statement addressed to the practitioner, which briefly indicates the level of understanding required for the performance of a teaching and learning support role of that type at an appropriate standard within a higher education institution. The final phrase in the introduction is the same for all four categories: 'Individuals should be able to provide evidence of', which makes clear the orientation of the Framework towards the development of the individual as a practitioner.

This is followed by a series of between five (for D4) and seven (for D3) further statements which draw on the Dimensions of Practice to identify what someone performing such roles should be able to evidence.

Descriptors 1 and 2 differ primarily in respect of the breadth of engagement expected. Someone working in a role appropriate for D1 is expected to cover at least two of the Areas of Activity and appropriate Core Knowledge and Professional Values, whilst someone working at D2 would be expected to be able to provide evidence of working across all five Areas, all aspects of Core Knowledge and to commit to all the Professional Values.

Descriptor 1 is intended to relate to staff whose role in teaching and/or supporting learning doesn't address all the Areas of Activity. They would also be expected to possess the appropriate Core Knowledge and be committed to appropriate Professional Values. Perhaps also they might undertake their role with guidance and support from more experienced teachers. Each Descriptor is accompanied by suggestions for typical job roles covered by that descriptor. An example role for D1 is an early

	D1	D2	D3
	Demonstrates an understanding of specific aspects of effective teaching, learning support methods and student learning	Demonstrates a *broad* understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning support as key contributions to high quality student learning.	Demonstrates a *thorough* understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning support as key contributions to high quality student learning
D1.1	I. Successful engagement with *at least two* of the five Areas of Activity	I. Successful engagement across all *five* Areas of Activity	I. Successful engagement across all five Areas of Activity
D1.2	II. Successful engagement in appropriate teaching and practices related to these Areas of Activity	II. Appropriate knowledge and understanding *across all aspects* of Core *Knowledge*	II. Appropriate knowledge and understanding across all aspects of Core Knowledge
D1.3	III. Appropriate Core Knowledge and understanding *of at least K1 and K2*	III. A commitment to *all the* Professional Values	III. A commitment to all the Professional Values
D1.4	IV. A commitment to *appropriate* Professional Values in facilitating others' learning	IV. Successful engagement in appropriate teaching practices related to the Areas of Activity	IV. Successful engagement in appropriate teaching practices related to the Areas of Activity
D1.5	V. Relevant professional practices, subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities	V. Successful incorporation of subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities, as part of an integrated approach to academic practice	V. Successful incorporation of subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities, as part of an integrated approach to academic practice
D1.6	VI. Successful engagement, *where appropriate,* in professional development activity related to teaching, learning and assessment responsibilities	VI. Successful engagement in continuing professional development in relation to teaching, learning, assessment and, where appropriate, related professional practices	VI. Successful engagement in continuing professional development in relation to teaching, learning, assessment, scholarship and, as appropriate, related academic or professional practices
D1.7			VII. Successful co-ordination, support, supervision, management and/or mentoring of others (whether individuals and/or teams) in relation to teaching and learning

Table 1 Comparison of Descriptors 1-3

career researcher with some teaching responsibility.

D2 is intended to relate to staff with a more substantive teaching and supporting learning role(s) covering all of the Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values. D2 is viewed within the Framework as the threshold level for teachers and supporters of learning in higher education. Everyone with a substantive role should be functioning at this level at least.

D3 brings in a strong educational leadership (which may not necessarily be managerial) dimension, whilst D4 is designed for highly experienced staff who have made a sustained and substantial impact at a strategic level in relation to teaching and learning support.

The HEA Fellowship Scheme

As part of its support of the Framework, the HEA provides recognition for each of these categories so a member of staff providing teaching and/or learning support can be recognised, depending on their role and experience as:
D1: An Associate of the Academy (AFHEA)
D2: A Fellow of the Academy (FHEA)
D3: A Senior Fellow of the Academy (SFHEA)
D4: A Principal Fellow of the Academy (PFHEA).

The Academy also accredits institutional programmes and schemes which in effect delegate the authority to award HEA Fellowships to the accredited institutions.

Key strengths of the Framework

The Framework has a number of strengths which make it an invaluable tool in the drive to professionalise the teaching role in higher education and ultimately thereby to improve the learning experience of the students.

Concise and compact

The whole document contains less than 1500 words, which makes it much more usable than many comparable sets of professional standards. This is made possible because of the very general nature of the Descriptors and the avoidance of attempts to provide a detailed description of the minutiae of the roles. It is truly a classic case of less is more!

Comprehensive
Yet nonetheless it manages to capture all of the dimensions of teaching and supporting learning in a way which enables anyone who performs such roles to recognise and interrogate their practice. The typical roles column, whilst by no means comprehensive or limiting, gives an idea of the breadth of roles covered by the Framework. And not only does it enable an individual to capture their role and activity, it also facilitates that process at team and institutional level.

Coherent
There is a strong inner logic and clarity to the framework reflected both in the sequencing of the component elements of each Dimension, the interrelationships of the Dimensions to each other and the ways in which they are combined to generate the Descriptors.

Legitimate
It also has the great advantage that it is not the product of any single institution, nor the outcome of an externally imposed political or bureaucratic decision. Instead it is the product of a lengthy (some might say too lengthy!) consultation process in which the views of the whole HE sector – crucially including students this time – were sought and given. The initial consultation document was certainly provocative, which had the advantage that it brought strong and definite reactions as discussed in the report on the consultation (Law, 2011). For example, the principle of sector ownership was emphatically reaffirmed as central to the Framework and this clear consensus has been fully reflected in the final document. The role of the HEA in relation to the Framework is that of a steward rather than an owner.

Practical and rigorous
The Framework strongly emphasises engagement in the practice of teaching and supporting learning but stresses also the importance of a thoughtful and evidence-based approach to that practice. For example, CPD, scholarship and evaluation of practice are referenced in each of the Dimensions and all Descriptor categories.

Developmental
The Framework has huge potential to support and foster the professional development of individual staff engaged in teaching and learning support roles. They can use it to:

- *Gain recognition of their teaching and learning support activities through the HEA Fellowship scheme.* Depending on their specific role they can use it to apply to become an Associate, Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow. This will give them national recognition as a higher education educator. They don't necessarily have to start as an Associate and work through to Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow. They can gain appropriate recognition for any descriptor depending on their current role and recent experience
- *Plan and guide their own Continuing Professional Development in the area of teaching and learning.* There is a natural progression through the framework as the scope of their teaching/learning support role widens and deepens and the framework can help staff at whatever stage they are at and whatever might be their goals in this field of activity
- *Foster creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.*

Strategic
As well as helping individual staff it has immense potential at the team, department and whole institution level. It can be used to:

- *Gain Academy accreditation for education development programmes and schemes.* Accreditation of a scheme or programme by the HEA means that staff successfully completing it are entitled to claim recognition at the accredited category. Gaining accreditation enables the institution to award the appropriate Fellowship recognition to its own staff, so this is a valuable means of enabling staff to gain HEA recognition
- *Enhance the quality and prominence of teaching and learning activities through Accredited CPD schemes and programmes.* As mentioned above this enables the institution to offer HEA Fellowships – at whichever levels accreditation has been granted – to its own staff in a highly cost-effective way
- *Facilitate and support the design and delivery of initial and continuing education development programmes and activities.* Staff involved in the training and development of teaching and/or learning support staff can use the framework to design and structure their development programmes. The Framework isn't dependent on any one particular theoretical foundation, so it can be adapted to whichever perspectives are preferred
- *Demonstrate to students and other stakeholders the professionalism that staff and institutions bring to teaching and support for student learning through published information about staff qualifications and achievements.* From 2012 academic year the HESA stats will include a section recording the teaching qualifications of staff, so institution-level comparison data will become available
- *Enable senior and strategic education managers to use the framework to help to enhance the quality and prominence of the teaching and learning activities within their remit.* There are many ways in which it can be used. Two examples would be:
    - its requirements could be incorporated into job descriptions and person specifications for posts with substantive teaching requirements
    - it could be used to construct policy statements with regard to teaching and learning.

In summary, the Framework is a flexible, practical and highly useful development tool that can be used in many different ways to help to raise the status and quality of the professional role of teaching and supporting learning within higher education. The degree to which it fulfils this potential depends on its widespread adoption and utilisation within HE institutions, and the education development community has a central part to play in making this happen.

Want to know more?

The HEA has developed Guidance Notes to support the effective use of the framework; these will be extended and amended over time. You can go to http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/professional-recognition for further information, or you can contact the Teacher Excellence team directly at ukpsf@heacademy.ac.uk, or by calling 01904 717 500.

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The story of 'teaching with emotional intelligence'

Alan Mortiboys, Higher Education Consultant

Introduction

A second edition of *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence* was published by Routledge towards the end of 2011. Here is a brief account of what led to the original being published in 2005, what the response has been to the book and its associated workshops and what lies behind the changes for the 2011 edition.

Background

Back in 1999, I was reviewing my 25 years of teaching in higher education, further education, adult education and schools. I knew from all of my experience, both as a teacher and as an observer of teachers, that there was something teachers could do that transformed a good teaching session into a special one, but I was struggling to articulate just what that something was.

It had to do with many different things: the way in which the teacher related to the learners; the teacher's empathy; being responsive to how the learners were in the session; the creation of an atmosphere; and with respecting all learners. It also had to do with what I found when researching participants who had completed modules I had run on counselling skills in education, to find out what impact the module had had on their teaching. Respondents reported that, as a result of developing their self-awareness on the module, and of reviewing how they relate to others, they adopted new and more fruitful ways of relating both to individual learners and to groups of learners. Whatever this elusive quality was, it seemed always to be about how ever present and powerful was the emotional dimension of learning and teaching.

This view had been confirmed for me when, with a colleague, I conducted a brief survey of learners on three different modules. Those surveyed included undergraduates and postgraduates, full-time and part-time, adults and those fresh from school. Amongst other things they were asked what feelings they associated with favourite/least favourite sessions. The extremity of some of the responses was notable – feelings of 'happy and alive', 'confident', 'excited' were mixed with 'annoyed', 'anger', 'resentment'. These were most often seen to be the result not of what the learner brought with them to the session, nor of their exchanges with other learners, but of the words or actions of the teacher.

Emotional Intelligence

I was familiar with the concept of 'emotional intelligence' from Daniel Goleman's book from the mid-nineties, *Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ*. His definition of emotional intelligence referred to being aware of your own feelings and of those of others, being able to manage your own feelings and to respond appropriately to those of others. I decided I would borrow this term to describe this extra attribute that teachers needed. It seemed to me that for teachers to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom they needed to recognise and work with the unavoidable emotional dimension of learning and teaching. They needed to develop and use emotional intelligence.

At the time, I encountered talk of the importance of developing the emotional intelligence of learners in higher education. Nothing I had seen indicated that teachers were equipped to do this, having been appointed on the basis of their subject expertise, research or professional experience. I was sure that any move to promote the use of emotional intelligence in learning and teaching had to begin with a focus on the teacher before even considering developing the emotional intelligence of learners.

I looked for literature which would help but all I could find was either acknowledgement that emotions were important but no ideas for what the implications were, or excellent, isolated texts which however did not focus on higher education.

The Emotionally Intelligent Lecturer

I wrote *The Emotionally Intelligent Lecturer* for SEDA to make the argument and to begin to explore practical implications. The argument I presented was: emotions are present in learning and teaching; they are potent; and your own feelings as a teacher and your learners' feelings can assist/hinder learning. Therefore, to enhance your effectiveness as a teacher you need to recognise and work with this emotional dimension of learning and teaching. This means:

- Let your planning be informed by how you would like learners to feel during your teaching session
- Be ready to seize opportunities to affect how your learners feel in your interactions with them during your sessions
- Develop both your self-awareness as a teacher and your capacity to shape and handle your feelings.

At the same time, I devised a workshop around *The Emotionally Intelligent Lecturer* and had the opportunity to run it at the university where I worked, and also for SEDA, at the University of Wales College Newport and at an Institute of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education conference. The response from participants was striking. The feedback confirmed that the importance of emotional intelligence had already been recognised by many participants but never legitimised – it was not a component of teacher training programmes and was skirted over in the literature.

Teaching with Emotional Intelligence 2005

At this time I moved to work independently for part of my working week whilst still running the 'PGCert' for academic staff and other staff development courses at Birmingham City University (BCU). I was asked to run workshops on teaching with emotional intelligence elsewhere and I came to realise that a more comprehensive guide than *The Emotionally Intelligent Lecturer* was needed by teachers. I approached Routledge with the proposal which became *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence,* published in 2005.

I wrote this as a staff development book, rather than as an academic text. It comprises around 60 'activities' – suggestions for how to explore the extent to which the reader currently used emotional intelligence in their teaching and ideas for how to develop and use it further. These activities are grouped into chapters, each of which focuses on one aspect of teaching with emotional intelligence, for example: dealing with your learners' expectations; listening to your learners; reading and responding to the feelings of individuals and groups. Each chapter briefly answers the question, 'What does this mean and why does it matter?' and goes on to provide activities for investigating and developing the teacher's practice in this aspect of teaching with emotional intelligence.

Responses to the book

Following the publication of *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence,* the interest and requests for workshops and conference keynotes continued to grow. To date, I have run workshops on the subject at around 40 higher education institutions. For many of them, it is or has been a regular feature on their programme, either as a workshop for all teaching staff or as a component of their 'PGCert' course.

Although I was originally prompted to write the book for a predominantly higher education target audience, the ideas have been welcomed in diverse settings. I have run workshops for schools, further education colleges and for medical educators. The ideas are seen as relevant in contexts as diverse as the International Entrepreneurial Educators Programme run by the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship, and the Freerange Childhood movement at Ringsfield Hall, Suffolk, for both of which I have run workshops. The idea has also received attention in the national press, in *The Independent* in the UK and *The Metro* in the USA.

I developed a longer course, 'Teaching with Emotional Intelligence', to run at BCU. This was recognised by the SEDA Professional Development Framework and I had the opportunity to run it for a number of cohorts before leaving BCU in 2010. I have also run the course on request for Carlow Institute of Technology, Ireland. The course is designed to have four one-day sessions which are over a period of around six-eight weeks and it is structured in such a way that participants can select their own path through, based on the activities in the book.

There has always been enthusiasm for the book and its ideas. This is offered verbally from participants I meet on workshops who are already familiar with the book. Their comments echo others to be found in reviews and online, such as:

> *'I love this book. If you are interested in the art of teaching, and passionate about working with learners, I think you'll like it too.'*
> *'This book "changed my philosophy of teaching"'*
> *'An excellent resource for use in teacher development in individuals or groups.'*

Other positive comments are more restrained, but do welcome the practical ideas and the new light they shed on effective teaching.

Of course, criticisms have been made too. A common criticism goes like this, 'This is not new, this is what I do anyway and is what all good teachers should do.' For some teachers, teaching with emotional intelligence does indeed describe what they do, although they probably have never given it that name. I think it is important for such teachers to acknowledge, identify and legitimise this aspect of their teaching. Others say, 'Well, isn't this obvious?' Yet, when such respondents look at the breakdown in the book of the dozens of aspects of their teaching where emotional intelligence can be used, they find there are still further ways in which they can enhance their practice through the use of emotional intelligence.

There is also the criticism that emotions have no role in university learning and, indeed, are obstructive to it. To refute this, I will repeat my words from page 5 of the new edition:

> *'[using emotional intelligence in teaching] does not necessitate sacrificing a higher education which values and fosters coherent critical argument, independence of thought and academic rigour but, rather, recognizing that these aspects can be enriched by infusing them with humanity. The university is indeed the "home of reason" but reason is bound up with emotion, not distinct from*

it. It is possible to respect the feelings of learners at the same time as vigorously challenging their ideas. The use of emotional intelligence by teachers is not a threat to, but more an essential component of, university education.' (Mortiboys, 2011)

A more substantial criticism is that more research is needed to support the argument for teaching with emotional intelligence. Whilst it is certainly easier now to find research on emotions in learning and teaching, it is interesting to note that a number of writers of these articles have written only after emotion emerged as a factor in research, which started with a different focus such as learner perceptions of excellent teaching, learner motivation, factors influencing the assessment perceptions of training teachers, and the experience of non-traditional learners entering an elite UK university.

My advocacy of this approach is still based on experience and scattered pieces of research. More research which tackles the following questions would be very useful:

- In what way do feelings affect learning?
- How far can a learner's feelings affect their learning?
- To what extent can a lecturer shape the feelings of groups of learners?
- Can you talk in terms of feelings that are always conducive to learning, and call them 'positive' feelings, as opposed to 'negative' feelings that always hinder learning?

I remain convinced that the use of emotional intelligence is essential for effective teaching but equally that it is just one aspect of what a teacher needs to draw on. The questions which formed the outline for my 2010 book, *How to be an Effective Teacher in Higher Education,* were taken mostly from new teachers in higher education. These teachers hardly ever asked about the role of emotions in learning and teaching in higher education and it was rarely appropriate to refer to emotional intelligence in the answers I provided in the book to the teachers' questions. I have run short courses at various universities for those about to teach in higher education for the first time and I am conscious that many participants are primarily concerned about surviving teaching sessions and developing confidence in areas such as planning, explaining and interacting with learners. They do not always have the confidence to work with the emotional dimension at the same time as developing the basics of teaching.

Teaching with Emotional Intelligence 2011

The changes in the new edition have been shaped by my experiences in running workshops and getting feedback about teaching with emotional intelligence since I finished writing the first edition in 2004. The new edition:

- includes new activities
- has revisions or rewording of some existing activities
- cites new literature and literature that was not known to me in 2004.

It also includes three new chapters on using emotional intelligence when teaching in specific contexts:

- one-to-one
- online
- with international students.

One-to-one

I was once asked to offer a workshop, 'emotional intelligence in research supervision'. I realised that whilst the same argument held true – that the supervisor should be mindful of the learner's emotional experience of the supervision – the practical implications for the supervisor were different from those of the class teacher. It was this and my experiences when contributing to a Learner Development in Higher Education conference that prompted this addition. Accordingly, this brief chapter includes guidance on the use of listening skills and on the potential emotional impact of feedback.

Online

I have increasingly been asked in workshops, 'but to what extent, if at all, do these ideas apply in online teaching and learning?' All activities in the first edition assume a teacher in a classroom/lecture theatre with a group of learners and are very much based on my personal experience of teaching. I have very little experience of teaching online and so for this chapter I drew more on literature. What was immediately evident was that many potential sources of negative feelings for the learner online were the same as in face-to-face learning and teaching, such as constrained opportunities for interaction and lack of clarity and detail about how the course operates and the respective roles of the tutor and learner.

Others' writings provided the basis for this chapter as well as very useful guidance from two colleagues at BCU – Dennis Foster and Jim Judges. I would be very interested to hear feedback from teachers with experience of online teaching about its relevance.

International students

Another recurring question I have heard is 'should there be differences in the emotional intelligence approach when you are teaching international students?' Janette Ryan and Rosemary Viete (2009) have written about how the experience in class of international students can result in them feeling powerless, excluded, ignored, isolated, marginalised, distanced, indignant and afraid. Their work is the starting point for this new chapter which suggests what the teacher can do to make these feelings less likely.

What next?

I have suggested to many audiences that to be an effective teacher you do need the 'technical skills' of pedagogy – planning, explaining, creating and using materials and so on – but that these are not enough and you need emotional intelligence too. I would now say there are still more attributes or approaches you need as a teacher which go beyond both conventional pedagogy and emotional intelligence. These include mindfulness, loving your audience, opportunity-based teaching and positive psychology.

In *Inspiring Academics: Learning with the World's Great University Teachers*, edited by Ian Hay (2011), individual teachers who have been recognised for high quality teaching give personal accounts of what has shaped their approach. These include: David Kahane, who writes of how his teaching is enriched by developing mindfulness and presence which 'provides a grounded basis for dealing with strong emotions and energies that arise for each of us in the classroom'; and Michael Wesch, who advocates 'loving your audience' – which he characterises as 'a simple shift of focus from yourself and your performance to your students and their learning' but which 'has changed what I teach, how I teach and even why I teach'.

When asked to contribute to a session on 'Inspiring Teaching' at a conference on 'Inspiring Enterprise' last year, I suggested that planning to take risks in a session to ensure that you will be put on the spot – which might be termed 'opportunity-based teaching' – would be more likely to lead to inspiring sessions.

Finally, there is the whole new area of study that is positive psychology – the 'scientific study of optimal human functioning that aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), which I suspect will have more insights into effective teaching which go beyond pedagogy.

Any comments on this article and/or your experiences related to teaching with emotional intelligence are very welcome.

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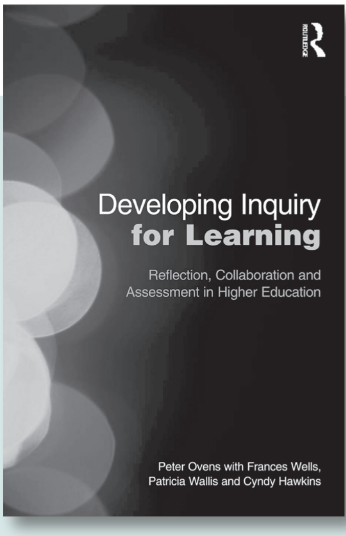
Book Review

Developing Inquiry for Learning

Peter Ovens with Frances Wells, Patricia Wallis and Cyndy Hawkins

Routledge, 2011



This book by Peter Ovens *et al.* sets out to show how university tutors can help students to improve their learning skills and become reflective practitioners. On first reading, it struck me as highly significant in the way that it described a template for anyone to pick up. It tackles that age-old dilemma of how to provide a learning environment in which students will be stimulated to develop their learning in a collaborative way, with the eventual goal of becoming independent learners – all of this in an ever increasing higher education population with ever increasing diversity and a tendency of the system to default to passive learning.

The book seeks to inculcate an innovative and practical approach based on creating opportunities for action research in the curriculum. It also seeks to swim against the tide of the sector continuing to push curricula into compartmentalised blocks of modules and learning objectives whilst accepting that these need to be kept going. Flexibility is the key!

The book is structured around four main parts: the general approach of Inquiry into Learning; using the Inquiry Into Learning approach in a specific programme; using experience of the Inquiry into Learning approach to address topics related to developments in higher education; and theoretical and philosophical bases.

A number of core concepts are cited in the course of the book:

- The notion of 'autonomy' as a personal and professional quality to be imbued early in all students
- The concept of 'action inquiry' as a learning construct for both staff and students which exists in a cyclical environment in which there is interaction between all concerned
- 'control' of the teaching process needs to be taken (given!?) at the teacher level rather than centralised
- The power of the student voice and the need to hear this
- The need for balance between teaching a subject and teaching a student
- The concept of learning as a social and moral practice rather than a subject *per se*
- The concept of next steps in learning taking place 'in the moment'
- Assessment based on 'patchwork texts'
- Barnett's three forms of 'criticality'.

None of these core concepts are in themselves new – what is clever about this book and the practice that it advocates is the way in which these concepts blend together to provide a new and stimulating learning environment.

The Inquiry into Learning approach in practice is, in essence, very simple – a series of cycles of learning beginning with students doing a critical reflection of where they are, identifying needs, negotiating support/appropriate learning activities from tutors, carrying out (doing) activities and evaluating these, and round again. All this carried out in a stimulating collaborative environment with other students and staff with shared discussion of experiences and mutual decision-making.

This is actually a sophisticated and well-developed form of personal development planning which is coming to the fore in many undergraduate curricula these days.

Part 2 of the book is a very helpful exposé of the practicalities of the Inquiry into Learning approach. It contains plenty of examples of templates, timetables, guidance notes to staff and students and exemplars of student work to help those interested in getting into this. For the module developed at a higher level, there is a very helpful description of the 'observation' activities employed to help students with the concept of becoming a professional inquirer.

The book is interwoven with appropriate theoretical underpinning from the literature, student testimonials and staff reflections. It is a veritable cornucopia of 'who's who' in adult and child psychology and education – from Rogers to Schon, from Dewey to Vygotsky and just about everyone in between.

So...it is all there – the theory, the practice, the templates for us to try it out, the personal reflections and so on. So why am I left a little underwhelmed? This is actually a very good case study, well researched and evaluated – but that is all that it is. What is missing for me is the experiences of others beyond the case study in operating in an Inquiry into Learning context. I don't think the model is universally applicable (the authors don't claim that, to be fair) – there will be subject areas and types of students (and staff!) who will struggle with this whole concept. To me, this book would have been better served with some appreciation of other contexts.

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Coping with students' expectations in the 2012 regime

Debbie McVitty, National Union of Students

As we anxiously monitor patterns of application to higher education for those students entering in September 2012 and speculate about the possible impacts of the new fee regime, one theme recurs: if students have to pay more, will they expect more? It seems like a straightforward and logical proposition. Where students were previously paying for three thousand pounds' worth of education, can they not now expect their higher education to be three times as good?

From the point of view of those who represent the interests of students, having lost the battle over fees, it is tactically appropriate to use the projected fee increase as the basis for making arguments for institutional improvements in teaching and learning, infrastructure and student services. The political danger is that student representatives lose the moral high ground and open up a rhetorical can of worms. If higher costs should lead to better provision, then arguably better provision should lead to higher costs. Those for whom it is morally abhorrent to frame higher education as a consumer good and the student as a customer, would resist any such conceptual linkages. When in 2010, shortly before the fees vote took place, Aaron Porter, the then President of the National Union of Students, warned that students who pay more will expect more, he was immediately criticised for taking what was seen as a 'consumerist' view of higher education.

The scale of projected student debt should not be forgotten. Living in the kind of society we do it is likely that cost will form part of every student's assessment of the value of his or her educational experience. Where that experience is disappointing, where staff are unhelpful, resources inaccessible or feedback unintelligible, the cry will go up, 'then what am I paying for?' It would be easy to dismiss students' concerns by condemning their consumerist attitudes and ignoring the real challenges behind the over-simplistic rhetoric.

It would be equally easy to concede to market forces and seek merely to give students what they want, and this, arguably, would also be a mistake. Howard Hotson in his oft-quoted article 'Don't look to the Ivy League', published in the *London Review of Books* in May 2011, observes that the marketing of 'the student experience' in North American colleges has led to fee price inflation attributable to provision of 'comfortable accommodation, a rich programme of social events and state-of-the-art athletic facilities', rather than to enhancements to the quality of teaching and learning.

The debate over whether students are consumers is a stale one, however, and not the purpose of this article. Rather, this article seeks to examine the concept of visible and knowable student expectations, on the existence of which the 'pay more/expect more' formulation is based.

One obvious challenge is that student expectations are rarely explicit. Derived from lived experience, perceptions of friends and family and whatever was picked up on the open day, most students do not arrive into higher education with a clear view of what is to be expected from higher learning. Teachers also operate with a range of tacit assumptions of what students know already, what 'works' in teaching one thing or another, or indeed, what students expect. One expectation that teachers seem to have – and which rarely makes it past the level of the tacit – is that students already understand the value of seminars and are able to extract learning and insight from discussion with peers. Novice teachers often discuss at length how to 'get students to talk', but rarely recognise that when the value of talking is unclear to students, there is limited motivation to share one's thoughts.

A central tenet of 'presage-process-product' models of student-centred learning is that all students bring their own individual motivation, experience, prior knowledge and expectation to the classroom that can hinder or enhance the quality of their learning. Good teaching consists in part of acknowledging these different expectations and trying as far as possible to meet the students where they are, not where the teacher wishes they were.

Central to all of this is a negotiation – the student may have ideas about how or what they want to learn, and they must understand how actively to engage in their learning, while still acknowledging the authority and experience of the teacher. For a student to emerge with a higher education qualification having their expectations unexamined and unchallenged would be a serious indicator of systemic failure. Likewise the teacher will in many cases wish the student to be more demanding, and subject the learning environment to closer scrutiny, because at least it demonstrates that they are actively engaged in learning, not attempting passively to soak up information.

But perhaps by the time the student arrives in the classroom it is already too late. Particularly in a system where the classroom can mean tens or hundreds of students, what teacher could be expected to manage such a range of expectations and preconceptions?

This is where higher education institutions need to start thinking more creatively about how students have their expectations managed and developed through a process of induction, before they arrive at their first lecture or lab. Induction is not just about working out where things are and what the regulations are, it is about understanding what it means to be learning at a higher level, about making tacit expectations explicit so these can be addressed.

Induction needs to start earlier – not on arrival at the institution but on acceptance. Prospective students should have access to online resources and virtual learning environments earlier, and be enabled to make contact with classmates and students already studying their chosen course. All students should be encouraged to work on some kind of essay or project (or YouTube video?) that helps them articulate why they have chosen to enter higher education and what their expectations are of learning their subject; these could be discussed with peers on arrival or remotely with a personal tutor. Personal tutors should be allocated well in advance of arrival and named in acceptance/confirmation letters. Current students should be sent into sixth forms and colleges to talk about how learning is different once you get to university. These are just a few ideas of how the challenge of student expectations can be harnessed for positive educational ends, and there are sure to be many more, appropriate for the diversity of students who now enter higher education every year.

Students who pay more will keep the same jumble of expectations and misconceptions they have always had, but whatever students are paying, they deserve the chance to get as much educational value as possible from the very start of their higher education experience.

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Employing the 3E Framework to underpin institutional practice in the active use of technology

Keith Smyth and **Stephen Bruce,** Edinburgh Napier University

Following the hugely enjoyable SEDA Annual Conference in November 2011, and a well-received workshop there, this article addresses some of the challenges of embedding technology-enhanced learning (TEL) within institutions and describes a simple but effective framework developed for the purpose of taking forward TEL practice at an institutional level.

After exploring the broader context within which institutions seek to embed TEL within their learning and teaching provision, we turn to the context within which the 3E Framework has been developed at Edinburgh Napier University in a move towards establishing an 'active' use of technology across modules. We then conclude by outlining how other institutions are starting to use the 3E Framework.

Wider perspective

Our tertiary educational institutions, and particularly our universities, face many strategic challenges relating to increasing globalisation, effectively widening access, the demand for more flexible provision including work-based learning, and meeting increasingly diverse students' needs. Within this broad context, made more difficult in the current economic climate, providing an engaging education that prepares students for their professions while equipping them with life-wide skills and literacies is perhaps the biggest challenge.

Only the foolhardy (and foolish!) would argue that technology by itself presents any kind of solution to this. However, as a sector we are now in an relatively informed position regarding what technology, when it is appropriately embedded in learning and teaching, can offer by way of providing additional space and opportunities to engage our learners with their subject, their tutors and perhaps most importantly with their peers. Those of us with an interest in TEL will recognise the potential of using current and emerging technologies to engage our students in the collaborative creation of their own educational experiences, and to engage them with learners and more experienced peers outwith their formal course cohorts. Many of our students are already using technology creatively as a means to support their learning, and through read/write web tools including blogs and wikis, and through the social networking environment, learners of all walks are directly contributing to the development and sharing of knowledge and understanding.

These and other applications of technology offer powerful educational opportunities. Yet for many institutions, and the educators within them, there remain significant issues around understanding how to approach technology-enhanced learning and teaching in ways that build upon existing good practice, which are easily implementable for those new to using technology while allowing the more experienced to go further, and which can be seen to have a clear purpose in terms of improving the learning, teaching and assessment experience.

Even where institutions have appropriate strategies and staff development provision in place to support effective TEL, the reality in any university is that many practitioners are making little use of technology to genuinely enhance learning and teaching. There are understandable reasons for this. The lack of time and space to revisit and revise practice is one, while apprehension or even scepticism about what technology-enhanced approaches can offer them and their students is often another – sometimes fuelled by seeing TEL initiatives fail to be effective in the ways they or their colleagues had hoped.

This presents something of a problem for institutions, like our own, which now take the view that there is no area of course provision in which TEL could not play a meaningful role in improving the learning and teaching experience.

Local perspective

As is the case in most institutions, the use of technology to enhance learning, teaching and assessment is a key aspect of the staff and student experience at Edinburgh Napier. A commitment to TEL has long been reflected not only in institutional strategy, but also in institutional guidance around making good use of institutionally-owned and external technologies in learning and teaching. Beyond the now well-established Virtual Learning Environment, which is currently WebCT but which will soon be Moodle, this has led to a rich range of technologies being harnessed to support learning, teaching and assessment in classroom, blended, and online contexts *within particular areas*.

While predominately used in undergraduate provision, TEL is increasingly commonplace in supporting postgraduate programmes and in widening the University's reach into the areas of continuing professional development (CPD) and work-based learning. TEL has also become a key mechanism for meeting students' wider academic and support needs, particularly around induction activities for new students and articulation activities for direct entrants joining from FE.

However, while relatively widespread, TEL is by no means fully embedded across the University. Feedback from a major institutional evaluation in 2009 highlighted this as a concern amongst our students, who expressed a strong expectation for all their modules to offer a balance of face-to-face and online support and interaction. This also underlined the discrepancy on the one hand between student expectations and the good TEL provision offered in some modules, and on the other the arguably outdated institutional expectations around how the VLE should be used.

Institutional benchmarks

At the time of adopting WebCT in 2004, the institutional vision recognised the opportunities offered by digital, predominantly online, technologies to underpin 'traditional' campus-based teaching, and to improve distance learning provision. As was commonplace in many institutions, and in some still is, our strategy for adopting TEL included a set of 'minimum presence' requirements for modules on the VLE which comprised centrally-located information (timetable and module descriptor) and information provided by the module leader (to include as a minimum a statement on how the VLE was to be used for the module in question). This aimed to provide an equitable student experience, but also to set a level of expectation of staff that was not too onerous. Indeed while staff were encouraged to go beyond the 'minimum presence' in their use of VLE, the minimum presence itself could be easily established by programme administrators with little input from the module leader. Consequently, while many academic staff did move beyond, many did not – the data available in 2009 suggested around a quarter had yet to log in to WebCT.

Since the initial adoption of WebCT in 2004, many academic staff have become more confident in using technology and TEL has become more embedded within academic practice generally. However, pockets of no or minimal use remain and as a means to meet student expectations and to move TEL forward for all staff, in early 2011 the development of a new Benchmark for the Use of Technology in Modules was approved. Rather than establishing a passive administrative presence, the new benchmark advocates 'the active use of technology to meaningfully enhance the learning, teaching and assessment experience' (Smyth *et al.,* 2011). Based on a '3E Framework' that includes illustrative and real examples of TEL use, and to ensure the benchmark is not too onerous, the new 'minimum presence' comprises a 'small blends, big benefits' approach. This involves the module leader identifying two or more straightforward TEL interventions that need only require a modest workload to implement, but which would involve making appropriate use of technology to support one or more aspects of the learning, teaching or assessment experience and help facilitate the active engagement of students throughout the trimester.

The 3E Framework

The 3E Framework that underpins the new institutional benchmark comprises an Enhance-Extend-Empower continuum (Figure 1). This recognises the iterative nature of adopting technology for educational purposes, and that the nature of TEL practice in supporting learning, teaching and assessment will also depend on the level of the subject and students in question, what the academic is setting out to achieve, and their level of comfort with technology.

The 3E Framework, plus associated guidance, was originally developed within the context of an Edinburgh Napier-led FE-HE project (Transforming the Student Experience Through Pedagogy) as a means of helping practitioners redesign their courses to increase learner autonomy, choice and engagement through blending classroom and online opportunities. It has been successfully tried and tested in this respect, and in its original form (detailed in Smyth *et al.,* 2010) has been used across a number of institutions for purposes including:

- The redesign of a range of modules and courses at various credit levels in FE and HE, across disciplines including art, healthcare, business and engineering
- As a central part of institutional learning and teaching strategies and initiatives
- Informing the design and content of CPD provision for educators including an HN Unit and an online taught Masters programme relating to TEL.

The 3E Framework itself comprises illustrative examples for a broad range of LTA activities that might be incorporated as a minimum (to Enhance), and which advances the use of technology to underpin more sophisticated learning, teaching and assessment activities (at Extend and Empower levels) where desired. In using the 3E Framework, staff are directed towards the illustrative examples but also towards a range of real examples from across a selection of undergraduate and postgraduate modules that colleagues have mapped to the 3E Framework as a means of providing discipline-specific approaches for adaptation.

As the continuum and different examples (Figures 2 and 3) will suggest, the 3E Framework places a strong emphasis on students actively taking a lead in their learning through creating or co-creating relevant resources for themselves and others, undertaking investigative and problem-based tasks, and engaging with others in their discipline area. Engagement throughout the learning process is a central theme, as is the development of the broader skills and knowledge that are increasingly required inside and particularly outside formal education.

To give a further flavour of what this means in practice, at the Enhance level we could take the example of a collaborative class glossary to which students take turns to contribute definitions, for concepts coming up in that week's class. At the Extend level, one suggestion for seminars is to improve engagement for all (and particularly those less forthcoming in class) by having students take turns working in small groups to summarise classroom seminars and post follow-up questions online. Finally at Empower we could take the example of more advanced students being asked to find and join online professional communities in their discipline that could help support their own continued professional development beyond graduation.

Enhance	Extend	Empower
Adopting technology in simple and effective ways to actively support students and increase their activity and self-responsibility	Further use of technology that facilitates key aspects of students' individual and collaborative learning and assessment through increasing their choice and control	Developed use of technology that requires higher order individual and collaborative learning that reflects how knowledge is created and used in the professional environment

Figure 1 The 3E Framework Enhace-Extend-Empower continuum

However, while the 3E Framework sets out to model a continuum of TEL practice from the simple-but-effective through to more sophisticated forms of individual and collaborative learning, there are a number of important points we are striving to make clear to our academics in their engagement with the 3E Framework:

- Although the 3E levels can be seen as a continuum, they should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. In any single module, there may be a range of learning tasks and activities that aligns with any of the levels in the Framework, although new undergraduates may be most appropriately engaged in Enhance activities
- While the 3E Framework is most likely to be applied within a modular context, it can equally be applied at programme level to support a progression to more advanced learning across programme stages (as the next section explains)
- The 3E Framework does not promote the Empower level as an ideal. Tutors and their students will start from (and end up at) different points on the 3E continuum in terms of using TEL in a particular learning, teaching and assessment context
- As students transition along the 3E continuum, the tutor is relinquishing more control and responsibility. While this brings benefits, it can take adjusting to and requires the tutor to be comfortable with assuming a facilitating role or, for some kinds of activities, a co-learning role (e.g. student-led online seminars).

The 3E Framework in a programme context

The 3E Framework is already in use on Edinburgh Napier's MSc Blended and Online Education, where it provides the curriculum design model for the programme.

The MSc BOE is a fully online programme for academics and other education professionals, and aims to engage participants from the outset in developing their skill and expertise as online educators while modelling good practice along the way. This is achieved through the embedding of the 3E Framework within the programme, and particularly in relation to the first three modules which are respectively designed to each of the Enhance, Extend and Empower stages (Figure 4).

In adopting the 3E Framework across the three core modules of the MSc BOE, the intention is to build upon the well-established concept of scaffolding to move participants to a position of expertise in a structured but relatively rapid way, and to ensure that by the end of Module 3, Pg Cert completers and continuing participants will be equipped to sustain their own professional development. As Figure 4 indicates, this involves

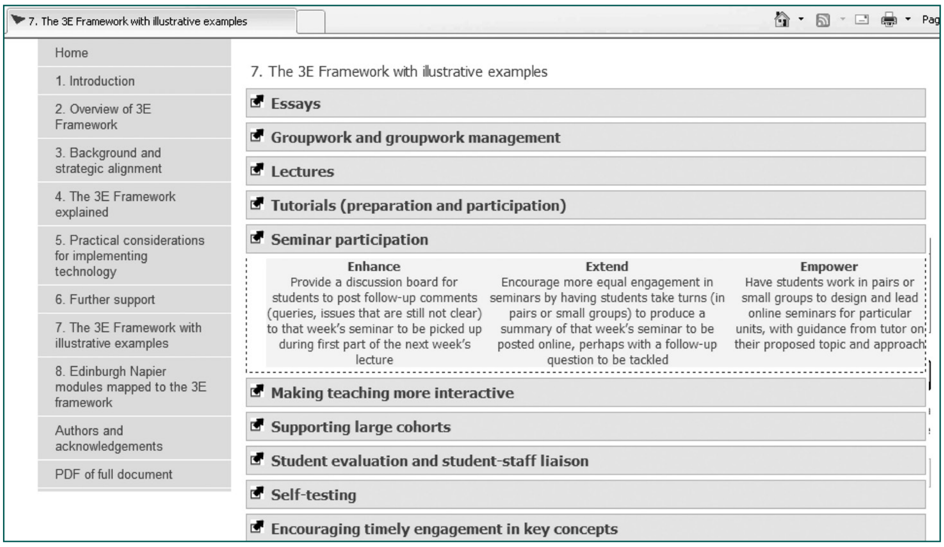

Figure 2 Illustrative 3E Framework examples relating to seminar participation

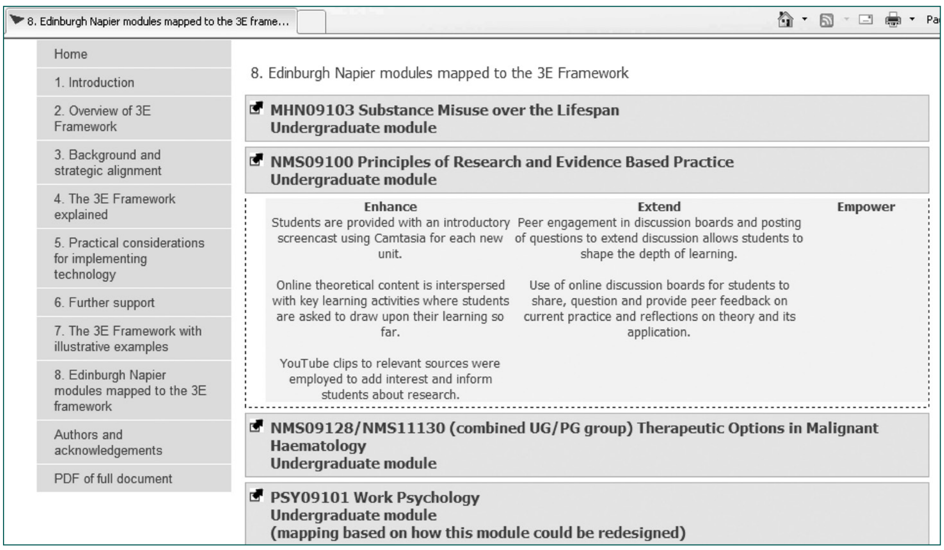

Figure 3 Example 3E Framework mapping to an existing undergraduate model

a move from tutor-led seminars in Module 1 to participant-led seminars in Module 2. These provide an opportunity to research a topic, and to develop skills in preparing and facilitating online discussions that can be taken back into the participants' own teaching practice. Similarly, in relation to individual work, in Module 1 participants undertake a project in designing for TEL that can be conceptual, but by Module 3 move on to producing a blended or online course that is ready to 'go live'.

The 3E Framework-underpinned approach on the MSc BOE has proved successful, with participants highlighting the impact on their knowledge, skills and professional teaching practice (http://www2.napier.ac.uk/ed/boe/testimonials.html).

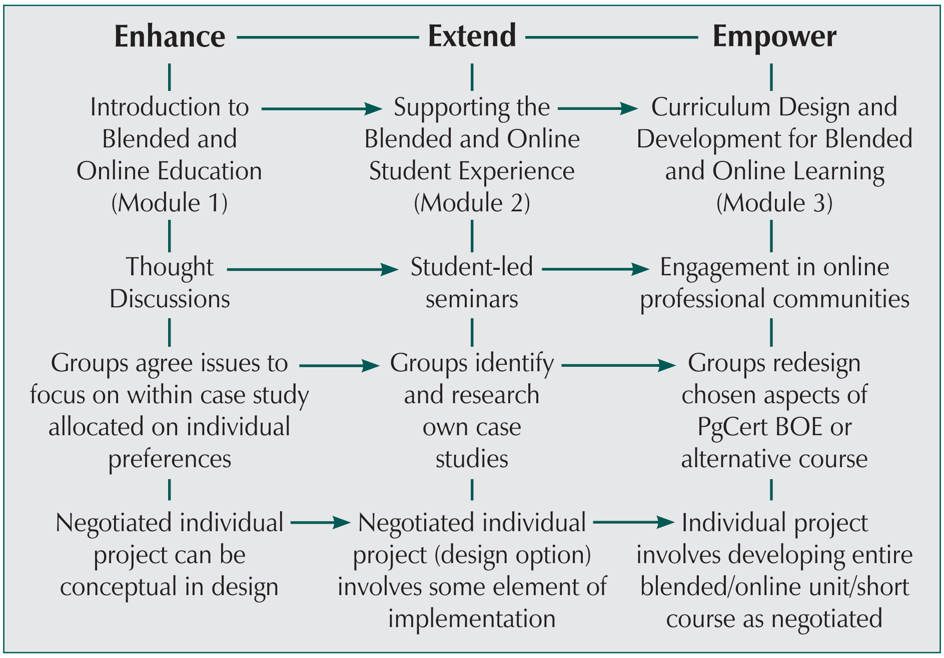

Figure 4 How the 3E Framework underpins the core modules of the MSc BOE

Approaches to embedding the framework

We are at early stages of adopting the 3E Framework at Edinburgh Napier, and while engagement amongst staff has been very encouraging, we are mindful of previous experience around the former TEL benchmark, and the need to take a more multifaceted approach if we are to reach staff who are yet to engage with technology as well as those new to the 3E Framework itself. Our planned approach is to combine alignment to recent institutional initiatives with other activities that will help extend the reach of the 3E Framework. This includes:

- In the move to a new institutional VLE (Moodle), all staff will be revisiting their use of technology to take advantage of the new features available. Key to this activity are recently appointed Faculty Learning Technologists who provide academics with the support they need to adjust their resources and activities to the new environment, and to raise awareness of the new Benchmark. This face-to-face support is complemented by the short online course Meet Moodle, which includes a collaborative activity: 'Technology easy as 1-2-3E' as a means of exploring the 3E Framework and collating further examples to share with colleagues (Figure 5).

- Internally there are a number of staff from across the Faculties on sponsored places to study the Pg Cert element of the MSc BOE programme, which carries the SEDA professional award in Embedding Learning Technologies. This is part of an institutional initiative to establish accredited 'online educators' in every School, and many of these staff will act as 'local champions' for the 3E Framework through sharing discipline-related TEL examples using the framework, and writing these up as case studies for the new LTA Resource Bank.

- The Professional Development team have long been a principal source for supporting TEL activities through a range of staff development events, and from session 2011/12 all TEL events in the programme will explore applications of the 3E Framework. Tailored support for module teams and subject groups will also be used to provide opportunities to adopt the 3E Framework, while the theme for the 2012 staff conference is 'Enhancing, extending and empowering student learning within online environments' and will provide a range of opportunities for direct engagement with the 3E Framework, Moodle, and other technologies.

- A new Teaching Fellows Special Interest Group in Technology-Enhanced Learning (SIG-TEL), which comprises Teaching Fellows and other staff from across the Faculties, has decided to focus all cross-Faculty activities for the next year on supporting the adoption of the 3E Framework and move to Moodle.

- The University LTA Strategy is underpinned by an interactive LTA Resource Bank consisting of a wide range of LTA case studies which includes a reflective analysis of the impact of the approach taken. Each case study is tagged to enable staff to easily locate relevant case studies based on criteria including LTA approach, subject, and year of study. Any case study which is TEL related has been tagged with one or more of the 3E levels, and this provides staff with another means to locate real example applications of the Framework (Figure 6).

Adapting the framework in your institution

Partly because the 3E Framework is derived from a cross-institutional project with a commitment to sharing outputs, although mainly for the simple reason of sharing practice, the 3E Framework is available under a Creative Commons licence for potential reuse and adaptation. Since the SEDA annual conference and

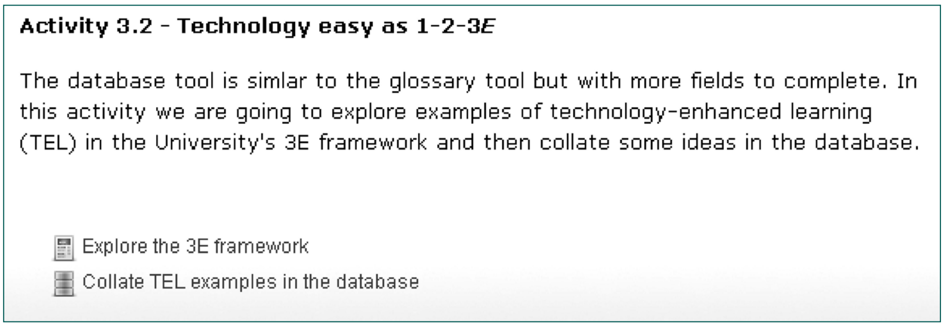

Figure 5 Activity in Meet Moodle to engage staff with the 3E framework

related online dissemination, a number of institutions have expressed interest in adapting the Framework for use in their own institutional contexts. Some have begun to do this already, and in addition to the various applications of the 3E Framework in its original form we are aware of the following current work using the 3E Framework:

- Development sessions to move staff beyond baseline use of the VLE, and adapting the 3E Framework examples for different subject groups across the university to complement local case studies of good practice
- Exploring the 3E Framework and related guidance as a means of informing new quality standards for online programmes
- Embedding the 3E Framework principles in the development and redevelopment of online MBA and Pg Cert programmes.

The authors would very much welcome interest from other institutions who may be exploring the 3E Framework, or who are taking similar approaches to embedding TEL within their own institutions, both with a view to evaluating different uses of the 3E Framework as well as contributing to the sharing and enhancing of TEL practice.

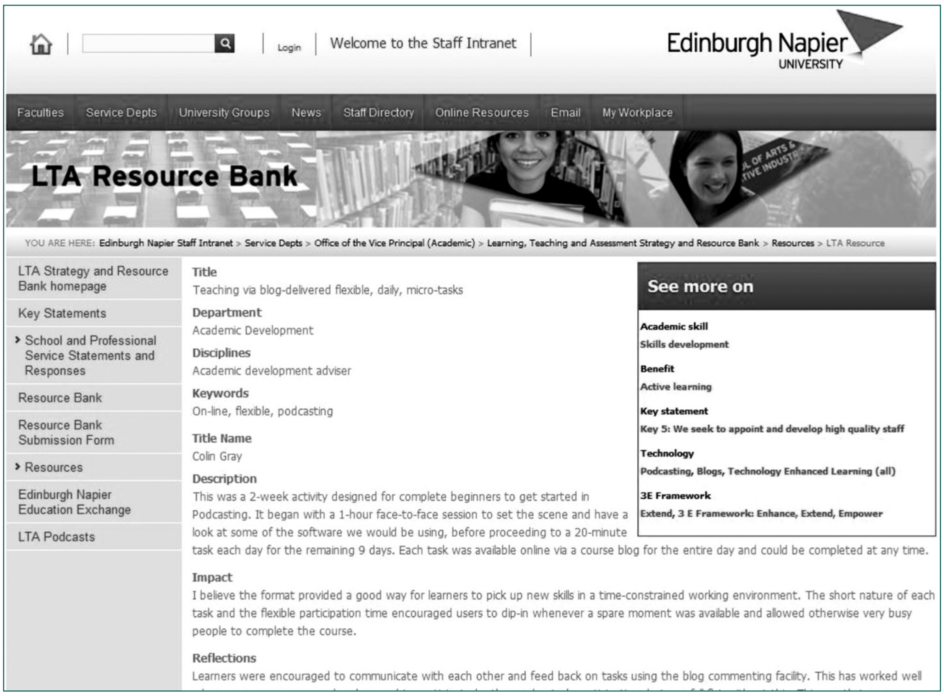

Figure 6 Case study in the University LTA Resource Bank

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Technology, Feedback, Action! The potential of technology-enabled feedback

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Why Technology, Feedback, Action!?

Like many higher education institutions, Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) has been exploring and exploiting the potential of technology-enabled assessment and feedback to improve student learning for several years, and we continue to do so. In 2006 we designed the Assignment Handler customisation in conjunction with Blackboard that provided us with flexibility in handling student assignments and supporting effective feedback online, and in 2007 we began to promote the large-scale uptake of the Blackboard Grade Centre as the primary tool for publication of assignment feedback and grades to students.

Receiving external funding in 2008 enabled us to undertake *Technology, Feedback, Action! The impact of learning technology upon students' engagement with their feedback (TFA!).* This study was essentially the start of our evaluation of the technology we had been promoting, and how these tools might encourage students to engage with feedback and formulate actions to improve future learning.

The Blackboard Grade Centre

Although many of our innovative practitioners had been returning assignment feedback and grades to their students electronically through the Blackboard Grade Centre for some time, practice on the whole was *ad hoc,* even though anecdotal evidence suggested that students were appreciating the convenience and flexibility this method of feedback offered. We began to scale up the adoption of the Blackboard Grade Centre and promoted the following benefits:

- enabling students to easily track progress and see how performance on different assessment tasks builds to an overall profile for module
- presenting grades and feedback alongside learning materials enabling 'in context' feedback, linking directly to materials to review
- returning feedback directly and efficiently to the students.

Assignment Handler

A number of early adopters were trialling online submission; however, they had reported that some limitations in Blackboard Assignment functionality were restricting its wider uptake. The *Assignment Handler Customisation Project* sought to address this by developing a specific tool that would meet our own assignment requirements. While specifying the functionality of the tool we thought it would be great if students didn't get to see their grade until they had acted on their feedback. Thus a key feature of Assignment Handler is the 'adaptive release' of grades, which is designed to engage students with their feedback by only activating the release of their grade after they have identified and submitted key learning points from their feedback.

Electronic Feedback Wizard

While colleagues are free to choose from a range of electronic formats when producing feedback for publishing through the Blackboard Grade Centre (e.g. annotated transcripts, audio files), at the same time as implementing Assignment Handler, we introduced an electronic Feedback Wizard. This tool, developed in-house using Visual Basic and Microsoft Office functionality, allowed markers to generate consistent individual feedback documents for an entire student cohort using an assignment-specific feedback template containing a matrix of assessment criteria and feedback comments.

What we did

TFA! was a qualitative study and we worked in partnership with over 20 second year undergraduates from SHU, to explore their experiences of receiving different forms of feedback with varying degrees of technical intervention, including online grade and feedback publication, electronic feedback with marks withheld and criteria-based feedback.

Through a series of semi-structured interviews we encouraged participants to articulate their experiences of receiving feedback. We took an inductive approach to evaluation and this enabled us to work closely with students to unpack their understanding of their own experiences to analyse the complex and diverse elements of feedback published using e-learning technologies. We encouraged students to identify how their feedback was provided, how useful they found the feedback, and what they had done or intended to do with their feedback. This approach provided an insight into the effectiveness of feedback and how students engage with it. One section of the interview followed an 'interview plus' approach (Creanor *et al.,* 2006) in which we used examples of feedback grids produced by the Feedback Wizard to encourage students to think about the benefits and drawbacks of this approach to feedback.

What we found

We found that the participants expressed a strong preference for the *publishing of feedback and grades online,* and they told us that publishing feedback and grades online:

- provides greater flexibility of access to feedback, enabling students to read and respond to feedback when they are emotionally ready and in relative privacy – *'You don't have to share it with everyone whereas if you are in a seminar and everyone's talking about what they got you kind of have to feel the pressure to join in whereas if you get it on Blackboard you can see it at your own leisure'*
- returns feedback and grades promptly and therefore students will be more inclined to act on it because it is current, relevant and meaningful in terms of the original assessment
- stores feedback alongside their learning, offering a sense of permanence and students are more likely to refer back to it when working on future assignments
- keeps grades in a single place enabling students to monitor their progression and see how their performance on different assessment tasks contributes to the overall assessment profile
- pushes feedback to students removing the burden to seek out feedback from tutors and makes it easier for students to engage with their feedback as they have ultimate control over how, where and when they receive it
- provides legible and readable typed feedback, which counters the perception that handwritten feedback can be more difficult to read and understand – *'It obviously makes it a lot more beneficial to me as a student to receive [feedback] in a much more legible form…typed feedback is much better than written feedback, because you can read it. Lecturers have a tendency to scrawl'.*

Through *TFA!,* we found that under normal circumstances, students read their feedback and do attempt to retain the information for future assignments, although not formally. The process of adaptive release of grades encourages students to read their feedback and reflect on it before obtaining their grade and the students we interviewed appreciated the potential benefits of disengaging the grade from the feedback – *'If I have to reflect on the feedback before receiving the grade then it sticks in my mind a bit longer, the feedback I receive, the points that I am going to use and it's a little bit easier to remember when I'm working on my next assignment'.*

However, many participants reported that they were unfamiliar with this adaptive release approach, and the most benefit was gained when students understood the process and the purpose. We noted that whilst students liked to get their feedback and grade at the same time or very close together, they valued the learning benefits of having to engage with the feedback before the grade was released. Where grades were made available before the feedback, the feedback itself was not valued as having additional learning benefit.

Although very few participants had experience of receiving criteria-based feedback generated by the Feedback Wizard, they had experience of receiving *feedback and grades linked to original assessment criteria* in other ways, and we found that they liked this approach:

- it enables students to identify their strengths and weaknesses at a glance, and they used the assessment criteria to identify future learning targets – *'You could really clearly see what you had to do for the next one and where you could actually improve'*
- feedback presented in this manner also offers a level of transparency as students can see how their grades have been calculated – *'If you just get…a percentage for a mark out of 20 or whatever then it doesn't really give you anything. Whereas if you understand the process that the lecturer has gone through with regards to how he's got to that figure…it gives you a bit more of a basis as to how or why they've got to that point'*.

Technology enables this process to occur at scale, facilitating the generation of comment banks which can be used to create consistent but individual feedback. This is possible without tools such as the Feedback Wizard, but it would require greater effort and a great deal of repetition on the part of the tutor. However, this approach does have limitations and there was a competing preference for 'in context' feedback (i.e. annotated transcripts), suggesting that a mixed model would provide the most comprehensive feedback.

How we engaged colleagues at Sheffield Hallam and the wider sector

Throughout *TFA!,* we kept colleagues and the wider sector up to date with developments, as well as inviting further contributions to the project's literature review, via the

Figure 1 Technology, Feedback, Action! Short Report and best practice guides

project wiki. As a result of the *TFA!* we identified a series of recommendations around the use of technology to enhance student engagement with their feedback, which have been published as a series of good practice guides (Figure 1) aimed at students, academic staff and senior managers. These guides have been used extensively in continuing professional development sessions across SHU, and at workshops and presentations hosted externally. You can download these guides from http://tinyurl.com/tfaproject.

We believe that technology has the potential to significantly enhance learning. These guides show how technology can be used to its full advantage to help students make the most of their feedback, and here's how from the academic staff perspective:

When considering *publishing feedback and grades online:*

- find out what tools and technical support are available at your institution to enable online publication of feedback and grades
- think about who else needs access to this information, including students, other members of the teaching team and administrative staff
- ensure that this information will be easy for both students and staff to access and archive for future reference
- ensure that students are informed of the status of all published grades (*i.e.* provisional or ratified)
- think about whether actual grades or calculated weighted grades are published, and how important it is for students to cumulate their grades
- set, communicate to students, and keep to the date when you will be publishing feedback and grades
- ensure students are informed of how long this information will be available online to them (*i.e.* will it remain available only until the completion of the module, or for the duration of the entire course?)
- inform students in advance of any change in format or delivery of feedback, including how to access and use the feedback
- suggest techniques that enable students to easily and effectively download, store and retrieve online feedback.

When implementing *adaptive release of grades:*

- find out what technology and support are available at your institution to enable the introduction of adaptive release of grades into their practice
- think about how reflection is designed into their module, and be clear to students how this integrates into their personal development planning
- articulate to students the purpose and process of adaptive release of grades, and set clear expectations at the beginning of the assessment process
- provide students with clear guidance regarding the process of reflection in the context of assessment, action planning and feeding forward into future assessments
- design assessment tasks that enable and encourage students to consider previous feedback in the context of their next assessment.

When producing *feedback linked to the original assessment criteria:*

- find out what technology and support are available at your institution for generating individual documents that link feedback statements with assessment criteria
- provide students with the assessment criteria at the start of the assessment process so that they can understand what is expected. Students can complete and self-assess their work against the criteria
- ensure generic feedback statements are accompanied by individual comments that personalise the document for each student
- make sure that generic feedback statements do not just re-affirm the grade, but demonstrate to students what they would need to do to achieve higher grades, enabling students to feed forward
- consider keeping the grade awarded for each criterion, as well as the overall grade for the assessment, hidden from the feedback grid to further encourage student engagement with the feedback
- always write feedback in the context of the students' original work. Students can see immediately or easily refer to the points commented on.

There has been a good deal of interest in our work. In addition to our presence at national and international conferences, the greatest engagement with the findings and materials produced as a result of *TFA!* was through participant-driven seminars hosted at SHU as part of the Higher Education Academy Assessment and Feedback Seminar Series, in February and May 2010. Both seminars were well attended by staff from within SHU and the wider sector, and the activities proved equally popular when repeated as part of a workshop at the SEDA Annual Conference in November 2011.

During these sessions we encouraged participants to reflect on their current strategies and practice for providing feedback. Through worksheets, group discussion activities and games, we asked the participants to consider how evidence from *TFA!* can be used to enhance and transform feedback practice in the context of the role within their institution, and develop action plans to take away and put into practice. Supporting the activities, we gave participants

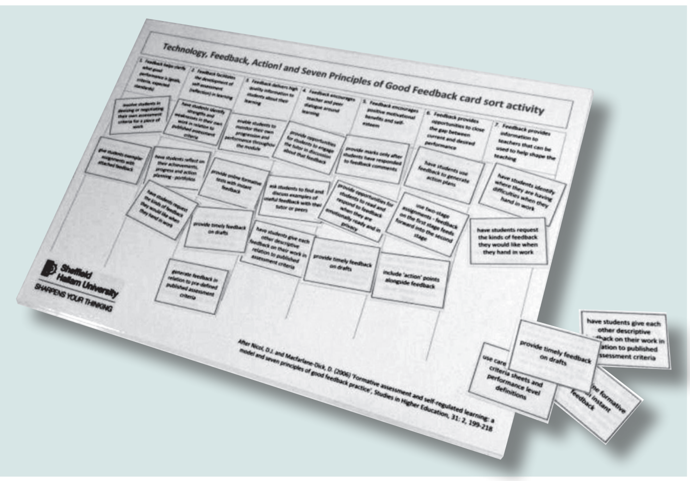

Figure 2 Technology, Feedback, Action! and the Seven Principles of Good Feedback card sort activity

access to the evidence-based best practice guides developed from the research outcomes.

To encourage participants to reflect on their current feedback strategies and practice, we proposed that the findings from *TFA!* align with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) principles of good feedback practice. Participants engaged in a card sort activity (Figure 2) in which they were required to consider how a range of feedback activities and practices best fits against each of the seven principles of good feedback practice. Each feedback activity was complemented by an appropriate student quote from the *TFA!* student interviews.

Next steps – Understanding Student Learning from Feedback

The findings of *TFA!* highlighted the need for further investigation around student practices in using feedback effectively for future learning. We found that even without the technical interventions explored many students will read and engage with feedback; however, it is not understood what processes students employ or whether engagement leads to action. Without a better understanding of this phenomenon and how this may be influenced by the variety of media used to produce and deliver feedback, we believe it will be difficult for us to move forward with the promotion of feedback as a learning tool. The primary purpose of our current research project, *Understanding Student Learning from Feedback,* is to gather evidence about the subconscious processes that students use to engage with feedback and the strategies that they use to feed forward into future learning. We also aim to identify the differences in how students interact with feedback delivered through existing technologies and media currently in use at SHU. This, we hope, will lead to institutional change in how students' use of feedback is facilitated, towards encouraging continuous formative learner engagement with, and enhancement of, feedback through appropriate technologies.

TFA! also indicated that many students viewed feedback as the end product of the assessment process and did not see connections between assignments, modules, years of study and employment. Through our current research we aim to challenge this assumption: we expect to demonstrate that feedback strategies have clear and strong connections with other assessments, modules, aspects of the curriculum and employability. We are exploring how students use feedback immediately after an assessment task, before their next assessment task, between modules and years of study, and ultimately into employment, seeking to make explicit the currently implicit processes that students use to deal with feedback.

We are currently working in partnership with ten full-time, on-campus, undergraduate students from SHU to undertake a longitudinal study of their experiences of receiving different forms of feedback. Over the 2011-2012 academic year, using an adapted version of the diary-interview approach (Lyons and Thorpe, 2009), we are encouraging the participants to articulate the processes that they use to engage with, act upon, recall, and store their feedback, including the strategies that they use to feed forward into future learning, assessment and employment, and in particular whether any technology is helping them to use feedback more effectively. In order to capture every instance of interaction with feedback, students are posting a Tweet each time they receive, make use of, or refer to feedback they have received. In addition, the participants are keeping a weekly diary entry reflecting on and capturing a detailed account of the feedback that they interacted with that week. At the end of the study, we will be inviting each participant to an individual hour-long interview. As with the *TFA!* study, participants will again be encouraged to articulate their experiences using the 'interview plus' approach. This time the interviews will be accompanied by the Tweets posted throughout the duration of the project and extracts from their diaries. During interviews, students will be encouraged to expand upon the processes that they went through in dealing with their feedback and identify approaches, techniques and technologies that may help them to make better use of feedback. Findings will be made available late 2012/early 2013.

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Alternative assessment

The first agenda of 'alternative assessment' was largely in response to various pieces of legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001). The interpretation of these acts highlighted the duty of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to make 'reasonable adjustment' for students with specific needs, which many institutions interpreted as providing special examination arrangements for disabled students. This might include the opportunity for students with dyslexia to have 'extra time' in exam situations, or perhaps allowing a student with limited dexterity to have an 'enabler' to pour the chemicals, as instructed by the student, in a laboratory assessment.

Inclusive assessment

The intention of the Equality Act (2010) was to rationalise key agenda from disparate pieces of legislation and take a more inclusive line. This shifted the discussion about assessment in Higher Education away from 'alternatives for disabled people' towards a more inclusive approach for the wider community. For example, if one key part of a programme is to enhance students' communication skills and assessed presentations are included as an important part of this, what strategies have the programme team built into that process so that all students, including those with extreme anxiety levels, might be able to participate? So rather than making *alternative arrangements* for those with specific needs, the conversation has moved on to designing *inclusive* assessment whereby the assessment modes on offer are available to all students.

Innovative assessment

The discussion about innovative assessment was born out of changing views about the ways that we judge students' work. Broadfoot (2002, p. 199) criticised the way that Higher Education had become driven by data and was, 'obsessed with the collection and dissemination of . . . statistics, measures, grades, marks and categories'. On a practical note, Brown and Smith (1997) identified that increasing student numbers, modularisation and more complex assessment regulations placed additional workload on academic staff thereby giving rise to the need for more creative approaches to assessment. Others such as Barnett (1999) went on to point out that a changing, high-risk society brings with it uncertainty and unpredictability and that our traditional forms of assessment did not connect with these factors. What was needed was a greater range of innovative forms of assessment that demonstrated the skills and abilities of the student and how they can apply their learning in this unpredictable world (Bryan and Clegg, 2006).

Innovation arrived, followed closely by the debate about authentic assessment. In his work on the Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) project, Graham Gibbs (2010) noted that 'Assessment innovations at the individual module level often fail to address assessment problems at the programme level, some of which... are a direct consequence of module-focused course design and innovation'. The data from this project seemed to demonstrate that some modules had indeed had an injection of innovation, but that in some cases this had led to over-assessment and in others it was unclear how a multitude of different assessment formats were helping students to develop their skills longitudinally across the programme. So the message is that innovation needs to be coupled with a strategic outlook at programme level to ensure that over the period of their studies students will gain the opportunity to develop and extend their skills, knowledge and abilities.

Authentic assessment

In the process of building a strategic approach to innovative assessment, research began to pick up on the idea of focusing on the most authentic tasks. However, as Gulikers *et al.* (2004, p. 67) pointed out, 'Authenticity is an important element of new modes of assessment. The problem is that what authentic assessment really is, is unspecified'. Some think of authentic assessment as a performative task, or a competency-focused task. Others stress the importance of the link between the value of the task and its context, whilst others discuss the importance of the authenticity of the cognitive and meta-cognitive skills which would subsequently enable students to apply their learning in a range of different contexts. This is where the notion of frameworks begins to emerge.

Assessment frameworks

There are already a number of 'assessment frameworks' in existence; each one has a slightly different emphasis, for example Gulikers *et al.* (2004, p. 70) proposed a 'Five-dimensional framework for authentic assessment' which identified those five dimensions as: the assessment task; the physical context; the social context; the assessment result or form; and the assessment criteria. Middlemas (2010) has produced some guidelines for the assessment of multi-format coursework which explore factors that should be considered, and explains the benefits of a multimodal approach. In their report on innovative assessment across the disciplines, Hounsell et al. (2007) provide a typology of genres of assessment. Waterfield and West's (2006) project examined staff and student perspectives on assessment change and evaluation, and provided case studies of a range of possible assessments. All of these help to inform and enhance our understanding of assessment, and encourage the reader to consider important aspects of assessment design and strategy. What they do not do is provide an assessment equivalence framework whereby the reader can see at a glance what an equivalent to writing a 3000-word essay might be.

Assessment equivalence frameworks

An assessment equivalence framework might be seen as the magic bullet that would help the time-strapped academic to identify a number of ways that students could be assessed to meet a specific set of learning outcomes or assessment criteria for a named module or programme. So here's the rub: it sounds like a helpful idea, but the discussion that took place via seda@jiscmail.ac.uk demonstrates that the notion of assessment equivalence frameworks is in fact quite controversial!

Arguments in support of a framework

A number of respondents to this online discussion noted that many colleagues in the disciplines have little time to sit and ponder many of the initiatives that arrive each year, which fall on top of an already busy teaching and research schedule. Research by Kinman and Jones (2003) supports the claim that there are indeed increasing demands upon the academic community. In particular, they report that there are poor resources, conflicting job demands, and that many academics are working in the evenings and at weekends to catch up with administrative tasks rather than research activity. It is also true that student numbers have increased and that staff to student ratios are currently being stretched to their limits. This being the case, it is not difficult to see why academic staff have difficulty in addressing new initiatives and want a 'quick fix'.

The initial enquiry gave an example of a programme which includes negotiated assessment formats. A couple of respondents picked up on this and pointed out that taking time to negotiate assignments is 'well nigh impossible with modules being sat by 300+ students'. However responses from academic colleagues within the disciplines all seemed to agree that a short framework, produced by the 'experts', including examples, would greatly help them to apply concepts such as authentic, inclusive and innovative assessment within their disciplinary practice. In addition to this respondents also made strong representation that, 'a framework makes it easier to justify to periodic review/course approval/QA committees'. This points to a concern over 'equivalency' and the lack of confidence of some colleagues in being able to articulate how a piece of assessed work constitutes the relevant number of credits at a given level.

The 'time principle' or 'equivalency' debate

The most vibrant part of the online discussion focused on the issue of equivalency. One respondent noted that 'a 1000-word piece is often much harder to write than a 2000-word one, and worthy of more credit'. So when we start to think about equivalency we might actually challenge our original notions of what makes for a more skilled piece of work. Is it true that constructing a coherent and well-argued piece in 1000 words should be more highly valued than completing the same exercise with 2000 words? Should writing in a concise format be the desired skill, or is there equally strong argument for extended pieces of work that enable students to develop and explore ideas in greater depth?

Another respondent suggested that, 'rather than thinking about wordage, we think in terms of learning hours, and design assessments and thus equivalents that way'. This again proved controversial, 'equally problematic is "learning time" – some learn much faster than others'. However others stuck to their guns pointing out that, 'we do not modify standard classroom hours for individuals, so making an estimate of learning hours on a specific task is perhaps a valid and reasonable approach when thinking about assessment'. This does seem rational, particularly when one takes into account the guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency which equates 1 credit with 10 hours of study (QAA, 2009). This suggests that programmes should be developed with a limited and reasonable number of required study hours in mind. More to the point, many universities require the number of study hours to be made explicit in their online materials and module handbooks. This debate was summed up by one respondent as follows, 'What are the intended learning outcomes, and what is the reasonable amount of student learning hours to expect the task to take?'

The upshot of this discussion was that it gave rise to vibrant debate and divergent opinions from a group of educational developers all well qualified to hold an opinion on the matter. However, there was a point of convergence on one central issue – that of whether an assessment equivalence framework would be a useful tool or not.

Arguments to support some 'guiding principles' rather than a framework

A number of different points were raised in this part of the discussion. One central theme was that a 'definitive framework' for alternatives may offer 'quality "re-assurance"', however it 'flies in the face of the principle of negotiating and designing those alternatives on a bespoke basis'. A number of respondents agreed that academic colleagues should be offered 'development' opportunities that would enable them to justify their assessment approaches in terms of quality assurance. There was some feeling that academics needed to take responsibility for some of these quality issues as a core part of their understanding and development of programme design, rather than relying on 'the quality assurance bit' to have been attended to by someone else in the guise of a framework.

One respondent, who asked that neither she nor her institution should be identified, had experience of using an 'in-house' equivalence framework, and commented that although the framework had been well-intended, it could be used as 'a very blunt tool that can be wielded with nasty consequences'. This insight seems to suggest that a framework might be too rigid a beast, and that perhaps guiding principles may be of more use to all concerned.

The equivalency debate surfaced again when one respondent suggested that devising a framework is an 'essentially meaningless task because the starting point is flawed – *i.e.* asking what is equivalent to a 2000-word essay. A 2000-word essay is not a meaningful and consistent unit. It will depend on the complexity of the question, how much research will be required, how difficult the subject matter, the level of the student, *etc.*'. This comment starts to indicate some of the issues that those who are thinking about innovative, inclusive and authentic assessment need to consider. Rather than giving a framework it asks pertinent questions about the level, complexity, purpose of the assessment, suggesting that this questioning approach might be a more useful strategy.

Assessment equivalence frameworks: to be or not to be?

We have to acknowledge that the busy academic would indeed welcome a magic bullet to facilitate the development of more innovative, authentic and inclusive assessment within their programmes. However, the louder voice seems to be making a strong case for a strategy that helps colleagues to more actively consider the pedagogical value of the assessment modes within their programmes. So perhaps this is the moment to put the notion of an 'assessment equivalence framework' to bed and look towards the development of some guiding principles instead. This brings us almost full-circle to the work already done by Middlemas (2010) Gulikers *et al.* (2004) and Hounsell *et al.* (2007), which shied away from providing a rigid framework, and opted instead to offer genres, guidelines and questions to prompt further development of assessment.

The next step, then, is to explore what key ideas might form the basis for a useful set of principles and what strategy might be used to help our time-strapped academics to engage with them. It seems that the approach outlined in the initial call to the SEDA JISC list has some support. This highlighted an approach where educational developers work with academic colleagues in developmental sessions, thus opening up the discussion about the purpose of assessment and the underpinning pedagogy. These developmental workshops also enable the educational development team to share the most recent research into assessment, and do some practical thinking in terms of: formative and summative assessment; staff to student ratios; the value of peer learning and feedback; online assessment; and what authentic, innovative and inclusive means in practical terms for that discipline.

It's not quite a magic bullet, but perhaps that's the point. Perhaps two hours working as a disciplinary team, taking time for a deeper discussion with some guiding principles, will actually produce a more holistic, developmental and relevant assessment portfolio and a better understanding of what 'equivalency' might look like.

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Assessment equivalence frameworks: to be or not to be?

Pollyanna Magne, Plymouth University

In the summer of 2011, a discussion on the issue of assessment equivalence frameworks was conducted by self-selecting interested parties via the SEDA JISC list. The essence of the question was:

As an Educational Developer I have been asked (a few times) what the 'equivalent alternative assessment' would be in relation (for example) to a 2000-word essay.

On the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) at Plymouth we negotiate various forms of assessment with our participants. For example, while some participants chose to hand in a standard 4000-word essay for one module, other submissions included: a staff briefing paper accompanied by a reflective blog; a video; the schedule for an event plus a reflection on its organisation and delivery which drew on relevant literature; and delivery of a workshop plus excerpts from a blog. The negotiation of the assessment type takes place between the tutor and the participants at the beginning of the module, with the Intended Learning Outcomes, SEEC level descriptors and QAA guidance at their fingertips.

However, colleagues across the university seem to want a more definitive framework outlining what equivalent 'alternative' assignments might look like, for example:

Has anyone come across such a framework, or indeed had a go at developing one?

The following discussion draws out a number of key themes from the online responses to the initial query, explores the notion of an assessment equivalence framework and starts to unpack some of the debates around whether such a framework should be attempted or left well alone.

Getting assessment right

Before looking at the responses to the question of assessment equivalence frameworks, it is worth acknowledging the wider context. At its most basic level, assessment is the process by which students are awarded marks towards their final degree classification. Most parties working in the Higher Education sector will also be aware that the National Student Survey (NSS) has consistently told us that students are not happy with assessment and feedback practices. So, on the one hand assessment is arguably one of the most critical parts of the educational experience for students, and on the other hand the universities annual report card essentially says, 'could do better'.

In an effort to redeem themselves many universities have taken a good look at the most recent research into assessment to inform their own updates to assessment strategies, policies and practices. In this process a number of agenda have taken centre-stage, including: 'alternative', 'innovative' and 'authentic' assessment, and inclusive practice. It is precisely these discussions which have brought a number of academics to the point of asking for a framework that demonstrates how these things work in practice.

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SEDA News

The latest Seda Specials

No. 31: Putting the 'S' into ED – Education for Sustainable Development in Educational Development
Edited by Debby Cotton, Stephen Sterling, Vivian Neal and Jennie Winter

No. 30: Developing Reflective Practice with Early Career Academics
Edited by Louisa Sheward and Marian Renshaw

Spring Conference

The Student Journey, Chester, 17 - 18 May 2012

Academic Development for the Digital University

The 11th SEDA Summer School for Academic Developers will run 9 -11 July 2012 at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park. It will, like the previous ten, provide an intensive 50-hour study programme for academic developers to review and enhance their practice. Based around action learning sets, the 2012 Summer School will again provide both expert input and time and support to work on participants' current and future challenges.

This event won't be about learning technologies. It will be about doing academic development well in an ever more digital environment.

More information on the SEDA website.

A new SEDA Special Interest Group for Technology Enhanced Learning

Following the very well-attended and well-received SEDA Conference in Birmingham in November 2011 on Using Technology to Enhance Learning, SEDA Executive decided in December 2011 to set up a Special Interest Group for Technology Enhanced Learning. (Appropriately, the idea for the SIG was developed, mainly using Twitter, during the conference.)

The SIG will build bridges between learning technology and academic development. It will work closely with existing SEDA Committees and functions, and with other organisations. It will mainly exist online – an online presence will be established shortly. Meanwhile if you'd like to be involved contact David Baume (adbaume@aol.com).