Educational Developments

SEDA
STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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Contents:

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Programme Specifications - What's The Outcome?
(An educational developer's view of the implications of the QAA's Guidelines)

James Wisdom, Higher Education Consultant

Here are two good ways of starting a Departmental workshop:

"Thank you for inviting me here today to work on Programme Specifications with you. Of course, this will lead to a radical revision of all your current practice, especially assessment, and I am grateful to Dearing, the QAA and our Head of Quality for giving me the authority to enforce this much-needed improvement. We are in for a lot of work, but I am sure you will find it worthwhile."

Or perhaps you prefer:

"Today's workshop won't take the whole morning, and you don't need to worry about the mountain of QAA guidance - Programme specifications are only a matter of writing "to know and understand" in front of your existing syllabus on the forms so kindly designed by the university's quality people."

(Just what is the career-expectancy of a subaltern in the educational development trenches?)

Whichever opening you choose, you will soon find yourself having to define your terms and the word which shoots out like a police stinger under the wheels is "outcomes". Aims is fine - everyone is happy to write the Aims of their course, sometimes at great length. But Outcomes? - this is technical talk, for specialists. Something which the ordinary lecturers have to get their heads around. Something which makes them feel their usual practice is lacking or wanting. And while we are at it, we watch programmes but we teach on degree courses.

An excellent example of these definitions comes from the "Guidance on Learning Outcomes" written by Lin Thorley and others at the University of Hertfordshire's (UH) Learning and Teaching Development Centre:

"**Aims:** *broad purposes, goals*. Aims are goals to work towards. Programme aims may be aspirational; but course aims should be expressed in achievable terms, if only by the very best students. Aims may not be measurable. They are usually stated following the introductory words: 'this course [or programme] aims to..'

Objectives: *specific intentions in measurable terms*. These are the individual steps which take us from where we are now towards the aim or goal. They must be measurable.

They indicate the 'teaching intentions', the content the teacher intends to cover, and are expressed from the tutors' perspective *(tutor orientation)*. Objectives are most commonly stated following the introductory words: 'students will...'

Learning Outcomes: *specific measurable achievements*. These are similar to objectives, but described in terms of *what learners will be able to do* (so-called 'can do' statements). They are expressed from the students' perspective *(student orientation)* - 'by the end of this course successful students will be able to...' Learning outcomes must be measurable and must be assessable. While in the past we have mainly used objectives at UH and elsewhere, there has been a gradual move towards learning outcomes more recently. In future, we must use learning outcomes."

What happens if you turn to the guidance published by the QAA? (See box right for website details.) "Outcomes" appears often, prefaced with learning, or programme, or units of study. A full search will lead you to the expectation that outcomes will be written in the following terms:

- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Skills and other attributes, variously described as:
  - Cognitive skills
  - Subject specific skills (including practical / professional skills)
  - Transferable skills
- Capabilities
- Values
- Personal development
- Progression to employment and/or further study.

This list can present you with a number of difficulties. The first is the task of reconciling "knowledge and understanding" with the clear and direct language of outcomes. Consider the advice from the website of the American Association of Law Libraries (details right):

"Since the learner's performance should be observable and measurable, the verb chosen for each outcome statement should be an action verb which results in overt behaviour that can be observed and measured. Sample action verbs are: compile, create, plan, revise, analyse, design, select, utilize, apply, demonstrate, prepare, use, compute, discuss, explain, predict, assess, compare, rate, critique.

Certain verbs are unclear and subject to different interpretations in terms of what action they are specifying. Such verbs call for covert behaviour which cannot be observed or measured. These types of verbs should be avoided: know, become aware of, appreciate, learn, understand, become familiar with."

We all know just how tenaciously our colleagues grasp these last verbs when writing their specifications. "The intended learning outcome of this course is that the students will understand the subject." To tackle this, Lin Thorley and the Hertfordshire team advise their colleagues to use the language of Bloom's cognitive taxonomy for their outcomes. Alan Jenkins (Oxford Brookes) and Dave Unwin (Birkbeck) have done similar work for the National Centre for Geographic Information and Analysis (details right).

Often that sentence on understanding is quite precisely the main intended outcome and many lecturers find the word-mongering around it quite unacceptable. If their Department has succeeded in the subject review (with the existing course guides and paperwork) and if they and their students are comfortable with their teaching and assessment processes (feedback is OK, results are constant or even improving, students succeed in their postgraduate ambitions) then why should they change? For the educational developer these intended outcomes are really aims, but as the lecturers' perception is that no change is required in the assessment methods, there is little point in going into greater detail.

Perhaps we are dealing with two quite different educational reforms, both are using the same language. One is driven by government policies, industrial, financial and European. Employers and government ask for evidence of what graduates can do. The assurance movement is in part responding to the government's financial questions - "Can you prove that all this investment is worthwhile, and that we have not priced the quality out at the margins by underfunded expansion?" The European dimension is noted in para 1.10 of the General Business and Management benchmark statement: "The signing in 1999, of the Bologna Declaration, by all Ministers of Education throughout the European Union, is highly significant in this regard. It commits the UK and other signatories to increased transparency and comparability within higher education, particularly with regard to quality assurance criteria and processes."

The second reform emerges directly from educational development work, particularly where it has engaged with assessment. There have been, and still are, plenty of universities with sufficient prestige to make the hurdle of entry as significant a statement about a student as the classification of their degree. But where lecturers have wrestled with the meaning of that Honours classification in new contexts (vocational degrees, modular pro-

grammes, non-traditional students, non-traditional subjects, re-design to handle unfavourable staff to student ratios), the systematic rigour of analysis by intended learning outcome has been the device which has opened up assessment practice to great improvements.

Are we sure we can take for granted that knowledge and understanding are implicit in action-based learning outcomes? For example, the wonderfully clear "programme specification written for students" by Margaret Harrison and Mick Healy at Cheltenham & Gloucester (appendix 4c of the QAA's Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications) uses the phrase "...what you should know and be able to do..." and uses this formulation as a guide for lecturers throughout. But they resist splitting it.

The QAA concentrates on programme outcomes but, on the ground, lecturers and educational developers will have to work on the outcomes for each unit of study as well. So a linking exercise will be necessary. At module level the language of action-based outcomes is appropriate - it is the daily currency of the tutor-student relationship and the drive behind explicit assessment criteria. The careful use of "objectives" to focus on the elements along the way which help build up, lead to and realise the outcomes is also useful, although this word is completely absent from the Guidelines. But the language of outcomes may be less appropriate for each programme - after all, they are not directly assessed. At programme level there is more likely to be confusion about Knowledge and Understanding serving as both aims and outcomes, with the added complexity of linking with standards and levels, and even with progression.

If we turn for assistance to the treatment of this within the Benchmark Statements we find a variety of approaches. Many subject groups have chosen to describe two levels - threshold (which in all cases is the minimum required to pass) and typical, though some here use "modal" or "good". Between the groups, definitions and descriptions of this typical level varies between the average, the majority, a student with an upper 2nd, the boundary between an upper and lower 2nd, most students and the main cluster. Some subject groups have gone on to consider excellence but only a few have attempted detailed descriptions.

This is the point when the grids come out - the tables from your subject benchmark document, the outlines from your programme specification, perhaps the graduate level descriptors which your place has been using for the last few years, perhaps some skills matrix which is trying to manage progression across the whole institution, even perhaps something from your learning and teaching strategy which is trying to make overarching sense of an institution which was constructed on the principle of propinquity - and your busy lecturer is trying to fit the outcomes and assessments of their module or course into this grand scheme..... The greatest danger here is that this work is seen as only a paper exercise - it is in fact the core debate about the expectations we have of ourselves, our students and our colleagues.

As Lin Thorley writes for the staff in Hertfordshire (details above left), the QAA's outcomes-based approach is nothing short of a revolution, though one which will depend on iterative revisions rather than a single act. For colleagues who welcome the questioning provoked by the Benchmark Statements, who feel there is still much to do in the alignment of intentions and assessment and who are working to reshape the student experience, this is likely to mean a lot of hard but worthwhile work. This is less likely to be the case for colleagues who have traditionally prepared all their students for further practice within their discipline and whose peers have confirmed they are doing a good job.

In educational development we are familiar with having to build on quality assurance processes to create something more than just a good set of documents. Departmental self-evaluation for subject review is one such current initiative - it can be used for powerful enhancement activities or as a paper-based reporting process. For some the history of regulation and self-regulation has been so heavy that they simply do not believe that processes designed for quality assurance can be used to improve experience for student or staff. Within the QAA's extensive paperwork and cumbersome processes, however,

there are some questions which would face us whatever the circumstances - about knowledge and understanding, about assessment in learning and about our expectations of ourselves and others.

Acknowledgements

A @!£%*& of Staff and Educational Developers

Were you at the 5th Annual SEDA Conference in Manchester last November? Do you remember being asked to come up with a collective noun for staff and educational developers?

After much deliberation and cogitation, it was decided that Dr Colin Mason, Head of Staff Development at the University of St Andrews, should win the prize with his suggestion of a SWARM of staff and educational developers.

His rationale being that we descend on a place, conference, department, institution. We devour everything, knowledge, experience, food, drink, each others company. And we move on to the next tasty meal with equal vigour.

Our congratulations go to Colin and we hope he enjoys the CD!

Others suggestions we had included:

a facilitation of developers
a confusion of developers
a diversity of developers
a tray of developers
a tank of developers
a diatribe of developers
a conception of developers
a workshop of developers
a persuasion of developers
a synergism of developers
a salad of developers
a facility of developers
an investment of developers
a capacity of developers
a gesticulation of developers
a nicety of developers

Commonly Used Acronyms

AISHE	All Ireland Society for Higher Education
C&IT	Communication and Information Technology
CAA	Computer Assisted Assessment
CAL	Computer Assisted Learning
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTI	Computers in Teaching Initiative
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EDU	Educational Development Unit
EIS	Electronic Information Services
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FDTL	Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
FEC	Further Education College
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FSEDA	SEDA Fellowship Holder
GLTC	Generic Learning and Teaching Centre
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia
HESDA	Higher Education Staff Development Agency
ICED	International Consortium for Educational Development
IJAD	International Journal for Academic Development
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LIS	Library and Information Services
LTSN	Learning and Teaching Support Network
NDT	National Disability Team
NTFS	National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
PDP	Professional Development Planning
POD	Professional and Organizational Development Network in HE, USA
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
STLHE	Society for Teaching and Learning in HE, Canada
TLTP	Teaching and Learning Technology Programme
TLTSN	Teaching and Learning Technology Support Network
TQA	Teaching Quality Assessment
TQEF	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund
UUK	UniversitiesUK (formerly CVCP)

Editorial - Rewarding And Developing Staff

By the time you are reading this, the consultation period will be over. Five days before Christmas HEFCE published "Rewarding and developing staff in higher education" (00/56) with a deadline of 12th February. It contains plans for the spending of £330m over the next three academic years, money described as additional resources from the government's Year 2000 Spending Review.

The proposed method of spending is one with which educational developers are becoming familiar, particularly since it was used to allocate institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy funds. By June 1st, institutions will have submitted plans (using the 00/56 criteria), the indicative allocations will be converted into next year's actual, and by the next summer managers will be reporting in their operating statements that they have reached their targets. Although we are asked if such an approach is effective, there is hardly enough time to devise another.

Fearing that it might have lost our interest over Christmas, the Times Higher went for performance-related pay as its lead and thus forced the traditional range of quotes in response. More Christmas chestnuts, really. This, and targeting the circular to those responsible for human resources management, might mean that educational developers have not yet given it much attention.

The mainstream story, however, is how to handle the 1999 Bett Report into pay and conditions. Compared to the total bill needed to implement Bett, the money in 00/56 is marginal. But the directions and intentions are aligned. And some of the detail is central to educational change and improvement.

Bett issued some major challenges to human resources departments. We don't know for sure who is employed in HE, and in what categories. Women in HE are still getting a raw deal. Casual, part-time and fixed contract staff have rights - institutions must find better ways to stay flexible. Overall, managers don't seem to manage well and probably don't know how to. Academics need protection from overloading. Promotion criteria need improving, especially for teachers - Bett grasped at the ILT as a possible reward mechanism, even using entitlement to membership as a way of describing an academic (teacher, researcher or one whose primary function is to contribute directly to student learning). In a buoyant "knowledge economy" young lecturers and experienced professors are in great demand and HE is often not the most attractive choice. And that's before we get onto the two spines, unrewarded productivity, inappropriate patterns of staffing, job evaluation and slippage on the differentials.

If we can overcome the political hazards, there is much in "Rewarding and developing staff" which matters to educational developers. SEDA's Professional Development in Higher Education accreditation scheme, for example, is potentially a major contribution. There is a welcome emphasis on staff development and training objectives, not only for future changes such as Computing and Information Technology, but also to meet current needs (Access? Diversity? The employed student? Mass modules? No time to teach?). And you can find further support for the learning and teaching strategy for each institution.

But the notion with perhaps the most potential for the educational development community is the explicit encouragement for management development. The work of Paul Ramsden, Michael Prosser, Keith Trigwell and Elaine Martin (in papers to the Improving Student Learning conferences and in Ramsden's "Learning to Lead", 1998) is linking the quality of student learning (outcomes and results as well as feedback and satisfaction) with styles of leadership and management. Bett was suggesting that the current approaches have not yet matched the scale of the task - might it not be worthwhile to try to use at least some of 00/56 to develop particular educational perspectives on this area of work?

James Wisdom
Educational Developments Editorial Committee

Congratulations!

SEDA has recently awarded Roger Catchpole (University of Plymouth), Peter Kahn (University of Manchester) and Patricia Kelly (Queensland University of Technology) their full SEDA Fellowships. Brian Caldwell (University College Northampton) has also been successfully assessed for his associate Fellowship.

More details about the SEDA Fellowships Schemes can be found on page 26.

Widening Participation - what causes students to succeed or fail?
"I did all the assignments but I didn't hand them in because they were rubbish."

Julie Hall and Steve May, Lecturers, South Thames College
John Shaw, Principal Lecturer in Teaching and Learning, London Guildhall University

By 2002 it is estimated that colleges will be teaching 700,000 more HE students than they were in 1997-98 but as Alan Thomas argues (THES 14.4.99) "the problem might not be lack of resources but finding and retaining the people to fill the extra places". Despite some changes in participation rates and some growth in franchises such as the South Thames College / London Guildhall University one discussed here, if colleges and universities are to meet targets set and retain students once they arrive much work is still to be done. We need to be clear about who we can realistically widen participation to, what the triggers are in persuading these people to return to study and what factors affect their ability to stay on course.

It seemed that what was missing from the debates were some simple questions - who were theses non-traditional students and how would HE provision have to change in response to this different market?

We aimed to consider our findings in the light of work conducted in this area (Cox and Light 2000; Entwistle N 1992; Bhachu 1991; Prosser and Trigwell 1999) to build up a rich picture of what makes up a non-traditional student. Jarvis (1998) talks of the sheer complexity and paradoxes involved in adult learning and Barnett (1994) uses Habermas' term 'life world' to describe 'the total world experience of human beings which higher education must address'. He contrasts this with teaching which limits its practice to the 'academic competence' of discipline world, or to the 'practical operational competence' world of work. Cox and Light argue too that teaching needs to address the wider multiple discourses of the 'life world'. We felt it important to build up a 'rich picture' to provide a deeper understanding of who our non traditional students were and why learning is sometimes not achieved or is missing. Without this information, responses to Government initiatives may merely represent superficial gestures and, as Trow argued over 30 years ago in 1969, an attempt to merely offer more of the same. It was thus important to us that findings would be fed back into our teaching and feed into the wider debate on widening participation (Cousin 2000).

But to begin at the beginning ... When in 1991 a franchise for the first 2 years of a modular degree programme was set up with London Guildhall University, the aim was clear - that we would provide opportunities for under represented to groups to study at HE level in their local Further Education College. Since 1991 this is what we have been doing. Thus we had before us an ideal sampling frame for a phenomenological study covering both BSc and BA pathways which could relate to the wider debate and central government emphasis on widening participation and adult learners.

Table 1:

Ethnicity	MDP%[1]	UK%[2]
Bangladeshi	1.6	0.6
Chinese	1.6	0.1
Indian	2.3	4.2
Pakistani	6.3	2.2
Black Caribbean	7.9	1.3
White	14.3	84.4
Black African	38.1	2.0
Other	27.9	5.2

[1] Modular Degree Programme

[2] From 1998/99 first degree student of known ethnicity 'students in Higher Education Institutions 1998/99' (Higher Education Statistics Agency)

Tables 1 and 2 show the current distribution of our students in terms of age and ethnicity compared with UK averages. Details of social class have not been gathered for this group of students but as a guide it was found that 67% of students used FEFC Widening Participation postcodes.

We aimed to interview all 60 first year students three times through semester 1 using semi-structured questions and the existing tutorial framework.

What makes you non-traditional?

"I don't feel like a proper student. I don't even know what a degree standard is. I'm going to try but I'm sure I'm not really clever enough."

Our first set of interviews took place in October and November before the semester 1 exams. What we found was very surprising. The conventional wisdom is that non-traditional students come from a background with no experience of HE and therefore need intensive help with study skills before than can engage in meaningful learning. The most common reason for 'dropping out' is financial however this does not explain why when students face similar crises some will persevere while other will 'fade away'

Our non traditional students were certainly non traditional in terms of age and ethnicity (see Tables 1 and 2). However, the majority of them did in fact come from families with HE experience. Many had parents in 'professional' jobs and brothers or sisters with degrees. The main identifying factor of our students was that they had 'dropped out' of the education system some time in their past. Students recounted stories of being 'the black sheep' and of rejecting A levels or of deciding to go for a job or have a child rather than carry on with study after school. Some had dipped their toes into the traditional route in their teens but some had rejected it all together. However in their mid twenties the majority of those interviewed had experienced some kind of a trigger - a child starting full time school, job loss, a relationship break-down, a bereavement which had lead them to pick up an educational path they had left in their teens. Although they had joined our course and saw the value of a degree now as a sign of 'good education', many expressed feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and even fear of the education process.

'I want a degree. I want to be an expert in my field but I don't know how I'll get there.

'At the beginning you got stuck on really trivial things like who is my tutor and what room am I in?'

Table 2:

Age	MDP%[1]	UK% (1999)[2]
Under 21	6.7	78.5
21 - 24	36.7	10.3
25 and over	56.7	11.2

[1] Modular Degree Programme

[2] From 1998/99 first degree student of known ethnicity 'students in Higher Education Institutions 1998/99' (Higher Education Statistics Agency)

To overcome this fear and uncertainty and to stop it regressing into hostility it became clear that students required help in boosting confidence and in becoming more aware of what would be required of them. They were desperate to gain a body of knowledge early on but were totally at sea with the some of the very teaching and learning strategies we had developed for the franchise. For many, their most recent learning experience had been at school as rather passive learners many years before and then we were suddenly demanding student centred independent learning from them.

'Lecturers are talking about assignments, case studies and essays and I don't even know what the difference is!'

As the interviews progressed through the first term it became clear that this was the crucial time for retention. This is the time when self-doubt is at its height and all the other students seem more intelligent and confident. Barnett's (1994) 'life world' has most impact at this stage and if finance and family problems occur the student is unable to put up much resistance and may leave. Finance was clearly a stress creator but it also appeared to provide a face saving excuse for leaving. Neither student or lecturer needed to feel guilty - it was the government's fault. Our results indicate that we should take other factors equally into account. These are:

- Low self esteem re academic capability
- Fear and lack of understanding of the learning process
- Isolation from other students.

Finally, many students commented on the crucial role of the personal tutor as a coach or mentor at this stage. Many emphasised that this aspect of lecturers treating them as individuals often made the difference between them staying on the course and giving up.

'When you stopped me and asked how I was doing I was just about ready to give up.'

The transition to self confidence

'If I'd known I could do that well I'd have really gone for it.'

Students identified three key aspects of a transition through the period of self -doubt:

- When they start to talk to each other and share their problems
- When they complete their first course-work and get their result
- When they settle into their timetable, join the library, know their personal tutor.

Once they have reached this point students explained they felt more confident about en-gaging with a body of knowledge. It is at this stage that they were able to consider the learning process and consider strategies for becoming independent learners, work on techniques for essay writing, for example, or research skills.

However in semester based courses like ours, no sooner have they begun to feel more confident and have validated themselves as 'proper undergraduates' then they face the stress of end of semester exams. Although 30% of those interviewed said they felt prepared and fairly confident of passing their January exams, another 30% experienced this time as another test of their academic right to be an undergraduate.

'As more and more students asked for paper in the exams I knew I was just not up to it.'

Many still didn't know what expect.

'What my lecturer taught came up in the exams and I knew what to write - it was great.'

A crucial insight we also discovered was that students were not fixated simply on improving their career chances but wanted 'knowledge'. Closer questioning revealed that they wanted to be certified as a 'proper academic' by being seen to have gained a specialist body of knowledge. Even though like lots of degree programmes we offer study support and personal tutorials these were on a self referral basis and weren't really 'filling the gap' by equipping the majority of the students with the skills and confidence required. Additionally our efforts to offer study skills, however we marketed it, was viewed as remedial and lowered their self esteem even further.

Our response as educators

'I haven't got time to offer TLC to 60 students a week'

As researchers our view was that our research should impact on current debates and our own institutional practice. We decided to focus on tutorial support and support for communications, number and IT and to change these in the light of our findings.

Tutorial support
Our research seems to indicate that widening participation must go hand in hand with increased tutorial support. In addition models which include early distance learning may hinder efforts to retain non-traditional students. Resources must be allocated to reflect this need for support and clarification at the early stages of the course.

This year additional funds have been allocated from year 2 and year 1 tutors now have 3 hours a week for their tutorial role. This allows tutors to be far more pro-active in encouraging students to make regular contact by for example liaising with a retention officer to follow up students who haven't been seen for a couple of weeks.

The students are timetabled to attend tutorials and each session is structured around a tutorial curriculum to give specific guidance and study support as well as time to see students individually. It is our intention to make the 'Wider Key Skills' of 'Working with Others', 'Improving Learning and Performance' and 'Problem Solving' a fundamental part of tutorial support from September 2001. Each session is recorded and students are encouraged to use action planning as part of the tutorial process.

Peer support of first year students by second years is also being piloted this year.

We believe that this will increase initial student / tutor contact and lead to better initial retention rates. It is interesting to note the very activity of interviewing all first years so consistently through semester 1 during the research project corresponded with a 30% increase in retention on the previous year.

Study support
To encourage students to take up this support we are offering them the chance to take a Key Skills Award through City & Guilds. This is a qualification in Application of Number, Communications and IT. The beauty of this scheme is that it can be embedded into already existing curriculum. By diagnosing students' skills at induction then entering them at an appropriate level in each Key Skill we are mirroring current Curriculum 2000 practice in FE colleges.

The award itself requires students to build a portfolio covering given key skills criteria and to take a test in each of the key skills taken. By liaising with tutors and mapping the criteria, the portfolio aspect has been embedded into other units taken by the students. Additionally again we have reallocated funds to support team teaching of some units with study skills specialists working alongside subject specialists. Early evaluations indicate that these sessions are proving a useful way of 'meshing' subject knowledge and skills.

We now feel that our previous 'wedging model' of offering a wealth of study skills self-referral work-shops throughout semester 1 may have been putting the cart before the horse. Adult returners need to recapture their lost experience of sixth form education where there is less of an emphasis on independent learning. Only when they see themselves as owning a substantial body of knowledge do our students feel ready to seek and accept help with their specific study skills.

Some final reflections ...

- Widening access will not succeed without a shift of resources
- Early distance or e-learning may hinder retention for some non traditional students
- Early peer support should be encouraged
- The teaching, learning and assessment process must be as transparent as possible
- Early feedback on academic performance is crucial
- Staff need time to be friendly and available - especially in semester 1
- Study skills need to be embedded into each area of the curriculum
- Early intervention can improve retention - this requires highly developed tracking techniques

For UK Higher Education to expand in line with government targets it is clear that institutions are increasingly recruiting from 'older', less traditional sections of the community. The key question has to be whether we can create an inclusive model of higher education (Brown and Scase 1994) which adapts to the changing needs of society and the changing demands of different groups of students or whether we retain an exclusive model which perpetuates itself and reinforces divisions. Those that are adopting the first approach are responding to the needs of students by recognising the 'weave of learning' beyond specific discipline knowledge (Cox and Light 2000), accommodating different attitudes and approaches to learning. This will require a shifting of resources into the early stages of the course and may in fact conflict with current models for foundation degrees for example with their emphasis on work based and e-learning.

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Biography

Julie Hall and Steve May are lecturers at South Thames College. John Shaw is Principal Lecturer in Teaching and Learning at London Guildhall University. They have all been involved in the Modular Degree franchise with London Guildhall University since 1991.

They would be pleased to receive comments on this article by e-mailing Julie at:

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SEDA membership runs from January to December each calendar year and is available in three categories:

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Institutional members receive regular mailings of SEDA information, including details of forthcoming SEDA conferences and events, copies of all SEDA papers and specials published during the membership year, ten copies of each issue of *Educational Developments* magazine, two copies of each issue of SEDA's journal *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* and one copy of each issue of the ICED journal *International Journal for Academic Development*.

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Individual members also receive regular mailings of SEDA information, including details of forthcoming SEDA conferences and events, as well as information on new SEDA papers and specials. They also receive one copy of each issue of *Educational Developments* magazine and one copy of each issue of SEDA's journal *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*.

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http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/member.html

Alternatively, a full information pack can be obtained from the SEDA Office (contact details on the back page).

SEDA
STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

A Developer's Guide to Major National Initiatives - Part Three

This series, edited by David and Carole Baume, is describing major initiatives to support teaching and learning, with emphasis on the implications for staff and educational developers.

In Educational Developments 1.1, David and Carole gave an overview of the main HEFCE teaching and learning initiatives. In 1.3, Jean Ritchie, described a range of initiatives in Scotland.

Here, Barbara Lloyd-Smith and Geoff Layer describe major HEFCE- and DHFETE-funded initiatives, respectively, on improving provision for disabled students and on widening participation. Both writers stress the need and the potential for close and fruitful co-operation between disability and participation specialists and staff and educational developers.

Improving Provision for Disabled Students

Barbara Lloyd-Smith, Director, National Disability Team, Coventry University

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Improving provision for disabled students:

- Funding programme that runs from 1999-2000 to 2000-2002 (HEFCE 99/08)
- Provides £6m to fifty institutions
- 29 projects in institutions that have identified themselves as having little or no existing provision for, or experience of, supporting disabled students and have designed programmes to rectify this ("base-line provision" projects)
- 8 projects to promote and transfer existing disability-related expertise
- 13 collaborative projects that will allow institutions to plan complementary provision to make best use of existing resources
- Managed and supported by the National Disability Team (NDT).

Disability rights

"Education is one of our strongest forces for inclusion," said Margaret Hodge, Employment and Equal Opportunities Minister. This, on the day the DfEE announced £172 million funding for further, higher, adult and youth education services alongside the *Disability Rights in Education Bill* - hard cash to underpin the changes needed for institutions to put access to their houses in order.

The National Disability Team

The National Disability Team NDT provides a co-ordination service on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) and Department for Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment (DHFETE) Northern Ireland. NDT's remit is to:

- support staff working on Improving Provision for Disabled Students, with advice and practical guidance

- be a focal point of information about the funding programme, supporting dissemination of its outcomes across the whole HE sector

- work with other national teams, key agencies and organisations to enhance the accessibility and quality of the learning experience for all students.

Disability Rights in Education - cast in the form of amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act itself - together with the existing *QAA Code of Practice, Students with Disabilities* - is, for project staff in fifty specially funded HEIs and for all disability advisers across the HE sector, one of the strongest levers on institutional and attitudinal change. Such change will make rights of access explicit in the whole range of institutional policies, in programme validation, content, delivery and assessment procedures; it will encourage reflexive responses to the needs of disabled learners in academic staff responsible for that work.

Implications for staff

When the force of education is harnessed, the overt instruments of inclusion are strategic statements, policy documents and their implementation in programmes and services. But the subtlest and strongest forces in higher education are the attitudes, skills, understanding and confidence of academic staff. It is these, displayed through responses to individual adult learners, which will fundamentally support inclusion. And, as participation does truly widen, academic colleagues may feel a deficit in their understanding, skills and confidence. So, over the next three or four years, in the run up to the implementation of legislation, academic colleagues may need to augment their understanding of disability issues, their attitudes to programme development, their skills in delivery and assessment - and

thus their confidence to provide for increasingly diverse groups.

Implications for staff and educational developers

It is here that staff and education developers have a critical role to play. Professional programmes that encourage staff teaching in higher education to reflect on and debate diverse learning will be crucial in supporting true access to the curriculum and both sides of the learning / teaching equation. But many staff and educational developers feel themselves in need of additional information and expertise in aspects of the debate which relate to the needs of disabled learners. Thus colleagues currently working in the *Improving provision for disabled students* funding programme may prove valuable allies to developers.

And in attempting to deliver their project outcomes, the strongest allies of disability advisers are in turn staff and educational developers. Disability advisers own up to finding staff development the toughest part of their job. Some may, but many do not, have a teaching background. They are often attached to student services and can be hampered by a perception that they are part of a welfare culture. Many not only have little status but are new to higher education. Nevertheless, they must function increasingly not only as service providers but also as policy advisers and educational developers: theirs is now a

29 projects will develop "baseline provision"

Baseline provision is the minimum level of support that each HEI should provide. It is not the same as best practice and is open to quality improvement and expansion. Baseline provision should include the following:
1 A comprehensive disability statement that sets out the institution's policies, support services and implementation strategy for students with disabilities.
2 An admissions policy and procedures that specifically address the needs of disabled students. Students should have opportunities to discuss their needs when they apply. If they make known a need for support, they should be invited to meet a designated officer on enrolment. All HEIs should maintain and monitor statistics about applications and enrolment rates for disabled students.
3 Well-publicised arrangements for the assessment of individual needs, with target times for their completion. Each HEI should prepare a code of practice governing the circulation of personal information, to preserve appropriate levels of confidentiality.
4 The provision of services to meet assessed needs.
5 Clear internal communication and referral policies.
6 Arrangements to monitor the provision of support services that have been agreed as necessary following professional assessment.
7 Each HEI should ensure it has access to networks of suitably trained support workers.
8 An institution-wide policy and procedure to cover examination and assessments.
9 Staff development programmes to cover information about students with disabilities and the support available. These should be part of induction sessions and training programmes for staff new to the institution or sector. There should also be optional training sessions for more experienced staff, specific briefings for any staff who request them, and professional development opportunities for staff working directly with students with disabilities.
10 Dedicated staff including a permanently employed disability co-ordinator, with other full or part-time staff including for example IT support or dyslexia support tutor.

7 of the 8 expert projects have a strong staff development focus

- University of Nottingham - *Integrating disability consideration into all staff development* - involving 10 Midlands institutions in the M1/M69 network.
- University of Plymouth - a *South West Academic Network for Disability Support (SWANDS)* - involving professionals from all aspects of institutional life across a whole region.
- *CLAUDINE* - at the University of Bristol - builds on an existing network of librarians (known as CLAUD) in HE institutions in the south and south west of England to improve access to library services for disabled users. Outcomes include a website, training materials and the development of training for library staff and for disabled students across the sector.
- *Disseminating Good Practice in Supporting Students with Mental Illness* at Lancaster University builds on the success of previous work undertaken under the 1996/99 funding initiative.
- *Developing the expertise of specialist and non-specialist careers advisers* at the University of Central Lancashire - good practice in careers guidance with disabled students through setting up of a national network of HE careers advisers.
- *ASPIHE - a Social Communication and Understanding Project in Higher Education* at Canterbury Christchurch University College - enhancing effective practice and provision for students with social understanding and communication difficulties across the higher education community. It will explore, develop and disseminate through two workshops supported by publications on the website and a dedicated email discussion list.
- *Learning Support for Disabled Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities* - Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education. Closely related to the Geography Discipline Network, it will identify, promote and transfer the principles and good practices of learning support for disabled students undertaking fieldwork, and related activities, in geography, earth and environmental sciences. Outcomes to reside in the Geography Subject Centre.

Many of the 13 collaborative projects also have a staff development strand.

Projects are be encouraged to locate outcomes in the Technology Centre, the Generic Learning and Teaching Centre or in Subject Centres.

strategic role. They know that they must manoeuvre their way out of the ghetto and into the mainstream of their institution's learning and teaching agenda.

Staff and educational developers know how to effect change in their own institutions. They know what works and what doesn't. They work with new academic staff; they advise and support departments during QAA; they understand the institutional ropes, and how not to get hung on them, or at least how not tie themselves in too many knots.

Thus many disability advisers are currently seeking to liaise with staff and educational developers to write modules for (often SEDA) accredited courses. Most are suggesting that reflection about disability issues must interpenetrate reflection on all aspects of learning, animating the SEDA outcome about supporting students and the SEDA values of concern for student development and practising equal opportunities. "Of course", said a philosophy colleague in a traditional university setting "I couldn't begin to discuss special approaches to assessment without opening up the whole poverty of our thinking about assessment in general."

Such collaboration should be easier now that educational developers have opened the door to professional training of academic staff. It will be easier still if disability advisers know they will be welcomed, and that the expertise they have to offer will outlast their current project and will pass into the domain of accredited programmes, understood and supported by staff and educational developers and thus by lecturers.

You may have a project running in your institution or at an institution near you that is primarily or partly aimed at educational development. Details of all fifty projects the Improving Provision for Disabled Students funding programme and the support role of the National Disability Team, (NDT) are at:

http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk

Please get in touch with Mike Adams or Barbara Lloyd-Smith, co-ordinators with the National Disability Team (NDT), if you have questions about the funding programme, working with disability professionals in your institution or wish to explore links through other networks.

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Widening Participation - So What, Why and How?

Geoff Layer, Director, Action on Access, University of Bradford

Understanding 'widening participation'

"Widening participation in higher education is the main priority, and I look to the Council to help the sector work towards social inclusion both nationally and in the local community" : Blunkett, 2000

The commitment to widening participation has never been more central to Government policy. There is clear political backing to raising the participation rate to 50% by the time people reach the age of 30. This is a far cry from the days of the Robbins Report (1963) when the system was based on 6% of 18-21 year olds.

So what does this commitment really mean, and how can we seek to move forward? The key dilemma is actually found within the vocabulary used. If we assume that the Government agenda is not simply to increase enrolments, but that students also have a good chance of success, then we need to do more than simply "widen access" or "widen participation". The challenge has to be one of "achieving equity". This means that, rather than focusing on numerical participation, the emphasis shifts to seeking to reduce imbalances in representation and to "ensure that all students have the best possible change of succeeding in their studies" (HEFCE 2000, 00/50).

If we assume that behind the focus or numbers the Government is really seeking this holistic approach, then how do we make the shift and what assistance is there, or put more bluntly, can we really sign up to anything other than a holistic approach?

Widening participation involves *everyone* in higher education

"Widening participation will not become a reality unless it has the full backing of all parts of the sector" : Blunkett, 2000

There is already considerable experience amongst HE providers in seeking and delivering this vision. This knowledge needs to be harnessed within institutions, and used to help others through sharing practice and experience. Many examples can be found in the specific provision a number of HEIs have adopted for adult learners. The challenge is to incorporate the best approaches across the institution.

In his annual letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Secretary of State makes it very clear that he is seeking to ensure a greater degree of diversity and inclusiveness within HE:

"All institutions must fully demonstrate the action they have taken to widen participation so that we can assure ourselves that funds are spent effectively and institutions have to plan, monitor and evaluate the work that they are doing" : Blunkett 2000.

The HEFCE has been focusing on this issue for a number of years, and has now developed funding, planning and development processes that seek to meet this policy objective. One aspect of this implementation has been to establish a national co-ordination team for widening participation to assist practitioners, HEIs and HEFCE, in meeting their goals. This co-ordination team is the Action on Access Team which has been appointed to the co-ordination role for a period of three years from January 2000 (contact details opposite).

Moving to an integrated approach

This scale of activity within the widening participation field is unprecedented, and very welcome. It does however have major implications for HEIs as they seek to face up to the challenge.

Traditionally, as indicated earlier, widening participation has been measured by many observers as focusing on changing the nature of the student body. Considerable focus has been, quite rightly, placed on admissions policies and practices. Indeed, much of the work funded in the regional projects focuses on aspiration raising and recruitment.

However there is little in the form of learning support, retention and staff development. This is not surprising, given the remit and criteria laid down by HEFCE (99/33), which was designed to meet a particular scenario. However, recruitment is only part of the issue. If we focus on the student, then we see that the issues are much broader. Interest-

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Main elements of HEFCE Widening Participation initiative

- **Student financial support**
  HEFCE passes on earmarked funding from the DfEE to HEIs to support students who are suffering hardship.

- **Increasing Opportunities**
  HEFCE seeks to increase the number of places available in HE through asking HEIs to bid for Additional Student Numbers, which seeks to broaden opportunities (45,000 more places in 2001/2).

- **Development Funding**
  HEFCE has allocated, with FEFC, £9.5 million per annum on a regional basis for HEIs and FECs to seek funding over a three-year period to work in partnership in widening participation. This is a fund that is seeking innovation in, and sharing practice of, widening participation. A total of 79 projects have received funding (for details see http://www.actiononaccess.org).

- **Infrastructure Funding**
  HEFCE has allocated each HEI a sum of money on a formulaic basis to recognise the additional costs involved in recruiting and supporting certain groups of students. The formula takes account of mature, part-time students and young full-time students from low participation communities. In 2001/02 this amount of funding will be in the region of £31 million having grown significantly since 2000/01.

- **Planning Approach**
  In 1999/00 HEFCE required all HEIs to establish strategic plans for widening participation (99/33) and also published Performance Indicators (99/66), which measure a number of trends. These strategic plans were Initial Strategic Statements as the HEFCE was encouraging HEIs to adopt this type of approach but at the same time recognising that for some HEIs this was new ground. In Circular 00/50 the HEFCE has indicated that they have reflected on the progress that has been made through this approach and is now seeking to develop the plans within a holistic and integrated framework and linked to teaching and learning strategies.

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ingly, it was back in 1995 that the former Higher Education Quality Council developed the student life cycle model in an approach to be adopted for all students. HEIs may now need to address this model, which has major implications for curriculum design and for teaching and learning. The student life cycle model has five stages:

1 Aspiration raising
2 Recruitment support
3 Arrival at the HEI
4 On course support
5 Moving on.

This process is referred to as "application, enrolment, progression and employment" by the administration that supports HE. Whichever vocabulary the sector decides to use, the key issue for inclusivity was raised by Tomlinson, when he defined inclusive learning as "the greatest degree of match or fit between the individual learner's requirements and the provision that is made for them" (Tomlinson, 1996).

HEIs tend not to plan the curriculum in that way. However, if we are seeking to broaden the student base, then the links between institutional widening participation statements and the teaching and learning policies are imperative. The Australian Equity initiative is an interesting comparator: "the overall objective for equity in higher education is to ensure that Australians from all groups in society have the opportunity to participate successfully in higher education" (DEET, 1990:2).

The Government policy objective to widen participation will not be achieved if broader groups of students are "admitted" to institutions that have support infrastructures and curricula designed for students from a narrower pre-HE experience. There is a significant shift in policy taking place, with a drive to increase the number of 18-21 year olds from the inner cities entering full-time undergraduate study. The social inclusion objectives relating to adults and minority ethnic groups still exist, and is equally important, but the perspective has shifted. It is crucial that HEIs address their strategies to all groups that are under-represented.

Implications for staff and educational developers

To achieve this change, education developers and widening participation practitioners need to work closely together to develop an appropriate learning environment. As HEIs are likely be planning their revised widening participation strategies in the coming months, this joined-up thinking will be crucial. Major changes to practice will need to be consid-

ered. It will be an interesting HEI that has a teaching and learning strategy that does not pay attention to the widening participation initiative, and vice versa. There will be challenges, not only to the curriculum itself, but also to the educational processes and policy measures.

The challenge can be illustrated by comparison with rail travel, which equally has its share of challenges. How will the student plan their journey? What is the nature of that journey? How much support will they require? Will everyone need the same level of support? Will they all want to move at the same speed? Will they want to break their journey? Can our staff accommodate emergency timetables? Have our staff addressed the development needs of developing new approaches to strategic planning?

The widening participation projects that are located in the HEIs, and the drive to establish a holistic approach, provide the opportunity to establish an approach that addresses the needs of particular students. At the same time, there are opportunities to enhance the support for all students. For example, an initiative to diagnostically test all students and to provide tailored support does not simply involve supporting students from targeted groups; it will be beneficial to considerably more students. It will also have a major impact on the development of the learning process as a whole.

The Action on Access team will be supporting HEIs throughout the process and seeking to ensure appropriate links through the National Disability Team, the TQEF National Co-ordination Team, the LTSN and Escalate

(the LTSN Subject Centre for Education). A challenge for SEDA is to ensure that this approach engages the educational developers, who will be crucial to its success.

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Encouraging and Facilitating the Use of Electronic Information Services (EIS)

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Abstract

JISC, the Joint Information Systems Committee, established a User Behaviour Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to investigate and profile the use of electronic information services within higher education in the United Kingdom. This article discusses aspects of the methodology of the Framework, and preliminary findings from the first annual cycle of the Framework. Findings are based on interactions with 1500 users, including academic staff, library and information service (LIS) staff, and students. Executed through 3 strands, the framework methodology uses an array of quantitative and qualitative approaches to lend a variety of insights into user behaviour with electronic information services (EIS), factors that encourage the use of EIS, and those that act as barriers to the effective integration of EIS into the learning experience.

Introduction

The impact of IT networks and electronic information services and sources on academic information users is potentially enormous, and permeates all of the arenas of research, teaching, publishing and communication. The change provoked by the emergence of electronic information services (EIS), is only one of many changes taking place in higher education, which affect the nature of academic jobs and roles, research and knowledge, student profiles and learning. In an environment characterised by several drivers for change, it is important that information professionals and policy makers are able to make well-informed decisions concerning the development, provision and funding of EIS. To this end, JISC, the Joint Information Systems Committee, established a User Behaviour Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to investigate and profile the use of electronic information services within higher education in the United Kingdom. This article discusses aspects of the methodology of the Framework, and preliminary findings from the first annual cycle of the Framework. Findings are based on interactions with 1500 users, including academic staff, LIS staff, and students. Executed through 3 strands, the framework methodology uses an array of quantitative and qualitative approaches to lend a variety of

insights into user behaviour with EIS, factors that encourage the use of EIS, and those that act as barriers to the effective integration of EIS into the learning experience.

The User Behaviour Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The Framework is of particular interest because it is the first and only attempt to provide a sector wide picture of the nature and extent of the use of EIS within the academic community. During the next two years, the Framework will be further developed to monitor the development of user behaviour over a period of years, and to lend a longitudinal perspective. The methodology will also generate an evaluation toolkit that allows institutions to benchmark their progress in the content of the use of EIS. This toolkit, like the Framework methodology will have qualitative and quantitative elements. This multidimensional methodology executed by two research teams allows the voices of stakeholder groups, such as students, academic staff and LIS staff to be heard.

Three strands of the Framework were contracted in the First Cycle:

A general survey of end users of all electronic information services:
A single (but differentiated) broad based sample survey of patterns of use and non-use of all electronic information services by librarians, academics and students administered through face-to-face or telephone interviews to ensure accurate sampling of all relevant sub-populations. This strand was executed as part of the JUSTEIS (JISC Usage Surveys: Trends in Electronic Information Service) Project, by a project team in Department of Information and Library Studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

A general survey of EIS provision:
A combination of a Web survey of resource access provided by individual HEIs, with telephone polls of purchasing intentions, backed up by a small number of detailed (face to face) interviews with key informants to profile service provision. This strand was executed as part of the JUSTEIS (JISC Usage Surveys: Trends in Electronic Information Service) Project, by a project team in Department of

Information and Library Studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

A qualitative longitudinal monitoring of EIS use:
A linked ongoing programme of longitudinal qualitative evaluation centred around a selection of actual and virtual sites within UK HE, and an associated programme of one off studies on the behaviour and needs of specific disciplinary groups. This strand was executed as the JUBILEE (JISC User Behaviour in Information Seeking: Longitudinal Evaluation of EIS) project by a research team in The Information Management Research Institute, School of Information Studies at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

Barriers and Facilitators

The First Cycle has established and tested the methodology and its associated instruments. Modest adjustments have been made to the methodology during the First Cycle, where initial approaches proved unsuccessful. This section summarises some of the key messages that emerge.

Diversity of the UK HE Community
Before launching into more specific issues it is important to comment on one overarching characteristic of the UK HE community which affected the execution of the methodology for the Framework, and is reflected in the findings. The UK HE community is diverse. There are institutions where staff and students have very limited access to EIS, and library web sites are only just being established. There are academic staff who demonstrate innovative approaches to the integration of the use of EIS into student (and their own) learning, and there are other staff who believe that EIS have little, if any relevance for their activities as a researcher, scholar and teacher. Similarly students can have very different levels of IT and information skills. It is this diversity that is the most difficult to profile and manage. JISC initiatives, specifically JANET and BIDS, are clearly having some impact in 'levelling the playing field', and it is important that this process is continued not only to support institutions that, for a variety of reasons, are not able to make sufficient investment without additional support, but also to contribute to the cohesiveness of the HE community.

Context for UK HE

The development of ICT and the opportunities that it offers for learning, research, scholarship and communication is only one of many changes that are affecting UK HE. For example, the Widening Access agenda creates greater problems in terms of providing access to students who never, or only infrequently visit a university campus. In relation to the issue of access, the matter of licenses for EIS and specifically e-journals is also problematic. QAA Subject Review visits can influence attitudes to EIS either negatively or positively, depending upon the position taken by and attitudes held by peers involved in the Subject Review process.

Contributions from Library and Information Services

Library and information services are actively engaged in developing web sites, and purchasing EIS such as electronic journals. All sites linked to their own OPAC (On-line Public Access Catalogue). Almost all sites provided access to JISC services, Web databases and electronic journals. Many sites link to other sites. Collection development and budgetary control are bedevilled by change in the purchase arrangements for sources such as electronic journals. Further, in institutions in which budgetary control is split between LIS and the Faculty, liaison associated with the acquisition of EIS can be a long and complex process.

Academic Staff are Gatekeepers in the Student Learning Process

Academic staff have a privileged relationship with students, even in large classes. LIS staff find it much more difficult to establish relationships with students and students perceive them to be remote and not always there when they want them. On the other hand, LIS staff offer group sessions, and individual help on the use of EIS, for which the take-up is often disappointing. Most importantly, by defining assessment and the curriculum, academic staff have the power to define expectations. Further, they have the subject and pedagogical understanding to be able to evaluate EIS and make targeted recommendations to their students.

Academic staff have difficulty in keeping up to date. They perceive EIS to be a very fast moving field. In some areas, academic staff have not acquired the requisite basic IT and I competencies.

Student Use Behaviour in respect of EIS

Students make a low level of use of EIS. Their use is focused on the Web, e-mail and OPACs. Search engines and known sites are the first resort for most academic queries, as well as for many personal domestic queries. Internet use has spread into the routine activities of daily living: travel, job searching, and shopping were all popular purposes of use, mentioned by interviewees at several institutions. On the other hand, search strategies do not suggest a very structured or informed approach. There is little if any evidence to suggest that they use subject trees and other tools designed by their institution's LIS. Perhaps it is significant that they use search engines; search engines usually appear on the first screen that displays as they enter the Web, and offer what students perceive as a 'one-stop shop'. Also this generation of students are accustomed to active promotion of products that others want them to know about, and are rarely encouraged to find things for themselves.

Students learn a lot from each other, but ultimately their learning through this route will be constrained by what their friends know.

In their use of the web students integrate information seeking in support of both academic and leisure activities. Leisure related use of the Internet should not be dismissed, but student learning from this source needs to be viewed as part of the student experience of higher education. Library and information providers have always straddled leisure and education, and it should come as no surprise that students do not make a rigid distinction between the sources of information that they use for leisure and those that they use for study. An optimal, but possibly unrealistic, scenario would be to persuade students that the work that they need to do using EIS is leisure!

Student Use of E-mail

E-mail is widely used to complement informal communication and provide an easy means of contacting organisations. E-mail would appear to be supplementing rather than replacing other means of communication. For example, students are able to e-mail a foreign company, when their language skills would act as a barrier to a telephone conversation.

A particular issue raised regularly was the popularity of Web-based systems (eg. hotmail) for personal e-mail, which are accessible from a multitude of different locations. The use of these instead of institutional e-mail systems could hinder the use of e-mail for administrative and academic purposes.

Student Information Skills

Students do make use of search engines, and e-mail, and therefore must have at least a basic level of IT skills. Information skills are the real problem, and they appear not to understand the nature of the EIS that they use, even when they do use these sources. Some LIS compound this situation when they design web-sites that do not clearly differentiate between databases of full text journals articles, and electronic journals.

Postgraduate students have often developed knowledge of specific sources relevant to their studies, but in other respects do not exhibit a profile of EIS use that differs much from undergraduate students.

Students are provoked to use sources by instructions, especially those embedded in assignments, from tutors. Assignments and background research are the main reasons for using EIS. Classes embedded in the courses might not always be as successful or wide ranging as might be desirable, but they remain the most effective means of introducing EIS to students. From an institutional perspective this piecemeal approach is difficult to manage, and it is difficult for institutions to be assured that all students are provided with comparable opportunities to enhance their skills in the use of EIS.

OPAC Use

The OPAC is used consistently across the student body and by academic staff. By contrast, the use of other OPACs is low. For LIS staff, however, there is a high incidence of use for both. It is a reasonable assumption that it is used not just for access to books but other resources and the manner in which the OPAC is used and the structure of the options offered may be worth more investigation in the second cycle.

Use of Other EIS

With the exception of LIS staff and academic and research staff, the use of Web databases and BIDS is low. Even for staff the actual incidence is lower than might be expected. Subject gateways are notable only for the lack of mention among students and academic staff, although there is some use among LIS staff. There seems a possibility that, for the student audience, the subjects of the subject gateways do not meet the most popular subject needs. Benefits in terms of time saving may need to be promoted more, as time is a precious commodity to those students who do not expect, or cannot spare the time, to search for lengthy periods. The emphasis on quality resources is of less concern to students if they are simply looking for one or two appropriate references or answers to particular calculation problems. For them any example is better than none at all. Gateways appear to be products looking for a market, which suggests that their marketing is deficient

Differences between Disciplines

EIS are less embedded in English, relative, for instance, to Health and Business. In English it is more difficult to raise an awareness of the potential value of EIS, but change is beginning to take place. While use of search engines and e-mail are universally high, there seem some distinct differences in the type of source used between the various disciplines.

Some disciplines make greater use of BIDS and Web databases than others (Pure and Applied Sciences, and Clinical Medicine); particularly high use of search engines (Humanities and Arts); there may be more use of electronic journals among Pure and Applied Science and Pure and Applied Social Science.

The Development of an EIS Maturity Evaluation Toolkit

The First Cycle has proposed a toolkit that could be used to evaluate the stage of development of engagement with EIS in different institutions and disciplinary communities. The key themes for this toolkit have been identified in this Cycle as: Access, Resource base, Skills/knowledge, EIS and course design and delivery, EIS and learning, Quality assurance, and Seamlessness.

Conclusion

Overall, the picture is one of a sector that is energetically tackling the challenges and opportunities that EIS present. LIS staff are recognising and generally relishing the opportunity that EIS gives for greater engagement with the learning process. They are most successful if they can work with academics. In addition, LIS Staff are working, often collaboratively, across institutions to make access to EIS easier, and more tailored to the communities that they serve. On the other hand, better web sites gateways and other tools must not be viewed as ends in themselves. Marketing which embraces promotion, but extends beyond it to consider targeting communities, messages and the appropriateness of the design of the offering is essential. Continuing challenges for the provision of an effective resource base lie in the areas of licences and, within institutions, the ownership of budgetary control.

Students currently make a relatively low level of use of EIS, and their use is focused on e-mail (often hotmail), the Web, and search engines, and OPAC's. When students are aware of specific information sources that support their studies, their awareness may have been cultivated through one of a series of different channels including their peers, one-to-one coaching by LIS staff, training sessions, or activities embedded in the curriculum. Instructions in assignments which direct students to use specified EIS are a significant driver in extending their experience of EIS. Academic staff have a key role to play as gatekeepers and role models for students. Yet they often express concerns of reservations about the relevance of EIS to learning, and their competence in the use of IT and EIS. Engagement with EIS differs between disciplines, and any institutional or sector-wide initiatives need to engage specifically with different disciplinary communities.

5th Annual SEDA Conference for Staff and Educational Developers
21st - 22nd November 2000, The Manchester Conference Centre

SEDA's 5th Annual Conference for Staff and Educational Developers took place at the Manchester Conference Centre from the 21st - 22nd November 2000. The title of the Conference was 'Developing the Developers - Professional Enhancement for Staff and Educational Developers'. As the Conference Committee Chair, Rakesh Bhanot, indicated in his welcome, the title and themes of the Conference were selected by the Committee to enable participants to reflect upon and contribute to current and future staff and educational developments within the Higher Education Sector - including the ever-growing body of research evidence.

A total of 140 delegates attended the event. As usual, it attracted may overseas participants from as far afield as Australia, South Africa and Bahrain, as well as from Europe, with colleagues travelling from Ireland, The Netherlands and Hungary to attend.

The Conference was opened by the Vice-Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University, Alexandra Burslem OBE. She emphasised the importance of continuing professional development across the sector to improve the support given to students and to enable staff to meet the challenges of new legislation. Dr Angela Brew presented a very stimulating opening keynote address 'Taking Research Seriously: the role of inquiry in staff and educational development'; she emphasised how enquiry, investigation and discovery were at the heart of effective staff and educational development. Staff and educational developers should recognise the centrality of enquiry and 'hold our own as researchers'. Dr Ray Land presented a thought provoking and highly enjoyable keynote address 'Development and Change: a tool for auditing practice'. In this session he took delegates through an exploration of notions of change which appear to underpin the way developers operate within specific organisational contexts; the presentation also offered a conceptual tool for auditing the extent to which development units appropriately address the cultures and needs of their institutions.

The Conference offered a wide range of well evaluated seminars and workshops and closed with an address from Dr Sheila Watt (Head of Learning and Teaching Policy) of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Dr Watt discussed emerging policies for staff and educational development and the need for capacity building; in her abstract of the session she quoted Ingram and Schneider 'Public policy almost always attempts to get people to do things they might not otherwise do; or it enables people to do things they might not have done otherwise.' The Conference certainly provided a plethora of practical and scholarly means of enabling delegates to learn, reflect, share and build capacity.

Dr Kristine Mason O'Connor
SEDA Conference Committee

Alexandra Burslem OBE, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University, welcomes delegates to the 5th Annual SEDA Conference for Staff and Educational Developers.

The Aim Game

The following are taken from the web pages of various associations and organisations concerned with learning and teaching in higher education. But whose is whose? Can you identify the group by their aims and missions?

As a slight help the possibilities are listed on page 22. Good luck - the solution will appear in issue 2.2

1) Our mission is to:
♦ support quality with diversity in Higher Education by anticipating, articulating and answering the needs of its members.

2) We aim to:
♦ enhance the status of teaching, improve the experience of learning and support innovation in higher education.
♦ keep the formulation of standards of practice where they belong - in the hands of the practitioners.

3) We are:
♦ the lead UK agency providing strategic advice, specialist resources and professional services for the development of people working in higher education.

4) We aim to:
♦ improve the quality of higher education through the encouragement of debate and publication on issues of policy, on the organisation and management of higher education institutions, and on the curriculum, teaching and learning methods.

5) We aim to:
♦ promote good practice in the use and development of learning technologies in higher and further education.
♦ facilitate interchange between practitioners, developers, researchers and policy makers in education and industry.
♦ represent the membership in areas of policy such as infrastructure provision and resource allocation.

6) We are committed to:
♦ the promotion of excellence in higher education management through a professional development scheme, an annual conference, specific training events and publications.
♦ the advancement of a code of professional standards through a framework of values and principles which members are expected to follow.
♦ the provision of information networks through newsletters, electronic media and personal networking.
♦ the development of international links with appropriate organisations and with individuals.
♦ the enhancement of the profile of the profession nationally and internationally.

7) Our mission is to:
♦ be the essential voice of UK universities by promoting and supporting their work.

8) We:
♦ encourage and promote quality teaching and learning in higher education.
♦ provide forums for the exchange of information on higher education.
♦ develop and publish material for higher education.

9) Our strategic aims are to:
♦ be the primary information and advice resource for all academic and related staff in HE on generic and subject specific learning and teaching practices.
♦ promote, transfer and broker good learning and teaching practices and innovations, including practices that meet the diverse learning needs of the HE student population, to effect change in UK HE and FE institutions.
♦ develop and maintain a coherent and integrated network of effectively managed centres with a clear remit and national identity.

10) We aim to:
♦ increase the emphasis on teaching in post-secondary education.
♦ encourage and facilitate the improvement of teaching and learning and the scholarship of teaching in post-secondary education.
♦ provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information on post-secondary teaching and learning.
♦ contribute to the professional development of members.
♦ disseminate scholarship on teaching, learning, instructional development, and policy in post-secondary education.
♦ recognise and reward outstanding contributions to teaching excellence and educational leadership in post-secondary education.

11) Our mission is to:
♦ promote public confidence that quality of provision and standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced.

12) We aim to:
♦ provide support and services for its members through publications, conferences, consulting and networking.
♦ offer services and resources to others interested in faculty development.
♦ fulfil an advocacy role, nationally, seeking to inform and persuade educational leaders of the value of faculty, instructional, and organisational development in institutions of higher education.

13) Our mission is to:
♦ help all members, whether staff and educational developers, teachers or learning support staff, to enhance the quality of their capabilities in supporting learning.
♦ develop and sustain links with other organisations committed to enhancing the quality of learning in higher education.
♦ seek to influence the national debate on matters within our remit.

All the above information was taken from the relevant websites on 1st February 2001 and, to SEDA's knowledge, is correct at the time of going to print.

SEDA Publications Strategy

The SEDA Publications Committee is seeking your support as we look further to improve the service we are offering to the Educational Development - and wider Academic - community. As well as continuing to publish our Induction Packs for new Academics, and our series of edited publications on major, topical themes, we have now decided to strengthen our provision with three new series of publications: a new series aimed directly at supporting Educational Developers; an Induction Series for the huge numbers of Graduate students who are now teaching; and a series looking in a very practical way at quality and policy issues in HE. Like the papers in the current Induction Packs for new Academics, these papers will all be short, readable and focused and will be available both singly and in packs. We are intending to launch the new series for Educational Developers at the SEDA conference this Autumn.

Here, as well as announcing this development, we are also calling for expressions of interest and offers of support from our colleagues. We already have clear ideas about what titles we ought to be publishing, but suggestions and feedback would also be very welcome. What would be your top five titles under each of the proposed themes? We would be delighted to hear from colleagues with an interest in proposing papers; in writing and/or editing; and in wishing to work with the Publications Committee. I'm sure that all the current Committee members would echo my feeling that working in the Committee has been a very interesting, enjoyable and most of all developmental learning experience.

For further details, or to express an interest in taking part in this project, please contact either the SEDA Office or myself,

Neill Thew
Chair, SEDA Publications
n.d.thew@sussex.ac.uk

Forthcoming title in the SEDA / Kogan Page Series of Books

Educational Development Through Information and Communications Technologies

Stephen Fallows and Rakesh Bhanot (eds)

This volume grew from ideas discussed at the SEDA conference in Coventry (April 2000) at which several contributors interpreted the conference theme "Reaching Out" to encompass the use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

The editors have developed the conference discussions to provide a wider international consideration of the educational development and staff development issues that arise as universities around the world take on board various ICT methodologies in course delivery, student assessment and student / tutor interaction.

The book will NOT be a specialist text for ICT professionals - rather it is intended to bring the issues to a wider higher education readership who wish to become more informed in this rapidly developing area. The contributions are drawn from a mix of ICT specialists, subject teachers and education / staff developers with the aim of providing a well rounded examination of the issues.

Contributions will be from Australia, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Due for publication: August / September 2001

SEDA / Kogan Page books are available from bookshops or from Kogan Page direct. For more information see the Kogan Page website at:

http://www.kogan-page.co.uk/

and click on 'education'. Then select 'further education and higher education', followed by 'SEDA Series'.

Reviews

Books

A Handbook of Techniques for Formative Evaluation: mapping the students' learning experience
Judith George and John Cowan
Kogan Page (1999) £16.99
ISBN 0 749430 63 X

This is a particularly useful and timely book which provides support for curriculum developers working in Higher Education. It provides a clear rationale for the use of formative evaluation within the curriculum design process and it also offers practical solutions, many of which will be of particular interest to colleagues involved in the ongoing review process.

George and Cowan begin by arguing that all curriculum development requires a systematic approach. They describe a logical model of curriculum development in which regular opportunities are provided for formative evaluation and which recognises the centrality of aims / learning outcomes. They use a case study based on their own experiences to contextualise helpfully the ideas outlined. They contrast this with the iterative 'traditional' model of curriculum development which they argue is essentially linear, being driven by sequence and chronology and by teacher input rather than student output .

The mid-section of the book is concerned with designing or selecting an appropriate method for formative evaluation and then implementing it. Their fundamental concern is that the purpose of the evaluation itself should remain uppermost in the mind of the curriculum developer. Having decided upon the formative evaluation method or methods, an eclectic approach to data gathering is advocated including logs, diaries, journals interviews and questionnaires. Curriculum developers are cautioned to be aware of their own biases and values within the formative evaluation design process by providing appropriate external criteria against which the evaluation can be measured.

A later chapter in the book addresses the issue of the formative evaluation of assessment. The authors provide a helpful matrix of questions and sub-questions to investigate this aspect of the curriculum. The activities outlined for curriculum developers, if undertaken in full as outlined, could be quite time consuming. I believe that many curriculum

developers and tutors would certainly regard the activities as being worthwhile, but largely aspirational rather than practical due to the demands upon their time. They could, however, form a very useful element of curriculum action research on the part of the curriculum developer. On this topic, a relatively short succeeding chapter outlines the potential of action research to bring about enhanced student learning. George and Cowan suggest that this can be achieved through the collective involvement of students and teachers in purposeful structured reflection and that this can have long term benefits for both parties.

In summary, at around 130 pages, this is a short but particularly helpful book for curriculum developers wishing to formatively evaluate their practice. Those wishing to delve deeper into the processes of evaluation which are beyond the scope of this book might refer to other recent texts on evaluation such as Clarke, (1999), Robson (2000), or Shaw (1999).

Nick Sutcliffe
Leeds Metropolitan University

References:

Clarke, A (1999) **Evaluation Research: an introduction to principles methods and practice**. London: Sage

Robson, C (2000) **Small-Scale Evaluation**. London: Sage

Shaw, IF (1999) **Qualitative Evaluation**. London: Sage

Designing Courses for Higher Education
Susan Toohey
Open University Press (1999) £19.99
ISBN 0 335200 49 4

Why is it that although teachers have a clear philosophy about student learning, supported by extensive research, they allow their work to be driven by resource issues? Here is a book to help the teacher working against all odds in HE. The book suggests that if we only design our courses better, then we are more likely to give students a fighting chance to develop the 'deep' learning that the teacher philosophy deems to represent a desirable level of learning.

This book contains unsentimental comments about how courses come into being, and everyone embarking on course design can benefit from reading Chapter 2. In it the author focuses on the student, provides a useful framework for course design and makes entirely realistic suggestions about who should be involved in the process. The refreshing change here is that the classroom level is given consideration alongside philosophy; often the location of learning is an aspect that can be ignored until students become a three dimensional reality!

The philosophical position adopted by a course may be a sticking point over time, as courses may be taught by people with differing perspectives. The descriptions of the different approaches are nevertheless a useful set of starting points for course team debate or staff development, as are the 'academics goals for graduates' in Chapter 4.

The book contains a good deal of standard information but is sprinkled liberally with diamonds. Chapter 7 is an absolute must. It revisits in detail the agenda of the whole book, which is that learning should be focused on what students need rather than on what courses have to offer.

I thought this book would be boring. It's far from it! Dip and enjoy!

Mary Hayes
Nottingham Trent University

Good Practice in Postgraduate Supervision
Edited by Gina Wisker and Nick Sutcliffe
SEDA Paper 106, Staff and Development
Association (1999) £14.00
ISBN 1 902435 03 6

I must be almost the ideal audience for this compendium: novice PhD supervisor and an educational developer. In these capacities, I found much to interest me personally and to pass on to others. The contributions are wide-ranging. There is an autobiographical account of being a PhD student; arguments about the meaning of quality in relation to postgraduate study and for a changing conception of PhD supervision based on scholarship; a useful overview of the changing nature of the PhD in the UK; and several accounts of models, practices, cases and procedures in a number of institutions. The latter cover supervisions for science students and students for whom English is a second language, supervising at a distance, professional doctorates, and training for supervisors.

I found a number of contributions informative, but space requires I make a selection for comment. For me, Andresen's contribution is a highlight. A convincing and stimulating argument is made for regeneration of the academy and that the PhD supervisors should be the vanguard. Revitalisation will come from acknowledging supervision as pedagogy open to critical discourse. At a time, when the 'scholarship of teaching' is becoming the most recent clarion call, this piece includes a succinct and practicable analysis of the meaning of 'scholarship'. Exley and O'Malley chart recent changes in the funding and management of PhDs, nationally and institutionally, and spell out the implications for practices and procedures. I found this extremely useful. Inevitably, not all of the items will be of interest and use to everyone, and the quality of contributions is variable. Unfortunately, too, the copy-editing is poor.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, this is a timely book. The introduction points out that numbers of postgraduate students have increased rapidly and continue to do so; while in his contribution Beasley calculates that time for training in research supervisions amounts to one day in contrast to the 'tens of hours' for other types of teaching. Despite new requirements to make some account of supervision, it is still a mysterious and secretive process. It is time to debate alternative configurations of 'good practice' and this selection makes a substantial contribution.

Monica McLean
Keele University

Key Skills Online - a Key Skills resource for HE

Sue Drew, Learning and Teaching Institute, Sheffield Hallam University

Key skills are becoming a more central issue for Universities. Subject benchmarking, subject / academic review, QAA qualification descriptors, programme specifications, the focus on standards, progress files, the likely effects of Curriculum 2000 - all are encouraging courses and institutions to provide for the development of Key Skills in their students. A Project funded under the TLTP3 programme of HEFCE has attempted to provide resources to help HE institutions in this area.

The 'Key to Key Skills' Project ran from March 1998 to May 2000 and has now received continuation funding for a further year from HEFCE. As part of this continuation project it has 14 partners from across the UK, ranging from Northern Ireland to the South West of England, with 'old' and 'new' universities, colleges of HE and colleges with both FE and HE students.

Forthcoming SEDA Conferences and Events

SEDA and SEDA Scotland Conference
"Challenge to Change"
2-3 April 2001
Kelvin Conference Centre, Glasgow

SEDA One Day Event
Management and Staff Development within "Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education" (HEFCE 00/56)
24 April 2001
National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

SEDA Conference
A Summer School for Educational Developers
18 -20 July 2001
Lancaster House Hotel, Lancaster

6th Annual SEDA Conference
Developing the Developers
19 - 21 November 2001
Manchester Conference Centre

More details on all the above to follow as they become available

The original project had three partners. Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) had developed and used a web based system called 'Skills for Learning' over a 5 year period. Through the Project a technical team made this system portable to Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) and this experience was used to produce technical guidance notes. The system was then implemented at the University of Plymouth, and the field trials there led to further refinement of the system and of the guidance notes.

The Project aimed to produce a system which was as flexible as possible, allowing institutions to insert their own Key Skills material - to cater for the 'not invented here' syndrome and for the needs of different institutional contexts. If we were to create such a flexible system it would inevitably not be a ready-made system to be simply plugged in, but would need, rather, to be constructed to some extent - like flat pack furniture. It consists of separate pages, slotted into an overall system. It is therefore easy to amend and to add to, whilst providing support in one place and allowing easy navigation between topics. It is customisable (eg the colour can be changed) and there are templates to make inserting content easy.

The system and its attendant materials (guidance notes, user notes, evaluative information, case studies etc) have been available free to download from the Project web site since June 2000, and by October 2000 over 50 institutions had downloaded it. The Project aimed to enable continuation of the Project after funding ceased by making the download as simple as possible and by providing all the necessary notes. In trial installations at two further sites it took 20 minutes for one to install it and 3 hours for the other, and that it was a relatively simple task for a 'computer person'. However the best laid plans ...

In fact sometimes very experienced installers skip the notes and therefore create problems by seeing it as more complex than it is, local systems and browser set ups vary, some installers are inexperienced, and technical people like to explore technical issues with other technical people. We had underestimated people's need for human interaction and reassurance, and have found there is a need for installation support, albeit usually for simple queries, by phone or email. Plans to charge for telephone support have been abandoned as it seems churlish and expensive to charge institutions for brief phone calls, and it has been decided to fund ongoing technical sup-

port from the proceeds of the sales of the SHU content (see below).
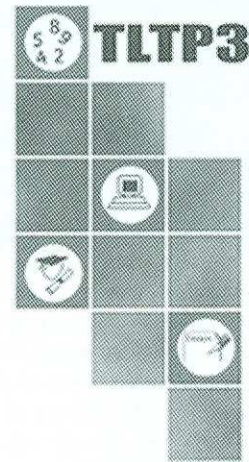
We also overestimated the desire by institutions to insert material which they had developed themselves, rather than material developed by others. Alongside the Project SHU itself funded the development of the complete contents for its own system, calling it 'Key Skills Online'. These contents were partly based on the widely sold 'Student Skills Guide' by Sue Drew and Rosie Bingham (1997) and 'Student IT Skills' by Mark Pettigrew and David Elliott (1999), but they were also extensive additions, for example a complete additional Working with Numbers theme and many additional topics in the other themes. Developing such contents from scratch takes a considerable amount of time, and during the Project it became clear that institutions might find it hard to do so and would welcome having the SHU contents rather than needing to develop their own - although they did wish to be able to also add in their own material.

The Project developed an innovative continuation strategy by being in partnership with a commercial publisher, Gower Publishing. Gower are publishing 'Key Skills Online' as a CD of templates which can be inserted into the system which is available free to UK HE. Since August 2000 this has been bought by 27 UK institutions and one in the Irish Republic. Royalties from sales of the contents go to LMU and SHU and are being used to fund the ongoing technical support referred to above.

The contents consist of self assessments (Skill Checks) which help students identify their skills and the topics within the system which they need. The user can either start by using a

Skill Check, or can go direct to a topic (eg. Essay Writing) or can browse (eg. in the Writing Skills theme). There are 10 themes with on-screen guidance containing interactions and also lists of published resources. As part of the free download for UK HE there are templates enabling institutions to add location information to the details of published resources or to add or delete resources, and to insert new content or to amend content.

The continuation project members are exploring issues relating to the infrastructure needed within their institutions to install and implement the system, issues related to integrating the system into the curriculum and to customising it using the various tools provided free by the Project. At the end of the continuation project we hope to produce further guidance for institutions about implementing the system.

The original Project fully evaluated the system and its installation in the 3 partner institutions. The SHU content is based on the evaluation findings, and the system itself was amended (for example a search engine was added). Above all, the evaluation showed that usage was not determined so much by age or gender of student or by subject discipline but by model of usage. Essentially 4 were identified. Optional - students are told the system is there and given a handout about it; student encountering this model do not use the system. Directed - students are shown the system in class and are directed to a specific part of it to help them with a task; more students use it and go on to use it again. Integrated - students are shown the system in class and are set an assessed task requiring use of the system; all students use it and many go on to use it again. 'Integrated' is further divided into partially integrated, where the focus is on one or two topics only, and fully integrated where a whole unit or module uses the system and many of the topics. A major task therefore for those involved in the continuation project is to encourage effective use.

UK HE can download the system and see information about the Project from the Project web site at www.shu.ac.uk/keytokey where they will also find information about purchasing the content on a license basis from Gower. The system is not free to HE institutions outside the UK nor to institutions in the UK not funded by HEFCE (eg FE colleges without HE students) but they can purchase it, again details are on the Project web site.

References

Drew, S and Bingham, R (1997) **The Student Skills Guide**. Aldershot: Gower

Pettigrew, M and Elliott, D (1999) **Student IT Skills**. Aldershot: Gower

The All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE)

AISHE is a professional society whose goal is to bring together and support those people who are concerned to advance higher education in the island of Ireland. It will promote the professional recognition and enhancement of teaching and learning in Higher Education through a wide range of activities including seminars, conferences, publications, and provision of online community forums and services.

The initiative to establish AISHE originated in the Colloquium on University Teaching and Learning: Policy and Practice held at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, 1st - 2nd December 1998, under the auspices of the Irish University Training Network. AISHE was formally established at a meeting hosted at University College Cork on 14th March 2000 where the AISHE Constitution was formally adopted and the first Executive Committee was elected.

AISHE was formally launched on 30th November 2000 by Dr Seamus Smyth, President of NUI Maynooth. Other speakers included Sandra Griffiths of the University of Ulster and Rakesh Bhanot representing SEDA.

It is hoped that a joint conference, to be held in Ireland, will be organised by SEDA and AISHE to take place in spring 2002.

More information about AISHE can be found on their website at:

http://www.aishe.org/

Notice of the 2nd Annual General Meeting of the Staff and Educational Development Association Ltd
2nd April 2001, Glasgow

This year's SEDA AGM will be held at the SEDA & SEDA Scotland Conference taking place in Glasgow from 2nd - 3rd April 2001.

It will mark the end of the term of office for the current SEDA Co-Chairs, Professor Liz Beaty FSEDA and Ranald Macdonald FSEDA, although they will both continue to be members of the SEDA Executive Committee as Co-Vice Chairs for a further year.

Other elections due to take place at the meeting will be for:

- SEDA Accreditation Co-ordinator
- SEDA Publications Co-ordinator
- SEDA Conference and Events Co-ordinator
- Plus four posts without portfolio.

Co-ordinator posts are for a period of three years (until the AGM 2004) and those without portfolio are for two (until the AGM 2003).

Nomination forms have been circulated to the SEDA membership, but should you require additional copies please contact the SEDA Office (tel: 0121 415 6801; e-mail: office@seda.demon.co.uk).

The meeting will also mark the beginning of the term of office of the new SEDA Co-Chairs, who are Hazel Fullerton FSEDA and Barry Jackson.

Details of the election results will be published in a future issue of Educational Developments.

A ramble around Subject Centre websites - implications for educational development

Barry Jackson and Allan Davies

Introduction

When the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) was announced in 1999, educational developers were amongst those most pleased to see the increased emphasis on support being given to the enhancement of learning and teaching. The TQEF comprises a number of initiatives, one of which was a strand which focused on development of teaching through the subject disciplines. As a consequence 24 Subject Centres (SCs) were identified. Following a bidding process, the SCs were set up in 2000. All SCs promised to develop a website as part of their enhancement activity, and setting this up was one of the first tasks many of them tackled. Since the SCs have been active for some months, and their websites are now all online, we thought that this would be an appropriate time to have a look at the websites to see how the SC network is progressing.

This exercise grew initially out of curiosity about what the SCs were doing. As educational developers we did not feel sufficiently well-informed - SCs after all have been established to communicate directly with subject providers, and not educational developers. From this initial curiosity grew a more focused purpose. We wanted particularly to make some inferences about the ways in which the Centres have set about supporting educational development within subjects, and their potential relationship with a broader educational development constituency. The impact of the Learning and Teaching Subject Network is of obvious interest to educational developers. It is important for us to know whether, and how, our clients in various subjects in our institutions are supported by the LTSN. There has been recent discussion, in SEDA and the Heads of Educational Development Group for example, about the ways in which the newly formed SCs will relate to, and make use of existing expertise in the enhancement of learning and teaching, and how they will add value to the work of enhancement which up to now has been largely carried forward by educational developers.

We chose to survey the Centres through looking at the web-sites, because this is the most generally accessible evidence of SC activity. Individual SCs may be engaged in frequent and rich communication with subject staff across all institutions, but educational development staff in the same universities might have no means of knowing this. Our experience so far is that of the subject staff with whom we work, few have any contact with, or even awareness of their relevant Centre. We therefore thought that it would be useful to look at all 24 websites in some detail. We wanted especially to see:

- how the structures and functions of the SC websites were developing to support the enhancement of teaching by relevant subject staff

- how well these structures and functions might relate to the generic educational development constituency who will be supporting the same subject teachers in their own institutions

- to what extent the websites meet the established general aims set for the SCs.

The review of sites is ongoing - although all sites have been visited by both authors, there are still untravelled links in some sites which we need to look at. And the sites themselves, being relatively young, are still developing. We have also found (as usual) that there is more to be discussed than we anticipated. This article then is only an initial overview and will be followed by a more in-depth review in a later issue, to which we will invite readers to contribute (see below). What follows then, is a brief description of the context in which our survey is undertaken, followed by our first impressions.

The context

In order to set the context for our review we visited the LTSN web-site to remind ourselves of the strategic aims of the LTSN along with its core activities, which are:

- Setting up, supporting and developing learning and teaching **networks**

- Promoting and sharing **good practice** in learning teaching and assessment

- **Brokering the transfer of knowledge** between users, experts developers and innovators.

The Subject Centres' core activities are also identified on this site:

1. collation of information on all aspects of teaching learning and assessment
2. provision of staff development opportunities
3. advisory service
4. support through networks and contacts
5. liaison with professional bodies and subject associations
6. advice on C&IT in learning and teaching
7. awareness of current and future developments in learning and teaching
8. collaboration with cognate subject centres to support interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary activity
9. collaboration with Generic Centre.

Our review therefore, whilst recognising the short developmental period of the web-sites, is set in this context - we believe it is important to look at the sites in relation to the explicit aims of the SCs. We also felt it was appropriate to observe the extent to which the SCs were forging strong and active links with:

- existing subject networks such as subject associations,

- existing initiatives such as the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning

- existing organisations such as SEDA and the Institute of Learning and Teaching

- existing sources of pedagogical expertise

since these might be useful indicators of the ways in which the aims are being addressed by the SCs.

The centres are intended to be **client-focused**, having a **high visibility** and providing a **pro-active and responsive service** to the needs of their community. They are also clearly subject-focused - a matter which has emerged as more significant as our review has progressed.

Interestingly, LTSN is founded on the view that 'the subject-focus recognises that for many staff in HE it is at this level where most networking and exchange of learning, teaching and assessment practice takes place'. If this is the case, then one might expect to identify subject associations and networks as a principal site for this interaction. An element of the likely success of the SCs therefore

seems to rest on the degree to which they can exploit existing subject associations or create meaningful new ones, focused on learning and teaching. To achieve this, the partnerships of institutions, which was HEFCE's preferred option in setting up the SCs, may have to work hard to transform institutionally based Centres into virtual centres which can be owned by the subject community. Some SCs have particular groupings of subjects, which do not readily reflect the existing communities as sensed by their members - these will have a particularly difficult task.

It should be recognised that none of the SCs have been in operation for very long, and that few of the websites are complete. Indeed some sites helpfully indicate that they are under construction - while others, which have little more than a home page, give no indication that work is in progress. Over the period of review (up to 22.1.01) one site had no functional links beyond a single link on the home page, while others have dozens of active links. Nonetheless it is possible to gain from the sites some understanding of how the SCs are going about achieving their aims. Variability is the key impression - variability in the kinds of functions which the sites are being used for, and variability in the way in which they present those functions. A certain amount of diversity is presumably encouraged by the LTSN, to reflect the diversity of subjects. However, there may be some indications that encouraging diversity carries with it the danger of encouraging variability of **quality**, and this would be of concern to anyone who wishes to see enhancement of teaching and learning.

First impressions

The first impression of any site is at the home page, and there is considerable variability of approach apparent in the homepages of the SC sites. The first question to be asked is: who are the sites intended for? We visited them trying to imagine them from the point of view of a teacher seeking advice, who might be imagined to be a principal intended user. But there are other questions:

- How do the home pages present themselves to their potential users in order to encourage engagement?

- What is the relationship of the home page structure to the core activities of the SC?

- How well are these activities provided for by the site?

- To what extent do the sites present the SC as part of the LTSN?

An initial impression is that there is considerable variability in the way in which the SCs present themselves in relation to the LTSN itself. This manifests itself very clearly in the visual appearance of the site. All sites make use of the LTSN honeycomb symbol and logotype, but to differing degrees. Some (such as Art, Design and Communication) have opted for a distinctive appearance which pays little attention to the image of LTSN, others (eg Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism) have very little individual visual identity.

The way in which the SC has conceived itself in relation to LTSN is also visible in its URL. Some SCs (eg http://bio.ltsn.ac.uk, or http://www.ukcle.ac.uk) have clearly set up domain names which make no reference to the institution, others have not seen this as important (eg. http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/hrm/ltsn or http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ltsn/english). Whilst this might be thought to be an insignificant issue, it is an indicator of the priorities addressed by the various SCs in setting up. From the point of view of accessing SC websites, a common format for URL might be an advantage. At present the probability of being able to guess the URL of any of them is very low - you have to look them up, or have them bookmarked. Even where no part of the domain name refers to an HEI there is no regularity. Business Management and Accountancy, Economics and Psychology have a logical, common format (http://www.business.ltsn.ac.uk and http://www.economics.ltsn.ac.uk etc). Others don't - too bad if you can't remember that performing arts is called Palatine and is hosted at Lancs, or that Education is served by Escalate (neither of these mention ltsn at all in their url!). The address for engineering is http://www.ltsneng.ac.uk, for Medicine Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine it is simply http://www.ltsn-01.ac.uk. Not important, you might say, but such apparently insignificant decisions do contribute to how client-focused the SCs are seen to be. And client-focus is one of the features the SCs are intended to display.

Some SCs (eg Biosciences or History, Classics & Archaeology) have obviously gone to some length on their site to present themselves to their subject constituency as independent of particular institutions, and thereby open it up to greater ownership by the sector. Others, in contrast, have given great prominence to the partner institutions of the SC, thus giving the message that it is the involvement of these partners which gives credibility to the SC (eg English). It is interesting to note how few of these front-page references to the partners refer to bodies other than the HEIs concerned - Social Work and Social Policy is one of the few exceptions. Where space is used to give information simply about university partners, it does look rather like an inappropriate piece of institutional PR, and is unlikely to assist the Centre in developing the

necessary sense of ownership across the subject constituency.

There is a high degree of variability in other aspects of the visual design of the home page. Most sites have single-screen home pages, in some cases designed to present a simple welcome screen (eg Health Sciences & Practices or Sociology, Anthropology & Politics). Others (eg History, Classics & Archaeology or Philosophy & Religious Studies) choose to have several scrollable pages as their first page, providing lots of information up front. The Engineering site is an interesting example of this - a busy but intelligent front page that draws users deeper into the site with questions like: "what are the three most important assessment issues in Engineering - find out more here". We have assumed that there is considerable design development work planned for some sites, given their relative newness, and therefore those developing later have the advantage of looking at some of the well developed sites to reflect on what constitutes good practice in site design. The same may be said of the functions provided by different sites. We would like to think that all SCs are engaged in a fairly regular survey of what the other SC sites are providing, and the ways in which they provide - there is much to be shared and learnt. This may be something which the LTSN has plans for, and the ways in which the SCs will be encouraged to work together may emerge as the new Generic Centre gears up; nonetheless, we think it would benefit SCs in many ways to take such initiatives. We should state that the variation which we describe here is not simply variation in the aesthetic quality of appearance, but more importantly, variation in the usability of the site, as expressed in its visual form. A web page which is more than one screen long, may compromise readability; a site which has a strongly coloured background may not assist the visually impaired. We noticed that one SC had taken note of accessibility issues (Philosophy and Religious Studies) and achieved Bobby approval for their site - this good practice could be shared. (Bobby is a service that will check any website submitted to it for accessibility issues, and give approval if the site is adequately designed with accessibility in mind - http://www.cast.org/bobby/).

Beyond the site-design issues which could have general impact for any person there are those questions which are significant for the actual proposed users of the site. While none of the sites are explicit about their 'readers' it can be inferred that teachers of the relevant subjects are expected to visit, and interact in the website. (On this point, it is interesting to note that one SC has included a visit counter on their front page. However, when we visited we were visitors 99 and 100 - there is obviously some way to go in drawing in the expected constituency).

Different sites take different approaches to providing access to the content at deeper levels of the site. In some cases there are questionable judgements about what information is important - information on jobs available in the subject sector for example, or information about research conferences unrelated to learning and teaching. Sadly, few SCs seem to have thought about structuring their sites from the point of view of the likely user need, rather than their own, producer-determined, perspective. Thus it is common to find 'useful resources' less obviously and easily accessed than information about the organisers or news about visits to departments. Sites which indicate the date of the most recent updating are to be commended, except, as in one case, where the date is 6 November of last year ...

Behind the front pages

Of course the effectiveness of the sites cannot be judged simply, or even mostly, by the matters we have discussed so far. What is of greater interest is the value of the resource that the site offers behind the front page. Most SCs provide a common range of functions, accessible, with greater or lesser ease, from the front page, and some provide very specific, useful functions not offered by others. We intend to write further of these later. In the meantime we invite readers of Educational Developments to let us have their own views of the websites, to point us to good practices (of which we already have a note of

several), and to comment on their implications for educational development. Some of the questions we'll be trying to answer are:

- how many sites have active links to FDTL projects? Or have they clearly taken over such projects when they have come to an end?

- how many sites refer to SEDA, its publications and events?

- which SCs are surveying their membership to find out what the main learning and assessment issues are in the subject and is there evidence of this on their sites?

- which sites add value to their online resources by telling the user something about the resource before they go there?

- which sites make it easy to find the mission and original bid of the SC?

- how clear are the links between Subject Centres which might be thought to have some common interests (eg Medicine, Dentistry & Veterinary Medicine links with Health Sciences & Practices)

- which sites rely on CTI resources and which have moved beyond them?

- how are SCs making use of existing generic resources about learning and teaching which will be relevant to their subject?

- how are the SCs going about identifying, sharing and encouraging good practice?

- how long does it take to get to something useful on group assessment in my discipline?

- SCs offer advice - how do they use their websites to help this, and what are the sources of the advice they give?

- what can educational developers do to help SCs? And what can SCs do to help educational development?

Barry Jackson is Director for Learning Development at Middlesex University. Allan Davies is Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art & Design, at the London Institute, Wimbledon School of Art and the Royal College of Art (which is not an LTSN Subject Centre!).

We are offering these up as the initial questions. Are they the ones you have been asking of these websites, or can you suggest others? And what answers have you found so far? We will be writing the follow-up after Easter, so we would welcome any comments by then.

We can be contacted at:

b.jackson@mdx.ac.uk *and*
a.a.davies@linst.ac.uk

The Aim Game

These are the possible associations / organisations whose aims appear on page 16:

Body: **Statement No:**

ALT - Association for Learning Technology   _____
AUA - Association of University Administrators   _____
HERDSA - Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia   _____
HESDA - Higher Education Staff Development Agency   _____
ILT - Institute for Learning and Teaching   _____
LTSN - Learning and Teaching Support Network   _____
POD - Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, USA   _____
QAA - Quality Assurance Agency   _____
SCoP - Standing Conference of Principals   _____
SEDA - Staff and Educational Development Association   _____
SRHE - Society for Research in Higher Education   _____
STLHE - Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Canada   _____
UniversitiesUK (formerly CVCP)   _____

The solution will appear in issue 2.2

Effective collaboration between a Staff Development Unit and a subject network (the Mathwise User Group)

Rachel Hudson FSEDA, Academic Development Co-ordinator, University of Bath

Changing patterns in school education mean that new arrivals at university are becoming less and less prepared for the challenges and rigours of the mathematical units in their degree programmes. The effects of these changes are being felt right across the spectrum of science and engineering. A computer package, Mathwise, has been developed, originally with HEFCE Teaching and Learning Technology Programme funding, for use in the teaching of mathematics in higher education. The package is suitable for students of mathematics, engineering and sciences. A User Group has formed to support the promotion and further development of the package. The User Group works closely with the new LTSN Maths, Stats & OR Network.

I work for the Staff Development Unit at the University of Bath. In May 2000 I received an email circular from the Mathwise User Group describing the computer assisted learning package. The email stated, "we would like to build upon our links with staff developers and work with them to host workshops at their University. The format of the workshop can then be tailored to the needs of the institution or linked into an event promoting the use of technology in teaching."

Shortly after this email, I was involved in considering a number of bids to the University of Bath's Teaching Development Fund. Several of these bids (notably from the Departments of Chemical Engineering, Physics and Mathematical Sciences) concerned the development of first year undergraduate students' mathematical skills. An outcome of these bids was the purchase of the Mathwise software for the student network. Remembering the email offer, I agreed to organise a staff development event related to the package.

Once I had contacted the Mathwise User Group I was informed by their Chair that Dr Mike Barry from the University of Bristol would liaise with me on behalf of the User Group. To begin with, I just wanted the User Group to come in and do it all. As a non-mathematician I had no idea what was wanted, and did not feel confident in devising any kind of staff development programme. Instead of organising a standard event, Mike Barry acted as facilitator, asking pertinent questions and suggesting ideas for a programme tailored to the needs of staff from a wide range of departments at the University

of Bath. Whilst the programme included external contributions, Mike also suggested ways in which I might approach staff at Bath to make contributions. In this way, we were able to design a workshop of much greater relevance to staff at Bath than I could possibly have managed on my own.

I thoroughly recommend similar collaborations between subject networks and University staff developers. Particularly when the workshop topic is of cross-disciplinary interest, and would be difficult to organise by a straight collaboration between the network and a single department. The collaboration takes advantage of the host Unit's administrative systems for the organisation and publicity of staff development workshop and builds on internal knowledge of the members of staff in the various Departments who might be interested (in my case, I knew this via the Teaching Development bids). This helps to ensure that the practical arrangements run smoothly. The key to the success of the collaboration is the role played by the subject network contact. Although the contact provides the discipline expertise, he or she needs to facilitate rather than control the design of the workshop, so that ownership is retained by the host institution. This can be quite challenging, when the staff developer has absolutely no knowledge of mathematics.

The one day seminar proved a terrific cross-disciplinary event, attended by 16 lecturers from eight Departments at the University of Bath (Mathematical Sciences, Chemistry, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Biology and Biochemistry, Mechanical Engineering, Sports and Exercise Science and Physics). Mike Barry facilitated the event, which included contributions from four lecturers at Bath and from lecturers at Brunel University and the Universities of Keele and Sunderland.

Feedback was positive. All questionnaire respondents agreed that the event was relevant to their needs (average response 4.4, where 5 indicated most agreement, and 1 the least). Comments about the most useful aspect of the course included, 'how to integrate into a teaching environment' and 'the talks and "tea" chats'. Comments on whether the whole group was involved and able to contribute included: 'there was a particularly positive integration of presenters and audience'.

Further information about Mathwise and the Mathwise User Group may be found at the website:

http://www.bham.ac.uk/mathwise

SEDA's Response to the RAE Consultation (Report 00/37)

Prepared by Ranald Macdonald, SEDA Co-Chair, in consultation with members

Introduction

The response of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) to the HEFCE's review of research policy and funding reflects the Association's mission and aims, not least "to encourage and support the development and the application of greater understanding of the teaching process and the nature of student learning".

There is acknowledged need for high quality research into effective and efficient learning and teaching in higher education. (We will call this "pedagogical research" in this response.)

Our main contention is that:

- There should be a more central role in Higher Education for pedagogical, including action, research at both a discipline and cross-disciplinary or generic level and the Funding Councils should recognise and support this through the creation of an additional Unit of Assessment .
- There is a link between good research and good teaching and the two are distinguished by the nature of the audience rather than the individuals involved and through the centrality of 'learning' and scholarship. The Funding Councils should promote this relationship through more 'joined up' policy initiatives.
- The definition of scholarship being used is narrow and trivial and should be broadened in the light of work following that of Boyer (1990).

Earlier responses

In our response to the earlier consultation, RAE 2/97, SEDA made five recommendations, namely:

"The next RAE (and/or the Funding Councils as relevant) should:

- establish a Unit of Assessment (UoA) for research into higher education generally;
- enable staff not in departments of Education to submit the record of their research into higher education - including research into aspects of learning and teaching in their discipline. This research should contribute fully and equitably to RAE-accountable research either in the UoA for HE research or in the UoAs of

individual subjects without penalty to those institutions and their departments;
- support through the RAE and the Funding Councils' funding algorithms the research component of work leading to the production of quality teaching materials, including textbooks and software, and to the dissemination of good teaching practice;
- ensure that the procedures and funding generally for RAE-rated research in no way undermine teaching quality itself.
- (Funding Councils) dedicate an initiative for specified higher education research, integral to an overall integrated learning and teaching strategy."

Further, in our response to 'Research Assessment Exercise in 2001' (RAE 1/98) we reiterated these statements above and made the following points:

- We would wish to see nominees to each panel or sub-panel with expertise in research into teaching and learning in that discipline.
- We would favour 2 UoAs for Education, including one for research in Higher Education, including research that is theoretical and research that explicitly relates to policy and practice. This practical orientation should be a clear criterion for evaluating research quality in this UoA.
- Research should be interpreted in as wide a sense as possible to include both pure and applied research.
- We favour a clearer articulation of the importance of research into teaching and learning in higher education and funding arrangements that reflect this importance.

The current consultation

Given the statement in SEDA's core mission that we "will seek to influence the national debate on matters within its remit", our response is limited to the relationship between teaching and research and the role of scholarship. Further, we continue to argue strongly for greater recognition of pedagogical research within disciplines and more generally in higher education (Yorke, 2000).

SEDA's view is that there should be a recognition of the relationship between research and teaching at Funding Council, institutional, discipline and individual level. Whilst there is less strong evidence of the link be-

tween 'good' research and 'good' teaching, the complex relationship that does exists takes place through elements which are common to both processes, such as 'scholarship' and the 'act of learning' (Elton, in Press; Jenkins, 2000; Southampton Institute, 2000). Where is this relationship to be discussed and promoted? (Healey, 2000)

Rowland (2000a) argues the case strongly for the relationship between research and teaching and argues (2000b) that separating them into separate functions is anti-intellectual and 'impoverishes higher education by failing to value the integrating quest for knowledge". Statements in the RAE review that, whilst there are synergies between research and teaching, they need to be considered and funded separately, are in danger of permitting this impoverishment and further separation (McNay, 1998). The research into the relationship between teaching and research clearly shows the two activities need to be planned for at the level of the individual, unit/department and institution if the synergies are to be maximised, and not left to chance (Jenkins et al, 1998).

There therefore need to be specific policies in the RAE to promote the relationship between teaching and research and greater symbiosis between the Funding Councils' Research and Learning and Teaching Committees.

Response to recommendations

To respond specifically to a number of the recommendations:

Recommendation 7: We recommend that there should be no more, but not significantly fewer, than the present number of units of assessment (see paragraphs 101-5).

Question 7a: Do you agree that there should be no more than the current number of units of assessment?

Question 7b: Do you agree that there should not be significantly fewer than the current number of units of assessment?

Whilst we agree in principle with the recommendation as more units would be likely to lead to less funding for each unit, we would like to see either a separate unit for pedagogical research or for higher education in general. In addition, we would expect existing units to be much more explicit in their coverage of pedagogical research within individual subjects.

As in SEDA's previous responses we would also call for a recognition of the research component of work leading to the produc-

tion of high quality learning materials, including textbooks and software. There is a very real fear and danger that the RAE has already undermined the willingness of academics (particularly in the highly rated research departments) to be involved in producing such materials (Jenkins, 1995).

Fewer units might well see a 'crowding out' of pedagogical research and so we would support the maintenance of the current number of units of assessment, with the addition of one for higher education. However, the way that disciplinary panels treat subject based pedagogical research should be immediately investigated and the necessary revisions made to a subsequent RAE.

> Recommendation 21: Scholarship is an activity which is distinct from research and should be required of all academics who teach (see paragraphs 155-158 and 168-170).

> Question 21a: Do you agree that scholarship is an activity that can be distinguished from research?

> Question 21b: Do you agree that scholarship should be required of all academics who teach?

The report is working from a definition of scholarship which, in the light of increased interest both in the UK and elsewhere in Boyer's notions of scholarship, is increasingly difficult to sustain. 'Being alert to developments in their subject' (para 169) and interpreting this to inform their teaching is too narrow a definition. Similarly, the report's definition of research as 'creating new knowledge themselves' owes more to a scientific, rather than social science, analysis of practice in higher education. Healey (2000), reviewing the literature on the relationship between research and teaching, including that of Brew and Boud (1995) and Elton (in press), notes that the critical variable in this relationship is 'learning' and that the complementary nature of the two need to be maximised through appropriate planning.

Boyer's four scholarships (1990) are all important, though there may be 'seasonal' variations in the emphasis given to each in a person's career. For this reason it is invidious to place individuals in the position of having to decide whether their main focus is on the scholarship of discovery, integration, application or teaching, when the balance of activity may change over time.

There is a real danger of 'scholarship' becoming a meaningless term as it increasingly becomes a buzzword in universities around the world (Andresen, 2000). If this is to be avoided then scholarly teaching has to be more than keeping up to date and one definition might include " ... critical reflectivity as a habit of mind, scrutiny by peers as a modus operandi, and inquiry as a motivation" (Andresen, 2000, p138).

> Recommendation 22: The HEFCE should make it clear that its funds for teaching include an element intended to enable staff to engage in scholarship (see paragraphs 155-158 and 168-170).

> Question 22: Do you agree that funds for teaching are the right source of support for scholarship?

No. As argued above, this ignores the accepted synergy between teaching and research and the role of scholarship in this relationship. A more widely defined 'scholarship' should be recognised, and consequently funded, as an integral part of both teaching and research. To subsume it within teaching will be to perpetuate, rather than narrow, the divide between teaching and research as complementary activities. The danger is that, by dividing the activities or functions, it ignores the reality of the integrated nature of the work of an academic.

Further, the review sees scholarship as flowing from research rather than the other way round. Worries have been expressed as much about the possibility of research which is not underpinned by scholarship as by teaching not similarly underpinned. Scholarship underpins both, and so cannot only be funded from within the teaching budget. This leads to the further question of where the funding comes from to support scholarship such as that involved in textbook production.

The issue of scholarship therefore needs to be considered jointly by the Research and Learning and Teaching Committees of the Funding Councils. There is probably also a role here for the LTSN's Generic Learning and Teaching Centre, the Institute for Learning and Teaching, and professional organisations such as SEDA and the SRHE.

Conclusion

SEDA contends that:

1. The policy relationship between teaching and research should be strengthened rather than, as may result from conclusions in the consultation, decoupled. The Funding Councils, together with the other relevant agencies and organisations, should continue to emphasise the relationship and the benefits for both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching.

2. Scholarship should be seen in a wider context as one of the mechanisms by which the synergies between research and teaching are achieved. Consequently, it would be inappropriate for funding to be located with one activity, given the danger that it no longer be associated with the other.

3. Pedagogical research in higher education should be recognised as being a valuable and legitimate field and recognised with its own Unit of Assessment, as well as through clearer guidelines for consideration in individual subject areas.

4. The link between research activities and the preparation of high quality learning materials should be recognised and strengthened.

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The SEDA Fellowship Schemes
Professional Accreditation for Staff and Educational Developers in Higher Education

Developing and accrediting the developers

The SEDA Fellowship is a professional accreditation scheme for those who see themselves primarily or wholly as staff and educational developers in higher education.

The Fellowship is intended for those who support lecturers, support staff and their institutions to enhance the quality of the student learning experience, through the professional development of staff who work in higher education.

A Fellowship is awarded on the basis of a reflective portfolio and an interview. In these candidates show how their work embodies the values, demonstrates the core objectives and shows expertise in a number of specialist topics of staff and educational development.

After registering on the scheme, candidates select a mentor from the list of Fellowship holders provided. They then work to build their portfolio which is then assessed by two further Fellowship holders.

Associate or Fellowship?

The Fellowship involves demonstrating competence for each of the objectives and values. Your staff and educational development work may be within a university or in a funded educational development project or in a learning and teaching subject centre.

The Associate Fellowship involves demonstrating competence in a subset of the Fellowship objectives, alongside all of the values. This qualification is particularly suitable for those who work part-time, who are new to staff and educational development, or whose job now includes a development role.

Up-date

By December 2000, 32 full and 2 associate Fellowships had been awarded.

Most recently, two certificates were presented to successful candidates at the annual SEDA conference which took place in Manchester in November 2000. Mike Cook, who is the Academic Staff Development Manager at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, received his full Fellowship. Mike's specialist topics were *Developing an Institutional Framework for Rewarding Excellence in Teaching; Fostering Independence in*

Learning; the Management of Appraisal Within Higher Education and *the Development of Learning/Transferable Skills Within Higher Education.* And Dr Helen King (pictured below), who is the Manager of the LTSN Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences based at the University of Plymouth, was awarded her Associate Fellowship with her specialist topic being *Dissemination.*
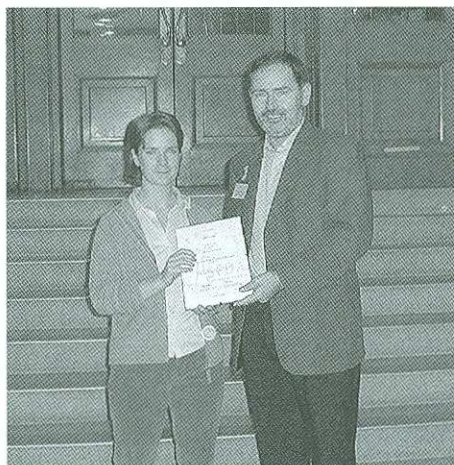
Helen King is presented with her SEDA Associate Fellowship by SEDA's Co-chair, Ranald Macdonald FSEDA, at the annual SEDA conference (Nov 2000)

Continuing professional development

Once an individual has been awarded their SEDA Fellowship or Associate Fellowship they are:

- Required to provide an annual report on their continuing professional delevopment (CPD).

- Invited to an annual CPD event with other Fellowship holders, to review and plan their ongoing development.

- Invited to act as an assessor for upcoming FSEDA candidates (for which they are paid £50 per interview).

- Asked to provide their details to be added to the list of available mentors for FSEDA candidates.

SEDA Fellowship holders are also eligible for membership of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT).

The rationale for these arrangements is:

- To encourage Fellowship holders to continue to maintain the professional standards expected of members of the scheme.

- To support Fellowship holders in continuing to develop their professional practice.

These arrangements are currently under review by the SEDA Fellowships Committee and current SEDA Fellowship holders. SEDA is also working with the ILT with the expectation that individuals who are both SEDA Fellowship holders and ILT members are not required to engage in two separate CPD activities each year.

More information

Further information, including details of the schemes' underpinning values and core objectives can be found on the SEDA website at:

http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/fellow.html

The website also gives information on the procedures for registering on the scheme and the fees involved. Alternatively, a full information pack can be obtained from the SEDA Office (contact details can be found on the back page).

Becoming A SEDA Fellowship Holder
Birmingham, 7th June 2001

This workshop is designed for people who are considering, or may have newly registered for, the SEDA Fellowship or Associate Fellowship. Participants will explore the aims and processes of the Fellowship, in particular the issues around the compilation of a portfolio, the kinds of evidence which can be used and how to present it, the time commitment, different approaches, the role of the mentor, and assessment.

The twin aims overall are to enable new registrants to "get going" and to enable others to decide if the Fellowship would meet their needs. There will also be the opportunity to meet colleagues who are current Fellowship holders.

For more information, please contact the SEDA Office (details back page).

Dialogues

Humour

Thanks for showing me the feedback from the workshop you ran yesterday. Pretty positive. One question?

Yes?

A few of them mentioned humour, in different ways. "Enjoyed the dry humour". "Great fun - the time flew by." Oh yes -"Inappropriate facetiousness".

I bet I know who that was. You can't please all of the people ...

So you told them lots of jokes.

No! I don't know any jokes! Well, I know two. And, come to think of it, one of them isn't funny.

Tell me the one that is funny?

Maybe later, if there's space.

So, no jokes in the workshop. Then why the laughter?

That's interesting. I suppose - from seeing the funny in the serious. From putting ideas together in odd ways. A couple from lecturers talking about strange things that had happened in their classes - laughter from surprise, laughter to show empathy. And once when I was going on about the difficulty of teaching under conditions of uncertainty and the coffee arrived, on time, to the second.

So you're happy when people laugh in your workshop.

Yes! I'm delighted! Usually, anyway. I want my workshops to be happy places ...

But no jokes ...

Hang on. I want the workshops to be happy, funny, serious, challenging, sometimes awkward and even uncomfortable ...

Funny and serious? Some contradiction, surely?

No. No twice, actually. First no - because I want the workshops to be funny at one time, serious at another, and all the other qualities I mentioned at different times. "Incorporating appropriate variety", perhaps. Variety to stave off boredom. Variety just because different moods are appropriate at different stages of a workshop.

Fair enough. And the second no?

Second, there's no contradiction between funny and serious. Serious isn't the opposite, or even the absence, of funny. Teaching and learning are fundamentally serious affairs - the quest to find and make meaning and understanding out of complexity and confusion. We're all being very serious when staff in a workshop are working to make sense of a difficult concept about student learning, struggling to reconcile some apparent contradiction between different people's experiences, working to solve a teaching problem. But - this may take me a minute or two -

Fine, I'm still with you.

Difficulty or contradiction can also be funny. A contradiction is an unexpected or problematic juxtaposition of two or more facts or ideas. Problems or contradictions can set up tensions in us, just as jokes do. Resolution can provoke a release, whether the resolution is of a problem or a joke. Laughter is one way we express the release of tension. We can be delighted at the resolution - for a joke, at the punch-line - because the resolution can be pleasing, elegant, unexpected - funny.

Always funny?

Oh no. If the resolution is unexpected and persuasive and paradigm-threatening it can lead to confusion, even to anger, rather than to laughter.

Anger? That makes teaching sound a dangerous business!

Oh, it is. Anyway. I think I'm starting to see one important difference between the use, in teaching or staff development, of jokes and of the kind of humour I'm talking about. In a workshop I'm much happier if the participants, get to the resolution, to the punch-line, before me.

'The' resolution? The one right answer? I've heard you be very critical about the use of teaching questions with one right answer ...

Indeed. I stand corrected, and embarrassed. I like it even better if **they** get to a resolution I hadn't thought of. One more quick idea ...

Leave room for the joke ...

... I'll try. At the risk of sounding even more pompous than usual, humour can be a creative force. 'Making and working with unexpected juxtapositions' is description of creativity as well as a description of humour.

I also think humour helps groups to get along - helps them to bond.

I agree. I think humour can make a group feel safer ...

... Make it safe to explore dangerous and difficult ideas ...

... As long as the humour is in the ideas and the discourse, and is not mocking or unkind. Maybe the intent of the humour - to create, to test, to explore, to make sense, not simply to get a laugh - is the key to using humour well.

Room for that joke?

Just. A new member of staff is being shown round the college by her mentor. In the senior common room, lecturers sat in their appointed seats drinking tea and reading newspapers. (It's a very old joke.) One of the lecturers clears his throat and says "seventeen". His colleagues laugh, and resume their reading. After a pause another says "nine". The others nod and smile, one of them groans.

Seeing the confusion on her mentee's face, the mentor explains: "They used to tell each other jokes. After a few years, they all knew them all; but they still enjoyed them. So, to save time, they gave each joke a number."
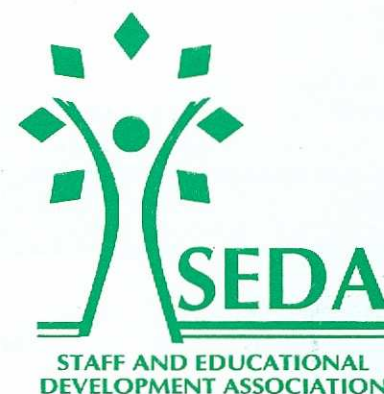
At that moment another lecturer stands up, gazes round his colleagues, and says, with some trepidation, "three hundred and nine." After a short confused pause, everyone in the room, save the new member of staff, bursts into prolonged laugher. The mentor sees fresh confusion on her mentee's face. Still laughing hard, she manages to explain "We haven't heard that one before!"

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