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From Peer Observation of Teaching to Review of Professional Practice (RPP): a model for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

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Background

Until recent refurbishment, 'The Crit Room' at the University of Gloucestershire was a hall encircled by rows of steeply raked hard seats. In the late nineteenth century teacher training students would herd pupils from the local elementary school into the Crit Room. In this amphitheatre they proceeded to teach the class observed by their peers in the surrounding seats. Afterwards their performance would be criticised with a view to enlightenment and future improvement.

A hundred years later, along with many HEIs, the institution introduced peer observation of higher education teaching. It began with paired observations and, subsequent to evaluation a few years later, was revised to take place in the context of small 'teaching development groups' – the institution-wide Teaching Development Group Scheme. In 2000 the Academic Board commissioned a scholarship of learning and teaching (SoLT) research project to evaluate the TDG scheme (McNamee *et al.,* 2002-3). The evaluation included a questionnaire of all academic staff and a series of focus groups. While the evaluation highlighted a number of positive features of the TDG scheme it identified key issues that needed to be addressed. For some staff it was clear they could put on a performance if required, others felt they were being 'policed', and some considered the observations to be a ritual without clearly beneficial outcomes. In response to the SoLT evaluation the Academic Board set up a working party to make proposals for a new scheme. The working party established a set of principles and an outline process which moved away from peer 'observation' to peer 'review' in recognition of the range of teaching activities that promote and support student learning.

These proposals, approved by the Academic Board, were subsequently taken forward by a cross-university implementation group chaired by one of the authors (Kristine Mason O'Connor). The group consisted of the seven School Teaching and Learning Coordinators who included National Teaching Fellows, University Teaching Fellows, the PGCHE Course Leader, the Chair of the Scholarship of

Learning and Teaching Group and Centre for Learning and Teaching staff. External consultancy was provided by the other author (David Gosling) who joined the group.

Key ideas

Our thinking about RPP developed in response to the input from the implementation group, with its emphasis on the process being democratic and inclusive. We began to focus on the three key changes of emphasis which differentiate RPP from the previous TDG Scheme.

The first related to the nature of the review process and the need to move away from a perceived 'policing' element in the previously existing peer observation of teaching scheme to a scheme that was inclusive and democratic.

Secondly, we considered that the new scheme needed to bring into the review the range of professional activity relating to the support of student learning and not merely the teaching that could be observed.

Thirdly, we wanted to move away from the implicit deficit model of identifying professional development 'needs' and move towards a more proactive conception of professional development activity based on the model of the scholarship of teaching. We will now discuss each of these key areas of our thinking.

Collaborative peer review

We drew on some earlier work by one the authors (Gosling, 2005) to distinguish between different types of peer review deployed in higher education. Academics are familiar with the idea of peer review within both the context of research, where publications and applications for research funding are typically peer-reviewed, and in quality assurance processes where peer panels undertake subject review, institutional audits and validations. In these examples, the role of the peers is to make a judgement about whether a paper is published, whether a grant is awarded, or whether a course is validated. 'Peers' in these cases have authority vested in them to make these judgements. It is clearly a relationship in which power is unequally distributed.

The development model focuses on how staff can be 'developed' through the peer review process, using an 'expert', such as an educational developer, or mentor, whose role is to enhance the quality of teaching by providing appropriate feedback and training. It is mostly a one-way process of the more experienced member of staff providing feedback to the less experienced teacher.

The collaborative model, by contrast, is based on equality between the peers and reciprocity of benefit. The collaborative model requires that both those doing the reviewing and those being reviewed are equally committed to learning from the process. It is a mutual process because both expect to gain from it. The collaborative model is non-judgmental, where the purpose is to promote dialogue about teaching in order to raise the status of teaching and improve teaching quality.

The Gloucestershire scheme is clearly aiming to be a collaborative peer review model based on equality between reviewers and reviewed. RPP emphasises that the reviewer is not giving feedback, since feedback implicitly involves making judgements about the quality of the teaching observed or the learning materials examined. Nor is the reviewer claiming specialist expertise that places him or her in position to 'develop' the teacher being observed. Rather they meet as colleagues, both with experience of teaching, in a context aimed at assisting all staff to reflect on and develop their teaching through a structured context.

RPP is not about 'observing teaching'

In common with many institutions, Gloucestershire's policy on teaching, learning and assessment emphasizes student-centred learning. Within a student-centred model of teaching and learning the role of the teacher is as a facilitator and supporter of learning. The range of activities that the teacher must be concerned with include determining the learning outcomes, designing the learning activities, writing learning materials and designing assessment tasks. It is a severe limitation

on the value of peer observation of teaching that it focuses on teaching activities that are observable.

We decided early on that RPP would not be limited in this way. The review process, in RPP, can focus on any aspect of designing, delivering and assessing learning. The review processes can consider any of the following, for example:

- documents relating to course design, or assessment of student learning
- curriculum issues - for example embedding skills in the curriculum
- learning materials designed by the staff member and being used, or intended to be used, with students either on-line or as hard copy
- teaching skills - for example teaching, demonstrating, tutoring, lecturing, supervising - within the context of the relevant course documentation (may include observation of teaching)
- interactions between staff members - for example a team meeting discussing teaching, or design of, a new course, or revisions to an existing course.

Professional development activity

RPP is designed to encourage staff to undertake further professional activity relating to the focus of the review, but we believe it is vital that we move away from the language of development 'needs' since this implies a deficiency in the teacher. Rather, teaching staff are encouraged to think of themselves as professional agents exploring professional issues and problems with their peers. The outcome of RPP will, therefore, include a wide range of scholarly activities relating to teaching and learning, including further investigation of teaching, and not just traditionally conceived staff development.

Locus of control

RPP attempts to vest control in the staff member being reviewed over key aspects of the process. This is because we recognise that:

'Any successful change management process aimed at improving teaching and learning depends ultimately on the willingness of the people involved to change.'
(D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005, p.57)

Firstly, they decide the focus for the review. Secondly, the staff member will largely determine the way in which the review is conducted, and, thirdly, the nature of the outcomes. We believe that staff will engage with the process much more wholeheartedly if they are convinced that they have the opportunity to identify what will be of most use to them in their professional practice.

Process

RPP normally involves three meetings between the staff member and the peer reviewer. The first meeting is where the focus of the review is decided. The second is the main review meeting and the third is an opportunity to discuss what happens next and to draft the Reflective Statement. The way in which staff pairs are brought together will depend on local decisions within Faculties, but normally we

anticipate that the staff member will be free to choose their reviewer, subject to that person being available (all reviewers must have undertaken the reviewer training). It is recommended that the reviewer should not be the staff member's line manager (directly or indirectly) and that reviewers should not be someone who is within the immediate teaching team of the staff member. This encourages cross-team discussion which introduces new ideas into the teaching team in any particular subject area. The reviewer's role is to help the staff member to identify a useful focus for the review, by asking appropriate questions, such as:

- What aspects of student learning would be most interesting for you to explore?
- Is there an aspect of your teaching or assessment practice you would like to change?
- Are there aspects of your teaching or assessment practice that you would like to investigate, or reflect on, further? (Note: this might be to understand better why something works well as much as something that is not working successfully.)
- What are your goals in teaching your subject? Are they being achieved?

Issues arising from student evaluations, external examiner reports, or from the staff member's Professional Development Group may also produce useful ideas for the review.

A good review will be one which stimulates the staff member to think about aspects of their teaching, or of student learning, to which they had not previously given serious consideration. It will help the staff member to think about ways in which further enquiry into his/her teaching would be beneficial to both him/her and the students.

Although the reviewer has undergone RPP training s/he is not presumed to be an expert who will necessarily know the answers to questions raised in the review. As a collaborative peer process, the presumption is that whilst colleagues will share their experience and knowledge, new questions will be identified that will require further investigation.

Outcomes

If RPP is to contribute successfully to continuing professional development, it is important to avoid the perception that there are simplistic certainties and easy solutions to teaching problems any more than there are to research problems. Academics need to be able to construct their own frameworks for exploring professional knowledge:

'1) knowledge always undergoes construction and transformation
2) learning is an integral aspect of activity in and with the world at all times
3) ''What is learned'' is always complexly problematic
4) acquisition of knowledge is not a simple matter of taking in knowledge but requires reconceptualisation.'
(Brown 2001: 9)

The principal outcome of RPP is therefore intended to be on-going professional activity which will explore the

complex issues relating to teaching discussed in the review. The formal requirement of the scheme is the production of the 'Reflective Statement' which is in three parts: Part A which is confidential between the pair engaged in the review, Part B which links RPP to the University staff development and review process (appraisal), and Part C which is optional and goes into the public domain.

Part A is the 'Personal Statement' to be written solely by the staff member and to be used in a way that is determined by him/her to explore their own constructions of the knowledge acquired through RPP. This will require critical reflection on the context of the review, the factors which were relevant and contributory to the chosen focus of the review, and a reflection on what happened in the review – what has been learned and the anticipated professional development outcomes. The Personal Statement could become part of a Teaching Portfolio, to inform an application for registered practitioner status with the Higher Education Academy, or solely for personal clarification.

Part B will provide details of how the review was conducted and what professional activities are proposed to be undertaken as a result of the review process. Part B will be made available to the person conducting the staff member's Staff Development Review (appraisal) and is intended to contribute to discussion about his or her CPD.

Part C is optional and is where the outcomes of the RPP are shared publicly to advance debate about teaching. Where possible the reviewer and staff member are encouraged to highlight examples of good practice identified in the review for wider dissemination to the Department, Faculty or University. There is also the opportunity to identify issues that need to be considered by the Department, Faculty or University.

By placing discussions of teaching in the public domain, it is anticipated that there will be shared knowledge and an exchange of ideas about developments in teaching. Part C will offer the opportunity for staff members to post ideas, suggestions, interesting thoughts, innovations, what works and what doesn't, onto their Faculty or University Learning and Teaching website.

Information for Contributors

The Editorial Committee of *Educational Developments* welcomes contributions on any aspect of staff and educational development likely to be of interest to readers.

Submission of an article to *Educational Developments* implies that it has not been published elsewhere and that it is not currently being considered by any other publisher or editor.

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Concluding comment

RPP was introduced in the second semester of 2005-2006. Briefing letters were sent to all academic staff and managers, the reviewer training programme continues and the guidelines have been published. Initial feedback suggests that the scheme is being welcomed as a focus for 'excellent collaborative/stimulating discussion' and a 'non-threatening chance to put students' learning environment first'.

We do not perceive RPP as a 'catch-all' process for advancing teaching and learning in the institution; as Becher (1996) pointed out, professional learning occurs in a range of forms. However, we do regard RPP as being innovative and having the capacity for promoting deep and reflective thinking and learning among colleagues. Over a century away from the Victorian enthusiasm for scientific positivism which produced 'The Crit Room' it is surely time to move on from peer observation of teaching.

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Developing and accrediting the developers: SEDA's plans for national provision

Peter Kahn FSEDA, University of Manchester

Introduction

We have seen a vast expansion in recent years for the field of staff and educational development within the UK and elsewhere. At the same time it is increasingly becoming apparent that the extent of the provision of professional development for staff involved in this field, for those who facilitate and lead educational change, remains relatively limited. The sheer number of development posts now in place means, for instance, that staff are often appointed without professional qualifications in leading change. Furthermore, a recent survey (Outram, 2006), conducted by the Higher Education Academy with SEDA's support, indicated that there would seem to be a *prima facie* case for some forms of provision to support the development of such staff. Some 64% of the 83 respondents indicated that they or their staff would be interested in gaining a professional qualification in staff and educational development in higher education.

SEDA has, of course, long been at the forefront of professional development for those who facilitate educational change, with its Fellowship and Associate Fellowship Schemes, and with its texts (such as Kahn and Baume, 2003), annual Summer School and other events for developers (e.g. SEDA's annual November conference). The schemes provide a national system of professional recognition for staff and educational developers, with around 50 highly experienced developers now accredited.

More recently SEDA has introduced two new awards within its Professional Development Framework (PDF), entitled *Staff and Educational Development* and *Leading Staff and Educational Development*, as Baume and Pilkington (2005) earlier reported in this magazine (see also the PDF section of the SEDA website).

Institutions are thus encouraged by SEDA to run programmes for developers and to seek recognition for these programmes under SEDA-PDF. Two such programmes are already under way, at the University of Central Lancashire and at the University of Manchester.

SEDA, however, recognises that not every institution will be in a position to run such a programme. It has therefore decided itself to offer two national programmes, one leading to each of these awards. The pilot work in support of this national provision is to be supported by the Higher Education Academy, which has agreed to fund £20,000 towards the collaborative project. This project is also to involve links with the Staff Development Forum. This article outlines the plans for this national provision, and the associated changes in the Fellowships Schemes.

Staff and Educational Development

The first of these two national programmes, *Staff and Educational Development*, will first be offered to the sector on a pilot basis beginning Autumn 2006[1]. The starting date(s) and costs for the programme will have been announced by the time you are reading this. (To book a place on either the First or Second stages of the programme see the details at the end of this article.)

The programme will be suitable for people working in a range of contexts, including institutional educational development units, Faculties/Schools/Departments, Higher Education Academy Subject Centres, CETLs, and so on. It concentrates on supporting developers to carry out cycles of development activity (goal setting, planning, facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and following up) within

their particular organisational and strategic contexts. As with all programmes recognised under SEDA-PDF awards, attention is also paid to professional values and to personal development. The programme as a whole is supported by reference to the course text: *A Guide to Staff and Educational Development* (Kahn and Baume 2003). The structure of the two-stage programme is outlined in Table 1.

Stage 1
Summer School for New Educational   Developers
(3 day residential course)

Introduction to Staff and Educational Development
(6 week online course)

Stage 2
Portfolio and assessment module
(3 months supported learning)

Table 1 Overall structure of the programme Staff and Educational Development

The programme normally begins with a participant taking either the *SEDA Summer School for New Developers* or the new online course *Introduction to Staff and Educational Development*. We may outline each of the elements of the programme as follows:

First Stage

- *SEDA Summer School for New Educational Developers*

  This annual three-day residential course is designed to provide an introduction to staff and educational development. The course is highly participative and practical. Participants develop and deepen skills and conceptual frameworks necessary to plan, run and evaluate successful educational development

activities and projects. Participants regularly value the opportunity to link up with other developers.

- *Introduction to Staff and Educational Development*

  This six-week online course has been designed as a counterpart to the Summer School. It is highly participative and is designed around frequent opportunities for you to practise and receive feedback on your developing skills. You will be supported through a series of scheduled activities by selected key readings from the course text, specially developed course resources, and experienced course tutors. You will need to set aside six hours per week in order to participate effectively in the course. The course has been developed for SEDA by the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development at Oxford Brookes University.

Second Stage

- *Portfolio and assessment module*

  The second stage of the programme comprises work towards an assessed portfolio, which provides evidence of achievement against the learning outcomes of the award. The portfolio is based around a case study that incorporates the cycle of staff and educational development, along with a role analysis, reflective review of professional practice and a series of formative tasks. Tutors and a group of peers support each other online through a carefully designed process over a period of three months.

Participants are welcome to take the Summer School or the online course without registering for the full programme; or to register for the full programme after completing Stage 1. Participants who have attended the SEDA Summer School on a previous occasion are welcome to progress straight to Stage 2. It will also be possible for suitably prepared individuals to progress directly to Stage 2, such as those who have already completed a similar course or who have sufficient experience within the field (usually at least two years), subject to the appropriate approval.

Leading Staff and Educational Development

The second of the two national programmes is planned for early 2007, and addresses the development of institutional strategy, setting the direction of development activity, and leading and assisting colleagues in carrying out development activity – all within their particular organisational and strategic contexts. Attention will again be paid to professional values and to personal development. Colleagues who are interested in contributing to the development of this programme are welcome to approach the author.

Changes to the Associate Fellowship scheme

The SEDA Fellowship schemes were originally intended as a means to recognise staff and educational developers, rather than as full developmental routes; although as Baume and Pilkington (2005) indicated, the process of analysing and reviewing one's own experience is profoundly developmental. Given, however, the changing national picture, it is evident that a more directly developmental route would be more appropriate for new developers in particular.

The SEDA Fellowships Committee has thus decided to close the existing route to the Associate Fellowship (AFSEDA) to new entrants from 1 November 2006[2]. Staff who secure either the SEDA-PDF award *Staff and Educational Development* or *Leading Staff and Educational Development,* through one of the two national programmes will be eligible to become Associate Fellowships holders, which will involve becoming an associate or full member of SEDA, and joining the annual continuing professional development process for the Fellowships scheme. The full Fellowship scheme (FSEDA) remains unchanged.

Conclusions

SEDA is committed to the professional development of staff in development roles within higher education. We believe that these new programmes and courses, and the changes to the Associate Fellowship scheme will open up further avenues for professional development, helping to bridge the current skills gap that is evident within the sector.

Notes

[1] Subject to this programme going through SEDA's own recognition process under PDF, this programme will lead to participants receiving the named award 'Staff and Educational Development' within PDF.

[2] Subject to the proposed programme 'Staff and Educational Development' going ahead during the autumn of 2006 as planned.

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Further information about SEDA-PDF and the Fellowship Schemes can be found on the SEDA website, http://www.seda.ac.uk.

Booking details: to book a place on the programme Staff and Educational Development as a whole, or on either the six-week online course or the three-day Summer School, please contact the SEDA office.

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Can you recognise a good facilitator when you see one?

Anne Lee, University of Surrey

Introduction

Facilitation skills are important both for educational developers and for the academic staff they work with. The growth of active learning methods, the demands for students to be critically reflective and the increasing number of adult learners all mean that many lecturers are now working with groups in a way that enables students to discover what they want to learn for themselves.

This article outlines four different ways of exploring facilitation skills: behaviourism, critical thinking, socio-psychological models and transformative approaches. Different academics and different disciplines may be attracted by different approaches. Those who are interested in numbers and incline more towards looking for 'hard evidence' may prefer the behavioural approach. Those who look towards logic and philosophical inquiry may prefer the critical thinking approach. Humanistic psychologists have nurtured the socio-psychological approaches and those interested in the emancipatory nature of knowledge may find the transformative approaches helpful.

What is facilitation?

The facilitator is the midwife in the learning process, and just as midwives have to be skilled at 'masterly inactivity' so the skilled facilitator needs to know when and how to intervene and when to remain silent.

The root of the word facilitator comes from the Latin *facilis* which means 'capable of being done'. Therefore the facilitator's role is to create the conditions under which a task may be effectively carried out. It is the opposite of 'to define', 'to limit' or 'to close down'.

The importance of who creates the knowledge is indicated in the diagram below. If the lecturer is coming from the left hand side of the diagram, they will be using a transmission skill base (demonstration, exposition, repetition, examination of knowledge retained and applied); if the lecturer is coming from the right hand side of the diagram they will be using a facilitative skill base (questioning, challenging, supporting, research supervision, co-operative inquiry).
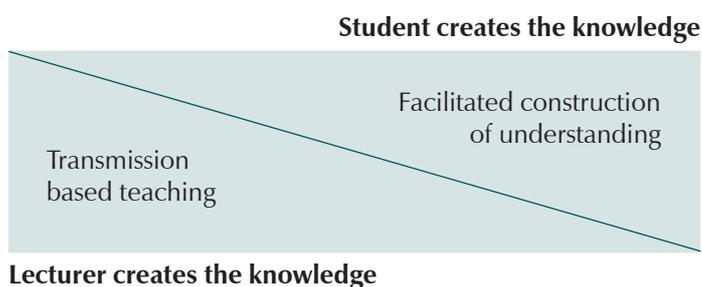
Student creates the knowledge

Facilitated construction of understanding

Transmission based teaching

Lecturer creates the knowledge

Diagram 1: the sliding scale in the transmission of knowledge

Four approaches to facilitation

The four approaches described below are not completely separate. There are aspects that 'leak' from one to another but I hope looking through different lenses enables further understanding.

1) Using behavioural analysis to identify facilitative skills
Behavioural analysis has permeated social psychology in many ways, and its approach is currently behind the use of 'cognitive behavioural therapy'.

Bales (1950) produced a powerful method for the study of interpersonal engagement in small groups. He used two researchers to analyse group interaction, and compared their results to increase rater accuracy. For our purpose the work he did in examining group leaders' interactions is the most relevant. He would measure two aspects: firstly, the portion of the total time that the leader spoke and secondly, the types of interaction that the leader made.

The table used to create interactive profiles is show below, and the columns on the right hand side are used to mark the number of interventions in each category by each member of the group.

		Facilitator	Student A	Student B	Student C etc.
1	**Shows solidarity** raises other's status, gives help, reward				
2	**Shows tension release**, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction				
3	**Agrees**, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies				
4	**Gives suggestion**, direction, implying autonomy for other				
5	**Gives opinion**, evaluation, analysis, expresses feeling, wish				
6	**Gives orientation**, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms				
7	**Asks for orientation**, information, repetition, confirmation				
8	**Asks for opinion**, evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling				
9	**Asks for suggestion**, direction, possible ways of action				
10	**Disagrees**, shows passive rejection, formality, withholds help				
11	**Shows tension**, asks for help, withdraws out of field				
12	**Shows antagonism**, deflates other's status, defends or asserts self				

*Diagram 2: Interaction Process Analysis (Bales 1950 p.19)*

This table could be adapted for academic use. The work of Bales provides a useful sample of a diagnostic tool, but we should not expect it to say anything about the quality of the interaction.

2) The critical thinking model of facilitation

The critical thinking model of facilitation looks to an external logical framework to solve a problem. It is a systems approach. Critical thinking can, if it chooses, avoid the affective completely. Three examples are described briefly: Coverdale, Halpern and Egan.

Coverdale's (Taylor, 1979) process relies on students learning by working together through a pre-set framework to solve an actual problem (real or contrived). It suggests that conflict can usually be resolved by going back to the agreed aims rather than involving any interpersonal analysis. The system and the process are the primary problem-solving tool.

The diagram below is the figure that small groups work to when they are being trained to apply Coverdale's sheme.

AIMS

↓

INFORMATION

↓

WHTBD(1)

↓

PLAN

↓

ACTION

↓
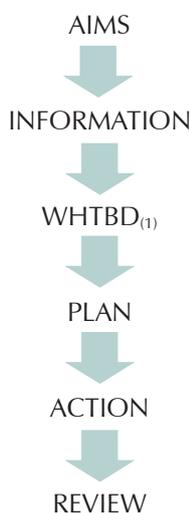
REVIEW

(1) *WHTBD is the mnemonic for 'what has to be done' and refers to the decision-making part of the process*
(Adapted from Taylor, 1979, p. 66)

Coverdale acknowledges the need for a continuing cycle of 'plan, action and review'.

Mosely *et al.* (2004) argued that Halpern was also the only theorist to deal adequately with what teachers and learners can do to improve the acquisition and retention of knowledge and skills for the post-16 years' student. Her framework included creating frameworks for developing:

- verbal reasoning skills
- argument analysis skills
- skills in thinking as hypothesis testing
- using likelihood and uncertainty
- decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Egan (2001) recognised this process but both extended it and added more about the affective domain. Although he intended his model to be used in one-to-one counselling scenarios, it is a broad model and suited to enquiry-based learning. His skilled-helper model works in three stages:

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III
What is going on?	*What solutions make sense for me?*	*How do I get what I need or want?*
STORY	POSSIBILITIES	POSSIBLE STRATEGIES
BLIND SPOTS	CHANGE AGENDA	BEST FIT
LEVERAGE	COMMITMENT	PLAN

→ **HOW DO I MAKE IT HAPPEN** →

As befits a counselling model, Egan highlights the importance of empathic relationships, and he suggests that the counsellor should tune in to the client and be tentative in sharing their understanding (Egan, p.114).

3) The psychosocial model of facilitation

This model assumes that where students come together voluntarily, learning will happen automatically if the relationships within the group are positive. The father of non-directive therapy, Rogers (1983), suggested that facilitators needed six role sets: they set the initial mood of the group, elicit and clarify individual and group purposes, regard themselves as a flexible resource, respond to both intellectual and emotional expressions from the group, share their personal feelings, and work to recognise and accept their own limitations.

There are many other models of group functioning and group relationships which focus on the interpersonal dynamics of an interactive group. One such model is called the FIRO-B (an abbreviation for Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation – Behaviour). This model was devised by Will Schultz (1984 and 2004).

The model identifies the key motivators that drive behaviour and help transform a disparate group of individuals into a cohesive productive group. The model helps individuals to discover how their needs for participation, influence and closeness can be contributing to or detracting from their success as a learning group.

Schultz argues that if the key concepts of inclusion, control and openness are not attended to, group members will stop learning because they will feel ignored, humiliated or rejected or fight for more recognition (inclusion), influence and attention to their (emotional) needs.

Another psycho-social model concentrates on looking at the intent behind the intervention. Heron (2001) has written at length about facilitation and the six categories of interventions that he has identified. Like Egan, he intended his six category intervention analysis to be used in one-to-one situations, but it is a rich analysis and much is transferable to identifying skills for group facilitation.

The core of his argument is that the skilled facilitator makes an intervention competently, free from any hidden agendas, and knows exactly what the intent is behind their intervention. Unskilled facilitators are at risk of making manipulative, perverted or degenerate interventions.

Making interventions purely, and constantly being aware of our intentions, is a lifelong quest. Heron tries to help us by dividing interventions into those that he calls 'facilitative' and 'authoritative'.

Facilitative interventions are those where the practitioner is seeking to enable the student to become more autonomous. Authoritative interventions are where the practitioner (facilitator) takes responsibility for and on behalf of the student. It is a positivist stance and is about raising consciousness, guiding behaviour and giving instructions.

It is easy to see from the above list that the skilled facilitator/ academic teacher will need to be psychologically self aware to understand their intentions when making any intervention. According to Heron, all categories are neutral in that if they are operated competently one is no better than another. His rider is that the facilitator must always be working from an underlying supportive attitude with the students.

Along with other writers, Heron (1999) has also looked at group processes. He identifies three models of facilitating: hierarchical, co-operative and autonomous. Within each model there are six different dimensions: planning, meaning-making, confronting, feeling, structuring and valuing.

For Heron some of the goals of facilitation are that the student will be able to direct and develop themselves, make informed judgements, be emotionally competent and self aware.

He identifies a hierarchy of facilitator 'states'. This is a way of identifying the level of 'presence' that the facilitator can portray. Levels 6 to 8 will be most meaningful for the learner and probably exhausting but rewarding for the facilitator:

1. Facilitator shows no interest or empathy in participant or subject matter – submerged in his/her own internal anxiety and concerns
2. Facilitator is fascinated by the subject, their own distress, or the participant, to the exclusion of all else
3. Facilitator's attention is distracted, goes off in directions irrelevant to work in hand
4. Facilitator displaces their own distress, confusion or conflict on to student by attacking, withdrawing, blaming, denial, complaining *etc.*
5. Control of attention energy: some attention for task in hand while remainder is buried, displaced, distracted *etc.*
6. Full attention directed to task in hand encompassing both own and participant's needs
7. Attention for work in context, encompassing past and future, but immersed fully in task in hand
8. Attention for work in context at the engaged participant level and also at the disidentified witness/monitoring level.

4) Facilitation to support a transformative agenda

There are various theories about how we evolve our values or ambitions. Maslow (1954) was one of the early writers to identify a goal of 'self actualisation'. Perry (1970) produced a chart of development which suggested that students move from a position of basic duality, through multiplicity to commitment. Hall (1994) has suggested that adults shift their

values as they grow from surviving, belonging, self-initiative to interdepending, and as they do that they move their leadership style through the following range: authoritarian, paternalist, managerial, facilitator, collaborator, and finally from servant to visionary.

Gregory takes our definition so far of facilitation (capable of being done) one stage further and argues that 'facilitation...means easing. "Easing"...helping learners get in touch with their internal capacities to learn and to make sense of their experiences' (Gregory, 2002, p. 81). This definition becomes particularly interesting when we examine the role of the facilitator in transformation.

Gregory (2002 and 2006) writes that facilitation is an ancient art: it had a place in spiritual and monastic tradition in the form of guides, spiritual masters and spiritual directors, where it still flourishes. She adds:

> *'Facilitation is the educational skill of accessing the phenomenological world of the individual, textured in social and cultural variables and helping the learner get in touch with their internal capacities to learn and to make sense of their experiences.'* (Gregory, 2006)

A transformative experience is one that enables the student to make a paradigm shift. It has similarities with the notion of threshold concepts (Meyer and Land 2002, Land *et al.* 2004, Meyer and Land 2005) in that once you have seen the world in this new way there is no way of going back. It is impossible then to perceive or believe that the world operates in the 'old way'.

The fact that Meyer and Land call this 'troublesome knowledge' gives some clue to the skills that the academic tutor/facilitator needs to support some students whilst they travel through this threshold. Some of the language that Meyer and Land use in their work is also redolent of spirituality; they refer to transfiguration and transformation as well as highlighting the metacognitive requirement for the learner to become self-regulated.

Senge (1990) takes these boundaries one stage further when describing this transformative learning process as 'metanoia', and links it to 'dia-logos':

> *'To grasp the meaning of metanoia is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning, for learning also involves a fundamental shift of mind.'* (p.10)

He links this ability to learn individually through groups to *dia-logos:*

> *'…to the Greeks dia-logos meant a free flowing of meaning through a group allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually.'* (p.10)

He also links this on to the concept of the learning organisation (and thereby makes explicit the premise that enabling staff to pursue the transformative agenda will enhance the employing organisation).

Enabling students to reframe their knowledge is a major task of the educator. Mezirow (1991) refers to this as 'a meaning perspective' (p. 46) and reminds us that the sociologist Erving

Goffman used the term 'frame' to refer to a shared definition of a situation that organises and governs social interaction.

Mezirow takes the question of how to understand knowledge firmly back to the philosopher. This would lead the facilitator to ask 'in how many ways can we disprove this' (after Popper), and 'can we make explicit what we are taking for granted' (looking for tacit knowledge, after Polyani):

> 'Popper and the transformation theorists agree that our efforts to understand the world generate the continuous testing of our most fundamental assumptions.' (p. 41)

Brooks studied 29 managers who were identified as critically reflective by their peers. She identified what she called first and second order thinking. First order thinking involved empathically taking another person's or group's perspective and listening to intuition. Second order thinking included perspective taking, monitoring thought processes, gathering information and using analytical processes (Brooks 1989, in Mezirow 1991, p. 181). Here we begin to see the skills required of the transformative facilitator: they are a mix of the psycho-social and critical thinking skills combined at a high level.

What skills are important for each type of facilitation?

The table below begins to identify the skills needed to become a practised facilitator in one of the four dimensions.

		Skills required
1	Behavioural:	creating an appropriate code and classifying interventions, giving appropriate feedback and applying the implications of that coding to their own performance as a facilitator
2	Critical thinking:	identifying appropriate critical thinking or problem solving processes and enabling the group or student to move along them
3	Psycho-social:	self awareness, ability to identify the psychological processes that mitigate both for and against healthy group working
4	Transformational:	an ability to encourage students to constantly reframe and question their understanding in order to broaden and deepen it, and to support students and learn from and with them

The combination of models is intended to help the academic to question the governing variables of facilitation. It aims to support what Argyris and Schon (1974) would call double-loop learning rather than single-loop learning (where the chosen values, plans and rules are operationalised rather than questioned). Or, as Elton (2000) put it more pithily, it aims to avoid the danger of 'doing the wrong things righter'.

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Educational Development - How do we know it's Working? How do we know how well *we* are Doing?

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'The primary purpose of evaluation is to contribute to the collective learning of all those involved in the programme or having a stake in it. … evaluation has thus to engage with the innovation process and to help shape its direction or trajectory.'
(Kelleher *et al.*, 1996, p. 5)

'There are reasons to think that the field of practice and research that is broadly referred to as educational development has achieved a new level of maturity and confidence. It is fast becoming both an established field of study and a recognised professional role in most institutions of higher education in the UK.'
(Gosling and D'Andrea, 2000(b))

The stature and status and, indeed, in some institutions, the very existence of educational development is occasionally somewhat buffeted by looming funding crises, influenced locally by managerial changes of direction, and affected sometimes quite oddly by the more distant national landscape of steers from HEFCE, the HEA, and currently the RAE. David Gosling and Vaneeta D'Andrea's certainty that professional recognition for educational development centres/units/institutes/ *etc.* and identifiable educational development practice had now reached maturity might seem a little shakier in the light of various upheavals and closures during 2004-06; but the fact that the HEA now intends to set up a network of our networks is further recognition of our local, national and international impact. Senior management threats to educational development centres might well arise from a short-sighted misperception that the work of educational developers in some way or other could really appear and

disappear with the vagaries of national funding agendas, as if one might suddenly do without a (even largely internet-based or virtual?) library. We will always morph, but I think we are now here to stay in some form or other. My own and others' various travels over the last few years (Australia, South Africa, Far East mostly, in my case) have yielded some, as yet under-researched, perceptions that, internationally, educational development centres rise and fall, grow and shrink, readjust to the changing needs of their client group perhaps or to the changing plans of the directorate.

They also change their focus. Current concerns with the scholarship of teaching, research evidence-enhanced learning and teaching, large-scale evaluative research into for example teaching quality or student retention, communities of practice, professionalisation and the professional standards framework, indicate something of the range of our work. It has moved from *only* the maverick marginality of nurturing individuals and their innovations of the early 1980s, right along the continuum to align itself with audit and quality assurance, senior management roles in the office of the pro-vice-chancellery, front line involvement or leadership, strategic policy decision-making and implementation. All this without losing the involvement with individuals. This paper seeks to review our remits and missions, dissimilar and various though they might be, and to look more specifically at ways in which we find out if and how we might have had an impact. This, of course, feeds into thought about why we might be worthy of committed funding when universities now have so many calls on

their money and are so audit conscious.

How do we evaluate our work and effectiveness?

Evaluation is increasingly important to our work, our status and our effectiveness. Barry Jackson comments on the growth in popularity of evidence-based, informed or supported policy and practice in education (Jackson, 2004) and from this we can see that building such an evidence base is necessary, and evaluation is one crucial element among several means to indicate our effectiveness. But it is also important because it provides us with evidence we may use in professional decision-making and change agency.

How do we evaluate and gather information and evidence upon which to base judgements? Perhaps we used to do this largely through the immediate responses of those attending workshops:

'It was a shame there was no decaffeinated coffee.'
'It was really good to talk with my colleagues – we don't get much time for this because of work pressures.'

It's wonderful to have such positive and discriminatory, carefully thought-through responses on the 'happy sheet' after an educational development event (I am being ironic, people need time to mingle and share) – but actually this tells us very little about the impact of our work. Such responses on the average evaluation 'happy sheet' just indicate that people have specific personal tastes (which we try to cater for but which might be out of our control) and that they do need the carved-out space to share their expertise and reflections with

each other and move forward. On second thoughts, then, these are not such frivolous comments, but they are not *enough* to evaluate the impact of our work.

What educational development does in one of its many manifestations is to provide such a space for professionals to share their experiences and expertise whether they are new to teaching and learning and so maybe finding their way, trying things out, moving beyond the ways in which *they* were taught (all of the above), or whether they are well-established, frequent attendees (early adopters, 'the usual suspects') and with a wealth of experience to share, or whether they are seeking something specific and otherwise rarely attend sessions.

Why might we want to evaluate what we do? And what is evaluation for?

Chelimsky (1997) identifies 'three conceptual frameworks of evaluation':

- Evaluation for accountability (e.g. measuring results or efficiency)
- Evaluation for development (e.g. providing evaluative help to strengthen institutions)
- Evaluation for knowledge (e.g. obtaining a deeper understanding in some specific area or policy field). (p. 100)

Colleagues at the Heads of Educational Development awayday in 2005 considered evaluation in all three of these areas or related to these three conceptual frameworks. Looking at the range of our work they identified individualised development achievements as being still very important goals for us in our work:

'Promotion of academics we've been "building up".' (Head of Ed. Development 1)

'Ask participants in development events what goals they want to achieve (and ask them if they succeeded!).' (Head 2)

In the light of the positioning, new centrality and constant change of Educational Development Units/ Centres, we can identify on the one hand the certainty that we are

essentially here to stay, but also that our position is volatile, based on an edgy realisation that the evidence of closure and realignment, funding insecurities and politics is an everyday reality. Anyone who has worked in any context with postmodernism will recognise this state of relativity, fragmentation, and uncertainty which produces in different measures, at different times, uneasy nihilism, a celebratory sense of strength, of having arrived (as one HEDG colleague put it, measures of effectiveness might well be 'Be the PVC!' (Head 3)), and an awareness of the constructedness of the whole situation. In the midst of all of this and the concomitant awareness that manipulation of paperwork, league tables, and the massaging of realities are a staple in higher education in the twenty-first century, how can any erstwhile radical, creative, imaginative, nurturing, politically adept agent for change (read educational developer) *know that* we are doing a good job? The scepticism which partners a radical philosophical stance is healthy – perhaps we won't be taken in by false realities and false securities, always edgy and always finding ways to prove what we intuitively know.

And what do we know? And how do we know it? I would argue we know to some extent intuitively when the range of our work is effective:

- It is well planned, well researched, well timed, well conducted, colleague and institution-centred, inspirational and solidly completed

- It enacts well-rounded educational development strategies in action

- There is ongoing evidence of networks and community of practice building/introduction and sharing of research evidence-led practice throughout the year and at events/ conferences, in publications

- There is informed support and advice given to the full range of colleagues, experienced productively, and shared with senior management

- There is advocacy and support for individual staff initiatives/internal and external consultancy

- Internal and external audits and reviews indicate the success of the work of educational developers and the unit or centre in terms of robust, leading edge, ethically informed, active, forward-looking, engaged practices.

How do we do know when the fullest range of our work in action has enabled all of the above? By the fact that it contributes to constructive change, involves reflective practice, sensitive, appropriate, strategic, people-centred innovation and embedding of good practice?

Beyond intuition

Some of the answers to those questions might be based *only* on intuition, and though essential, intuition or gut feeling is not enough. If we are expecting our colleagues to use a research evidence base in their learning and teaching developments and practice, and if we are living in an audit culture of league tables and university branding, we do need all the appropriate and useful evaluation vehicles we can gather, not merely to indicate to others internally and externally that we are having an effect, we are doing a good job, but also to prove it to ourselves (as far as anything is really provable – just to continue with the postmodernism).

So how do we evaluate effectively? Several Heads of Educational Development colleagues suggested using external and internal quality mechanisms:

'QAA Institutional Audit report/ findings.' (Head 4)
'Quality Review' of the unit.' (Head 5)

Ensuring the centre is central to the effectiveness of external audit and subject to both external and internal audit and review is a way of establishing credibility, and maintaining status and also, it is hoped, centrality and the continuing power to be effective. Of course, audit and measurable outcomes are limited, but they are an essential part of the evaluation continuum. I am not suggesting that everyone mistrusts the constructions of league tables, monitoring, assessment, appraisal and

attempts to capture the often fragile bubble of experience. Indeed, even if we do mistrust these as relative and partial constructs, they can help provide evidence of how well we are identifying and working with the varying needs of the institution, colleagues and students, in education and learning, locally, nationally, internationally, generally and specifically. We need them and we need more subtle, varied and reflective versions, alongside the perhaps simplistic and mechanistic, to capture the nuances and build on what this can tell us about our effectiveness, and show it to others. Ranald Macdonald, considering evaluation as part of our role in educational development, identifies several approaches to it, reasons for it, and methods and uses of it, much of which can be seen in the responses of HEDG colleagues:

'One possible approach to examining the main aspects of evaluation is to focus on a set of questions:

- Why *evaluate?*
- What *to evaluate?*
- By whom *is the evaluation carried out?*
- Who *determines the evaluation questions?*
- What assumptions *underlie the evaluation questions?*
- With whom *is the evaluation undertaken?*
- How *to evaluate?*
- When *to evaluate?*
- How much *evaluation will be carried out?*
- What types of evidence *will be used in the evaluation?*
- How *will the evidence be used?*
- For whom *is the evaluation being carried out?*
- What effect *will the evaluation have?*
- How *will feedback be provided to all stakeholders?'*

(Macdonald, 2002)

Identifying elements in the evaluation continuum

Following a very lively and successful session at the Heads of Education Development awayday meeting in in the summer of 2005 I was asked to write up what I'd prepared about evaluating the effectiveness of educational development centres and their work, and to collate and reflect on the different responses made by colleagues and friends at the meeting – against a background, as one would expect, of research evidence-led learning and teaching, and of the work of others in the field.

If in these changing times we want to genuinely find out about our effectiveness and our impact on learning and teaching in our universities, then first we probably need to review exactly what the range of our work is in educational development in the twenty-first century. In many ways, it might appear publicly in those kinds of sessions indicated above, but in many other ways it has moved enormously from that kind of activity and context.

The range of our work could include:

Nurturing the development of individuals

Networking and embedding through:
- secondments
- promoted posts
- fellowships
- small groups
- change work

Programme delivery - needs, analysis, etc.
- workshops
- symposia
- conferences

Research and publications
- learning, teaching, assessment
- management, leadership, roles, processes
- evaluating impact

Strategic – work in terms of policies and strategies
- internally (and externally)
- committees

The developing of strategies – networks and influences, and systems

Informing and linking local, national, international demands and trends

Managing Educational Development Centres – assessing/evaluating their impact

How and why do we assess or evaluate the impact of our work in managing and leading Educational Developments/EDCs?
- Leadership – vision, direction, mission
- Management – the more everyday practicalities

In 2000, the initial survey of work in EDCs noted that we had become more strategic and more centrally funded. We are carrying out a large range of activities, from strategic advice and internal advocacy, international and national development, to acting as visionaries as well as completer-finishers, working with individuals as well as whole institutions, and in league with audit mechanisms to ensure the university can be *seen* to be working well, and also listening to the needs of the newly overburdened teaching members of staff, and nurturing them forwards to build on their strengths, and supporting established colleagues in CPD activities.

A number of writers (Moses 1987, Hounsell 1994, Candy 1996) have suggested that 'educational development' includes all, or some combination of, the following:

(1) Improvement of teaching and assessment practices, curriculum design, and learning support – including the place of information technology in learning and teaching
(2) Professional development of academic staff, or staff development
(3) Organisational and policy development within the context of higher education
(4) Learning development of students – supporting and improving effective student learning.

As Gosling and D'Andrea have pointed out, such a summary misses much of the aims and activities of EDCs. 'Firstly it provides no account of what constitutes "improvement" or "development" and secondly it focuses entirely on the implementation of some previously identified practice or policy' (Gosling and D'Andrea, 2000).

Graham Badley (1998) argues that educational development is also concerned with:

'Supporting the scholarship of teaching through classroom inquiry and action research; providing opportunities for critical dialogue and conversation about teaching and learning in departmental and institutional settings, and promoting learning as the critical link between teaching, research, scholarship, inquiry and dialogue.' (Badley, 1998: 71)

Educational development is a key function in higher education. It aims to create a teaching environment in which debate flourishes about what constitutes good practice in learning and teaching in different contexts and for diverse students. Perhaps some of the measures of this have become increasingly simplistic but:

'Learning is not simply more or less "effective" and teaching is not simply more or less "efficient", nor can good practice simply be "disseminated". Educational development is also about interrogating the goals of learning and of higher education more generally. It looks at questions about the value of learning to students, and promotes conversations not only about how to teach and promote learning, but also about the nature of the curriculum and the political and social context of learning. The notion of "development" itself must be continually contested and interrogated.' (Webb, 1996, Gosling, 2000).

Pedagogic research and the scholarship of teaching and learning ('SoTL') (Boyer 1990, Hutchings and Schulman 1999), are not much represented in common definitions of educational development. A key recent feature of our work in HE is the increasing recognition of the importance of research into learning and teaching as an integral part of educational development (Jenkins 2000, Healey 2000, Yorke 2000, Gosling and D'Andrea, 2000(b)). Latterly, this had led to the inclusion of a funding study relating research and learning/teaching in the new HEFCE TQEF (2006-9) funding. As Badley notes:

'Educational development is therefore not only about "improving", "promoting", "supporting", "developing" learning and teaching, assessment and the curriculum, it is also about enquiring into, investigating, and researching higher education.' (Badley, 1998)

Gosling and D'Andrea go on to indicate educational development is also defined by being:

(5) Informed debate about learning, teaching, assessment, curriculum design, and the goals of higher education
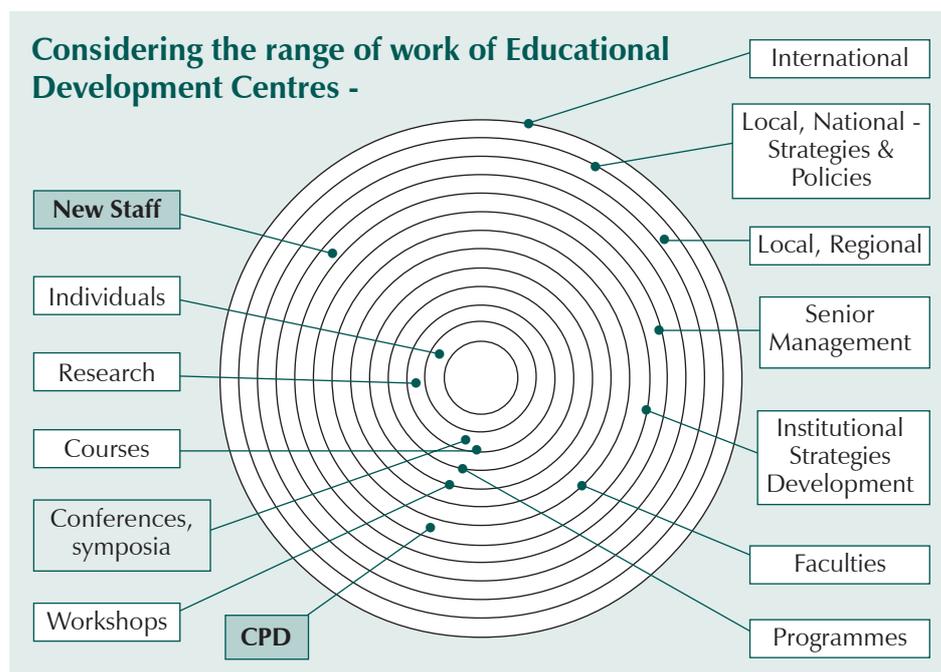(6) Promotion of the scholarship of teaching and learning and research into higher education goals and practices.

Gosling's 1995 survey indicated that not all EDCs were expected, or funded, to carry out all of these six goals or work areas. The survey revealed that improvement of learning and teaching and professional development staff was at the 'core' of what educational development units do (Gosling, 1996: 79).

As part of our activities in the awayday I asked colleagues to consider the chart below which tried to indicate some of the range of our work, in order to begin to consider how we *know* we are effective in these different areas.

Having decided the range of our work it is then important to consider how we really can measure any impact we have on each of these areas - what measure do we use to evaluate? The old adage that the successful staff developer knows how successful they are because those they have influenced now believe all the good ideas are their own, is fine enough for days when being a marginal maverick was the preferred option, but it is no good for an audit culture, or one which actually wants to make effectiveness visible -- two halves of the same coin. Our work is explicable in terms of Boyer (1990) and others at the Carnegie Foundation who suggested four areas of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and teaching. Glassick *et al*. (1997) subsequently identified six aspects common to these: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation and reflective critique. Glassick goes on to ask:

'Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work? Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique? Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?' (Glassick et al., p. 36)

Although Boyer, Glassick and others are focusing here on the role of the academic, we can ask ourselves the

Considering the range of work of Educational Development Centres -

International
Local, National - Strategies & Policies
Local, Regional
Senior Management
Institutional Strategies Development
Faculties
Programmes

New Staff
Individuals
Research
Courses
Conferences, symposia
Workshops
CPD

same questions and apply the same evaluative stringencies to our work in educational development centres. Evaluation is part of that scholarly continuum which leads to continuous improvement based on reflection.

What follows are some of the questions I asked HEDG colleagues, and some responses, managed into themes.

- Please identify the range and kind of impact, measures, outputs and outcomes of your EDC.

  (Some of my *own* include: nos. of individuals publishing, delivering at conferences on Learning and Teaching or engaging with Learning and Teaching; successful embedding of e.g. peer observation, curriculum changes)

What else?

Please also consider

Research
- Do you use research evidence-based information to evaluate impact, enable and embed change?

- Share examples and models of using research evidence-based information – how do you identify a change, problem, or innovation and then

- Plan/action/collect/analyse/use data? Embed change?

- And, when you see something is not going so well, what do you do?

- Who do you work with?

- How do you turn the problem around?

- Do you use research strategies in this also?

- What plans can you now share to assess and evaluate the impact of your EDC?

- What can we do to ensure we are not only effective but seen to be effective, and embed success at every level?

In the 2000 report by Gosling, a comment was made about evaluation being a crucial part of raising the status of learning and teaching more generally. Gosling found that some educational development units were not yet *au fait* with the need for or practices of evaluation:

*'Evaluation of Impact
The intention behind the increased funding is to raise the status of learning and teaching. An interesting question to ask, therefore, is the extent to which the increased activity is having that effect. In response to a question about the ways in which the unit evaluated their impact some said "not yet decided", "none yet" or "under consideration", "currently working on this". It was clear that some new units had been established without any clear strategy for evaluation. It would appear that relatively few units are required to systematically evaluate their impact on the institution although many reported that they used questionnaires or feedback tools to evaluate particular events or initiatives. Some were using external evaluators and some saw evaluation as part of their "action research". However, without more systematic forms of evaluation, it would appear that it will be difficult to know whether or not the increase in volume of activity in educational development is producing the effects that the funding councils are expecting.'* (Gosling, 2000)

However, evaluation is a key element in our work and in its future :

'I see evaluation as a process which leads to the making of a judgement in relation to a set of values or criteria; and one in which the judgement possibly leads to a decision.' (Cowan, 1998, p. 79)

And it is essential in innovation and judgement:

'Evaluation is any activity that throughout the planning and delivery of innovative programmes enables those involved to learn and make judgements about the starting assumptions, implementation processes and outcomes of the innovation concerned.' (Stern, 1988, quoted in Sommerlad, 1992, p. 1)

When asked about how we evaluate our effects and effectiveness, colleagues responded to the topic 'Managing EDCs – discussing and evaluating their impact'. Looking at the responses we need to bear in mind the reasons for evaluation, and ways of approaching it, since the following responses can be seen to cohere with the characteristics of carrying out, reasons for, and uses of, evaluation as explored and defined by Ranald Macdonald (2002).

A selection of suggestions about evaluation and its uses – the HEDG results

Responses fell into a variety of categories from the strategic to the personal and local, the visionary to the pragmatic, the short term to the long term. I am not going to produce a complex matrix and there are a number of overlaps, but we can see how educational developers and related colleagues might collect a variety of data to indicate impact, deal personally and professionally with their changing role, further their own future and mark the achievement of the learning and teaching strategy. Some of the strategies for evaluation and assessment and some of the indicators are a trifle ironic, others utterly pragmatic:

1) Play a political game.
2) Publish research papers/project outcomes of teaching fellows' work.
3) Leave (then they know what you used to do).
4) Encourage production of A1 position for projects – project workers to include evaluation and impact.
5) Invite someone in to meetings of [team] and share perceptions of what you think they do and vice versa.
6) Number of people/groups offering 'interesting' sessions at our annual Learning and Teaching Conference.
7) Sometimes bringing in someone to challenge everything.
8) Follow up on workshop feedback to discover actual change.
9) Levels of activity in faculties in relation to enhancement of learning and teaching quality.

10) Ask participants at development events what goals they want to achieve (and ask them if they succeeded!).
11) Direct impact of close involvement – e.g. with NTFS candidates, CETL Bid team.
12) How to evaluate 'down the line' evaluation and ask participants six months later about what they are doing.
13) Publish summary of programme/ seminar evaluations.
14) Trailing committee papers and minutes to check against effect achieved two/three years on.
15) Do you have an official parking place?
16) 'Repeat' business.
17) Increasing requests to do things by 'senior management team'.
18) Capture *everything* you do in the centre and make others aware of it.
19) 'Serendipitous' evaluations – lecturers citing your centre as a source of funding/support.
20) Number of staff presenting at Learning and Teaching Conferences.
21) Invite the head of HR to lunch.
22) Number of learning and teaching co-ordinators who have moved into senior management.
23) Number of bids achieved/income.
24) Number of staff who ring/email me for advice on leading sessions.
25) Plan measurable/desirable goals for development activities.
26) Take time for discussion with your team and listen to their views on successes.
27) Conference.
28) Proportion of people invited to work with us on a project or initiative who accept with *alacrity*.
29) Create promotion route for teachers in teaching so the management can show they value learning and teaching.
30) Write and publish summary of annual report.
31) Lie about the national context.
32) Get successes into corporate newsletter.
33) More people knocking on the door.
34) VC asks to meet you.
35) Promotion of academics we've been 'building up'.
36) Number and rate of new staff who

get PG Cert and move on to another university.
37) Intervention: consultancy with course teams facing validation.
38) Measure: how many conditions at validation (compare with courses that haven't used service).
39) Number of times senior management asks me to provide background research re… (e.g. student attendance).
40) Size of budget!
41) Keep and use favourable comment from others.
42) QAA Institutional Audit report/ findings.
43) Internal and external membership.
44) 'Quality Review' of the unit.
45) Student attests (unsolicited).
46) Annual funding tells us a lot about our perceived impact.
47) Dialogue ⇒ ideas ⇒ description ⇒ collecting data ⇒ evaluating
48) Present internationally at conferences where people link us with the name of the university.
49) Publish.
50) Internal review by team leaders within unit once every two years.
51) Mixture of numbers and comments used for evaluations.
52) Telling a convincing story.
53) Be the PVC.
54) Comments/commendations/ mentions in reports and audits e.g. QAA, OFSTED, NMC, IIP (external evidence).
55) Number of staff.
56) Understanding why staff change their practice: ask them why they changed what they do!
57) Evaluating training and development: how have participants changed what they do as a result of the training and development.

There are a number of ways of looking at these responses. I first gathered them into a kind of chart which considered those continua mentioned above – in other words connections and impact related to the strategic and the personal professional development of individuals; the pragmatic and measurable indicators of success or effect, and those which were more visionary; indicators which suggested an immediate effect – signs of some response or change – and those which needed a longer study, and could

indicate embedded development and change as a result of working with ourselves in Educational Development centres.

Strategic
1, 2, 4, 9, 17, 25, 32, 34, 37, 42, 44, 48, 50

Personal / Professional
3, 15, 26, 43, 48, 49, 52

Pragmatic and Measurable
5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, 55

Visionary
19, 31, 34, 53

Short Term
10, 51

Long Term
3, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 25, 29, 33, 41, 47, 56, 57

Some responses considered data. A number of responses focused on collecting appropriate data, evaluating and sharing it. Others recognised the importance of inclusion in key university activities, such as QAA, or curriculum development, and of being able to produce evidence of the way learning and teaching are supported, invested in. Some look at how we can identify and share the quality of our actual activities, as centres, and more crucially, of course, the activities of others which have been supported and enhanced by our work – both internally via public recognition and involvement in developments, and externally via publications and conferences, which herald abroad the university's image as committed to learning and teaching and the student experience.

The fascination with evaluation of the effectiveness of educational development centres needs to be seen in the context of a widespread evaluation culture of which we are a part. As Ranald Macdonald notes:

'We need to ensure that we are clear about the purposes of any evaluation and how we are going to use the outcomes that come from it (Patton, 1997). In particular, we need to create the right culture, climate or

environment for evaluation to be effective where the emphasis is on learning from mistakes and success, rather than merely apportioning blame or praise. It is worth remembering that there is no single right way of achieving our educational aims nor of evaluating them.' (Macdonald, 2002)

So that we can develop and enhance our abilities to recognise, evaluate, share and build on our successes (and overcome our weaknesses), it would be very helpful to hear of examples of data collection, and stories of successful impact.

Conclusion

Our roles in educational development centres have changed enormously over the last few years and, if they are volatile they are also much more strategically embedded in the variety of core work of the university, the curriculum development, CETLs, research grant bids, and the initial and continuing professional development of those who teach and facilitate learning. We are also not alone. Deputy vice-chancellors, deputy deans and learning and teaching committees now work with us and share titles and roles. One of the things we still do as educational developers is provide a safe and enabling space for the learning and teaching oriented learning conversations which have no such space elsewhere (though of course they should, but we are all too busy getting on with it, *it* being teaching, research, management activities and internal politics). Colleagues locally – externally and internally – work with us on fellowships, a host of learning and teaching developments and we are expected and even enabled more than ever to focus on the scholarship of teaching, the development and embedding of research-enhanced learning and teaching. We are also expected to be university representatives and beacons abroad – through publications, conference presentations and consultancies. Both hard and reflective evidence are needed to capture and share the ways in which our work, operating within a wider community of practice, can support the embedding of good practice and positive change as well as retaining a building on our knack for networking, questioning absurdities, creativity and supporting individuals.

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Exploring the developmental impacts of completing a postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching

A conversation between **Peter Stevenson** and **Anthony Brand**

Peter, tell us something about your background; where you work and your job profile…

Since 1995 I have been working at Spurgeon's College in London, a theological college in south London which is an Affiliated Institution of the University of Wales. My current role as Director of Training means that it is my responsibility to plan packages of training and information for students. It also means that I have a role in delivering staff training. Alongside that I am the Director for a postgraduate course in practical theology (MTh in Applied Theology) which attracts people from across the UK and some from overseas. They are involved in various forms of Christian service, and the course encourages them to reflect upon their experiences in ministry. At any time there are about 100 people working towards that degree, which means that various bits of work are coming in throughout the year. Prior to coming here I worked for 17 years as a local church minister, squeezing some postgraduate study in along the way.

A short while back you completed a postgraduate certificate in L&T – what are your reflections about the experiences while on the course?

When I started the Open University course in 2002 I had been teaching for seven years, and I found it very helpful to be able to reflect upon my experience and to make connections with broader currents of educational thinking. I appreciated the way the assignments were all geared to the work I was doing throughout the year, and amongst other things it enabled me to review one of our undergraduate courses in some depth. That review helped lay the foundation for a lengthy process of designing a new Bachelor of Theology course which we hope will commence in September 2006. Lots of the ideas stirred up by the course have flowed into our staff development sessions too.

The Open University course appears to have made a significant impact, and as a result you now want to extend your studies on learning and teaching. Tell us about what you hope to do:

Since 2002 I have been involved, twice a year, in teaching MTh students in West Africa, through a partnership with the Ghana Baptist Theological Seminary. Reflection on my work with students there identifies helping students engage in critical thinking as one of the key challenges. For, in keeping with the standard expectations of a Master's course at any British university, we expect our students to demonstrate their ability to engage in critical thinking.

So I want to do some primary research, which will help to identify some of the specific obstacles to critical thinking facing African students. The hope is that such research will help the process of developing strategies and materials that will help students, from an African context, engage in the critical thinking expected by Western based courses.

Another reason for my interest in this topic is its direct relevance for teaching in the stimulating, multi-cultural context of London.

As you tell it to us the concept of critical thinking as part of the research project produces a number of dilemmas and challenges. Can we explore these a little more?

Although there is no agreed definition of critical thinking, Neil Browne and Kari Freeman (2000) helpfully argue that 'critical thinking comes in many forms, but all possess a single core feature. They presume that human arguments require evaluation if they are to be worthy of widespread respect. Hence, critical thinking focuses on a set of skills and attitudes that enable a listener or reader to apply rational criteria to the reasoning of speakers and writers.' However, they claim that 'our proclivity to seek only information that supports our views (called "confirmation bias" by psychologists) in addition to the human tendency to hold firmly to our beliefs, provide a sizeable obstacle to developing the critical thinking of students' (Browne and Freeman, 2000). This seems to be an accurate description of many theological students in West Africa, who come from religious traditions which do not encourage a critical approach to questions of faith and theology. In such societies, which place a high premium on respect for tradition, it is likely to be the case that there are further cultural and educational obstacles which make it more difficult for students to engage in critical thinking.

It does strike me that if we regard the concept and development of critical thinking as a core aspect of (western) higher education, and indeed the certificate in L&T, then we are on the brink of a clash of cultural values here. If you were to succeed as a teacher you would be enabling and encouraging your student participants to challenge orthodoxy and, dare I go as far as to suggest, dogma.

In doing this kind of research I am strongly aware of the cultural assumptions undergirding Western notions of critical thinking, which presumably are themselves open to question. Indeed one study about critical thinking and

international students in the UK asks provocatively 'if UK models of critical thinking are grounded in assumptions about the universal characteristics of "our society", is it fitting to ask international learners to adopt them? If critical thinking concepts are drawn from a largely secularist intellectual tradition, do they offer the most appropriate modes of thinking for students engaged in theological reflection?' (Moore, Faltin and Wright, 2003).

Within Ghana, for example, I am sure that the Akan culture has its own resources for contextually valid forms of critical thinking. So I want to listen to both students and teachers in Africa to see how their insights might contribute to the development of a more international perspective on this topic.

Critical thinking versus orthodoxy?

It is undoubtedly true that some forms of faith discourage any kind of questioning, but it would be wrong to assume that all Christians are unthinking fundamentalists. It might be argued that Christianity actually encourages certain forms of critical thinking because the stress within the biblical tradition on seeking for 'wisdom' implies a process of discerning between the good and the not-so-good. Perhaps 'seeking for wisdom' might be a rough and ready definition of what critical thinking involves?

The challenges facing Africa have been very much in the spotlight over the last couple of years, and some agencies, such as the World Bank, have acknowledged the strategic role of faith communities in the work of community development (Belshaw, Caderisi and Sugden, 2001). Within such a context the place of critical thinking within theological education is not a private matter for the churches, but is potentially of much broader significance.

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The Long and Winding Road – a retrospective

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This article is a reflection upon the transition from SEDA's Teacher Accreditation Scheme to the Professional Development Framework (PDF)[1].

The history of PDF is to be found in a special edition of Educational Developments and may be downloaded from the SEDA website[2]. Briefly, while the outcomes of the Dearing Committee report were in many ways recognition of SEDA's early work, the establishing of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) presented a direct challenge to the continuing viability of much of SEDA's profile of activities. Appropriate measures were taken to reach an accord with the ILT which enabled SEDA-recognised programmes to move across and the Teacher Accreditation Committee continued to work with those institutions who

wished to maintain a link. Inevitably having two bodies accrediting the growing number of postgraduate certificates in learning and teaching was inherently unstable and so SEDA engaged in a radical re-examination of its place and role in the sector. The result was the formation of the Professional Development Framework and from the start it was emblematic of what SEDA does well – working with and listening to colleagues across the sector. A core feature and principle of PDF is its being supportive and developmental within the context of an individual institution's mission. The former Teacher Accreditation awards were transformed into what can now be seen as an embryonic continuing professional development (CPD) framework for an institution to use in a local context. In fact the rapid and rich growth of named awards within PDF can now be truly seen as

being close to a fully matured CPD framework.

At the start the Teacher Accreditation Committee, which was reconstituted as the PDF Committee, thought that the list of named awards was fairly complete. How naïve! Listening to the emerging needs of the sector proved that more were needed and these were added; see the list below. Additionally, SEDA has always been a proactive organisation and so, with the establishment of the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, there was recognition that further awards were needed to support a growing but diverse body of developers.

As Chair of PDF I frequently encountered the embarrassment of hardly being able to keep up to date with the growing list of named awards.

I would like to say with some confidence that the correct and current list is:

- *Action Research into Professional Practice*
- *Developing Leaders*
- *Developing People and Processes*
- *Developing Professional Practice*
- *Embedding Learning Technologies*
- *Enhancing Academic Practice in Disciplines*
- *Enhancing Research Practice*
- *Exploring Learning Technologies*
- *External Examining*
- *Leading and Developing Academic Practice*
- *Leading Staff and Educational Development*
- *Learning, Teaching and Assessing*
- *Staff and Educational Development*
- *Student Support and Guidance*
- *Supervising Postgraduate Research*
- *Supporting Learning.*

However, there will be an inevitable lag between the writing of this article and its publication and more might well have been added! What follows is an exploration of some of the named award areas showing how they meet the diverse needs of the higher education community. In doing so, PDF recognises and embraces the growing and highly diverse set of staff who now support student learning in post compulsory and higher education.

An inevitable question is in seeing how the PDF named awards relate to the new National Standards. While PDF obviously predates the release of the Standards in February 2006, *Supporting Learning* clearly satisfies and exceeds the requirements for level 1, and *Learning, Teaching and Assessing* maps to the level 2 standard[3]. Inevitably there is even greater interest in seeing how the remaining named awards can be used to establish unique institutionally context-related CPD frameworks for staff.

Most of the named awards are designed to be of interest to a single institution establishing a CPD profile for members of staff who support student learning in the broadest of senses. Others are highly specific in

regard to context/role. These include, for example, *Student Support and Guidance; Supervising Postgraduate Research* and *Enhancing Research Practice*. Some, such as *Action Research into Professional Practice, Developing Leaders,* and *Developing People and Processes* are open to a wide range of contexts and might be described as generic.

Enhancing Academic Practice in Disciplines is currently published as a discussion document. This is an example of a named award area which will support sector-wide development and most probably will eventually be offered through agencies such as the Subject Centres.

Since its inception, *External Examining* was seen as most probably being provided through regional consortia of institutions. At the time of writing the *External Examining* named award is being run in a pilot format from Keele University through on-line participation. The core group of participants, who are representative of a wide cross section of institutions, will evaluate the viability of this form of distance engagement and the validity of the Specialist Outcomes.

The establishment of Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has significantly grown the community of staff and educational developers. Aware of the professional development needs of these colleagues, SEDA has devised two additional named awards – *Staff and Educational Development* and *Leading Staff and Educational Development*. They are currently administered through the SEDA Fellowship Scheme and successful completion will enable participants to move to SEDA Associate Fellowship status. A typical pathway through the *Staff and Educational Development* award will be attendance at the SEDA Summer School and subsequent completion of SEDA's Portfolio and Assessment module. Mindful that alternative modes of study are desirable, SEDA is providing an on-line version of the Summer School. The first group of participants will commence the Portfolio and Assessment module this October and complete in January 2007. The module will be provided by

SEDA in association with the Higher Education Academy. During 2007 a parallel roll out will happen for *Leading Staff and Educational Development.*

Discussion of the named awards would be incomplete without reference to *Embedding Learning Technologies* and *Exploring Learning Technologies*. These are examples of how a nationally funded TLTP project – EFFECTS[4] – became incorporated into the PDF.

Spotting potential national and local needs are ongoing tasks which engage the minds of those who are members of the PDF Committee. Looking to the future there is an awareness that development needs exist for colleagues in FE institutions who teach on HE awards and around the area of internationalisation in all of its dimensions. So please keep on accessing the SEDA web site for updates on the named award areas.

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[1] Earlier this year I completed a three-year term of office as Chair of SEDA-PDF, having previously been Chair of the Teacher Accreditation Committee for two years. It is therefore an appropriate time to reflect upon the place of SEDA-PDF in the sector and how it is meeting current and future needs.

[2] See http://www.seda.ac.uk/ed_devs/index.htm

[3] The National Standards framework is owned by the sector and a number of the named awards clearly map across and meet the requirements of Levels 1 and 2. SEDA is currently seeking an accord with the Higher Education Academy which will enable holders of these named award areas to gain direct entry to the register of practitioners.

[4] EFFECTS - Effective Framework For Embedding C&IT using Targeted Support; fuller information can be found at http://www.elt.ac.uk

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The International Consortium for Educational Development, 2006

James Wisdom, Co-Chair, SEDA

The International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) was founded in 1993 by Graham Gibbs and representatives from six national networks. It has grown to embrace 23 national members and is working with a further three emerging networks.

It was set up to:
- help partner organisations develop their capacity for educational development in higher education through the sharing of good practice, problems and solutions
- increase the number of partner organisations of ICED
- help educational developers in countries where no national network exists to form such a network
- support educational development in higher education in developing countries
- link with other national and international organisations.

This year ICED held its Annual Council meeting in Sheffield (on the two days before the biennial Conference) and I represented SEDA at the meeting. The chairs or representatives of 13 of the 23 networks attended, along with two representatives from emerging networks, three observers, three editors of the *International Journal for Educational Development*, Kristine Mason O'Connor as Treasurer and Ranald Macdonald as Conference Organiser.

Educational Developments has carried reports of earlier Council meetings and activities in Bielefeld, Madrid, Ottawa, Perth and Croatia. From those accounts, and from the debates around the table, it was clear to me that the task facing ICED is how to grow from the 'very light and flexible organisational structure' which Carole Baume described in 2000 (*Educational Developments* 1.3) to one which can support further expansion without losing the values inherent in its aims. As Liz Beaty reported from Madrid in 2001: 'Keeping things simple has to be weighed against the need for the organisation to be active.'

ICED derives income from its Journal (IJAD) and its conferences. As everyone involved in academic publication knows, royalties from many journals barely cover the costs of production. Similarly, the profits from conferences can fluctuate. The aims of ICED are so consistent with the values which SEDA espouses that SEDA must be able to support ICED in whatever way is required. In recent years this has been primarily through the work of Kristine Mason O'Connor in sorting out the funds and the procedures, and of Ranald Macdonald in supporting the conferences.

ICED Council 2006 meeting in Sheffield, with Carla Nelisson, the President, in the centre.

The plan had been to hold the 2006 Conference in Sri Lanka, where Suki Ekaratne is chair of the Sri Lanka Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness. The 2004 tsunami destroyed the plans and hopes for this conference, and Ranald – as co-convenor and using SEDA as back-up – offered Sheffield Hallam as the venue. The outcome of a great deal of hard work was that Suki and Ranald were able to welcome over 280 delegates from 28 countries to an excellent three-day conference. The abstracts can be read on the website (**http:// iced2006.shu.ac.uk**/) and from them it is possible to get some picture of the issues and activities which concern and engage educational developers around the world.

The Council meeting in 2007 will be held in Estonia to help support the network which is emerging there. The next Conference (2008) will be in Salt Lake City, and the Council intends to hold the 2010 Conference in Sri Lanka.

The ICED web site is hosted at the University of Western Australia (**http://www.osds.uwa.edu.au/iced**) and the sites for the *International Journal for Academic Development* are hosted by Taylor and Francis at **http://www.tandf.co.uk/ journals/routledge/1360144X.html** and for authors by the University of Sydney at **http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ijad/ instructions.cfm**.

ICED has members in Australasia, Belgium (for three francophone states), Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, India, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and emerging networks in Ethiopia, Estonia and Israel.

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Book Review

Dyslexia, the Self and Higher Education

David Pollak

ISBN-13: 978-85856-360-2
ISBN-10: 1-85856-360-7
Trentham Books Limited,
Stoke-on-Trent, 2005

The topic of dyslexia is contested terrain. Fact, fiction, mythology and ideology compete to dominate established perceptions of what dyslexia should or could be understood to be. It has to be a brave author who considers perceptions of dyslexia through the equally contested lens of the 'self'.

David Pollak does not shy away from the complexities or conflicts, indeed he lays them bare in a very systematic overview of the different trends and influences on understanding of both dyslexia and notions of the self. The early chapters provide excellent signposting to detailed sources and introduce a range of issues relevant to a great diversity of learners, not just those labelled 'dyslexic'.

The research presented by Pollak in this book has adopted analysis of 'educational life histories'. Throughout the book this proves a powerful tool for gaining insights into the actual experiences of learners, in contrast to the heavily theorised assumptions that are often made about the learning experience. Again, there are valuable lessons here for accessing the reality of the student experience for all, not just those with a 'diagnosed condition', and thereby making progress towards a student-centred approach to learning and teaching, which celebrates a diversity of talents and aptitudes.

The title of this book leads to high expectations of ground-breaking insight about the interrelationship between the dyslexic label and notions of the self, as a learner and more generally. Some readers may feel that the book presents established truisms and restates anecdotal certainties. For those that have been active in the area of dyslexia support this may be true, but the particular

strength of this book and the research which informs it is the pertinent and compelling evidence of how a label, and the experience of all that is associated with a label, influences those who are labelled.

One fascinating element of the book for me was the presentation and consideration given to the discourses adopted by those accepting their dyslexia diagnosis/label. The range of positions and responses presented is interesting, and again offers potent insight to the motivations and challenges for these learners, and thereby also indicates effective mechanisms for supporting their learning. For those already interested in learning styles the chapter on discourses of dyslexia will be particularly interesting, offering as it does a digest of the evidence about attitudes to HE, the university experience and the coping strategies of dyslexic students adopting the discourses of: 'patient', who see their dyslexia as a defect; 'student', for whom dyslexia is an irritation and inconvenience; 'hemispherist', who recognises and exploits different natural talents; and 'campaigner', who tends to articulate their frustration with the environment that appears to make their dyslexia a barrier to their success. Although specific to dyslexia, these discourses seem to have resonance with other groups with concerns or issues linked to equality of educational opportunity and so will be of interest to practitioners with wider interests than

dyslexia. Pollak's conclusions arising from the research are a helpful and thoughtful contribution to the long-running debate about medical and social models of disability, which tend to inform medicalised and problematised support interventions, or 'academic socialisation'. A third way is posited, linked to 'academic literacies' and an acceptance that the learning attributes associated with 'dyslexia' are part of a perfectly normal variation in the population, concluding that 'learning support approaches based on an academic literacies standpoint centre on supporting students' self-awareness and sense of identity. All students need some meta-cognition – thinking about how they think, learning about how they learn – in order to succeed'.

Don't be put off if you are a self-confessed sceptic about dyslexia, or think you're not interested in learning disabilities. Any reader interested in his/her own meta-cognition and in enhancing his/her understanding of the vast array of factors operating on all learners should find this a valuable book. This volume combines helpful and informative overview and signposting, with excellent and extensive references, and thoughtful and balanced discussion of how different factors combine to influence students' sense of self and learning.

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Let me tell you a story...

Steve Outram, Higher Education Academy

Let me tell you a story told to me by a most respected staff and educational developer. It concerns one of his children studying at a quite prestigious university who had telephoned to complain that the lecturer for an option course she was taking did nothing for his lectures other than read a chapter out of the text book that he had authored. What could she do? 'Let's see,' replied her father. 'How many are taking this option?' 'Twelve,' she replied. 'This is what you do,' he said. 'Contribute £5 each and go into the town and buy the text book.' His daughter was studying a subject where text books are usually quite expensive – in this case it cost £50. 'Is the remainder of the money for the bus fare?' she enquired. 'Not at all,' said her father with a smile on his face, 'it is for a stanley knife.' He gave her the following instructions: that she should use the knife to chop the book into three equal parts. The twelve students should divide themselves into three study groups and it would be the job of each group to teach the other two from the third of the book they had been allocated. This they did and, since they had the book, attended no more lectures. At the end of year examination they all did extremely well; so well, in fact, that the tutor received a teaching award from the university to congratulate him on the improvements he must have made in his teaching!

This is a story told to a group of tutors in an educational development workshop over ten years ago, yet it endures. As educational developers we rely on stories such as this to bring life to the ideas we wish to share and it is worth looking at the relationship between educational development and storytelling in more detail.

Learning through Storytelling

A most useful text that offers a theoretical and conceptual underpinning is *Learning through Storytelling in Higher Education* by Janice McDrury and Maxine Alterio.[1] In exploring the role of storytelling in supporting learning the authors suggest that stories are one of the ways in which the learner is able to make meanings, and storytelling is transhistorical and transnational. Further, they suggest that storytelling is one of the ways in which we explore theories and make links between the self and other. It is a 'way to knowing' that is also inclusive:

> *'As a learning strategy, storytelling accommodates diverse realities and enables students to share experiences from their own cultural frame of reference.'* (p. 35)

Storytelling is clearly related to reflective practice. Consider the following stages to learning and how storytelling relates to them as described by the authors.[2]

Map of Learning (Moon, 1999)[3]	*Learning through Storytelling*
• Noticing	• Story finding
• Making sense	• Story telling
• Making meaning	• Story expanding
• Working with meaning	• Story processing
• Transformative learning	• Story reconstructing

As the authors remind us, reflective accounts are narratives where the account is told from the teller's perspective; notwithstanding that these accounts may have corroborating evidence to support them:

> *'Tellers choose which elements will be included and excluded and how they present their stories. Tellers also determine what level of affective involvement they will reveal.'* (op. cit.)

Given the importance of reflective practice to educational development activities, being able to appreciate the nature and craft of telling stories might enable us to advance our knowledge and practice of being reflective practitioners. As Ruggles states:

> *'Stories are great vehicles for wrapping together the many elements of knowledge. A good story combines the explicit with the tacit, the information with the emotion. Stories are not effective, or even appropriate, for every attempt to express knowledge, but I believe that they are underutilised in knowledge management approaches. Now, I am not proposing "story management", per se, but I do believe that stories enable people to express and comprehend the sticky, context-rich aspects of deep knowledge much more effectively.'* (Rudy Ruggles, *The Role of Storytelling in Knowledge Management*[4])

Telling a good story

So what are the characteristics of a good educational development story? In *The Story Factor* Annette Simmons examines the relationship between storytelling and being influential and persuasive in leading and managing organisations.[5] In this very compelling text she suggests six fundamental types of story that are influential in organisational settings:

- 'Who I am' stories
- 'Why I am here' stories
- 'The Vision' story
- 'Teaching' stories
- 'Values in action' stories
- 'I know what you are thinking' stories.

She suggests that 'before anyone allows you to influence them they want to know who you are and why are you

there' (p. 5). In short, we have stories we tell that establish our legitimacy and credibility. These help in building a necessary rapport without which engagement is unlikely. Further, the 'who am I' stories we tell also say something about our values as well as establishing authenticity. Authenticity is further achieved using 'why I am here' stories as is one's integrity. To establish and build rapport we share 'why I am here' stories to gain trust and, at the very least, a willingness to listen, however tentatively.

'Vision' stories are where we describe a possible future – a future that includes benefits to the audience, the organisation and to ourselves. It is the vision that provides the motivation; the lever of influence and change. Often, the 'vision story' is told badly or insincerely with obvious consequences. As Simmons also suggests, it is also all too easy to allow one's 'vision story' to sound corny. An effective 'vision story' needs time to create so that your listeners can *see* what you are talking about. An example she gives in the text, told to her by a friend, is of a man who comes across a building site where three bricklayers are working.

> *'What are you doing?' he asks the first bricklayer.*
> *'Laying bricks,' the bricklayer replies.*
> *He asks the second bricklayer who replies, 'I am building a wall.'*
> *On asking the third bricklayer, the reply he received was, 'I am building a cathedral!'*

It is the 'vision story' that connects all the pieces and gives meaning to the world.

'Teaching stories' do what they say on the tin. Whether through fables, modern-day parables or morality stories, we use stories to teach. Often the stories we use are multi-layered and complex. The story at the start of this article includes a view of active-learning; a view in relation to peer-supported learning; a possible view in relation to lecturing; a possible view in relation to the research/teaching nexus as well as a possible comment on the operation of distinctive teaching awards, *i.e.* there is a simultaneous demonstration of values.

This leads us into 'values-in-action' stories. Simmons suggests that 'Without a doubt, the best way to teach a value is "by example". The second best way is to tell a story that provides an example' (p. 20). One of the ways in which one might describe case studies, for example, is as a collection of exemplary stories.

We use 'I know what you are thinking stories' to disarm. 'Living a life of influence', argues Simmons – and let's face it, most of us live a life of influence – 'means that we are more often evangelising to the heathens and less often preaching to the choir.....Telling an "I know what you are thinking" story can neutralise concerns without direct confrontation' (p. 25).

I know what *you* are thinking – that the values she is representing emanate from a divisive, deficit understanding of organisational change. In fact, she goes on to describe

how the use of stories transcends organisational division. She also goes on to warn, however, that it is also possible to generate 'blame stories' as well as 'fear stories' – stories that are used to frighten and scare in order to gain a quick (but seldom enduring) compliance. Indeed, she identifies a 'shadow' side to organisational storytelling . Adolf Hitler, she tells us, was primarily a storyteller:

> *'His story and his ability to convince others of his story was a primary tool of Hitler's influence. Even when he blatantly distorted facts, the emotional content of his message mesmerized his listeners. It is a frightening example of how story can trump facts.'* (p. 227)

As we become adept at writing and telling stories so the responsibility to tell stories with integrity is enhanced. As David Snowden concludes:

> *'Properly understood Story is both a science and an art, to neglect one at the expense of the other is not only foolish it is also dangerous, in playing with people's stories you are playing with their souls and that requires a high level of responsibility.'* (Snowden, 2001[6])

The characteristics of a good story

According to Simmons there are a number of 'dos' and 'don'ts' of story writing.

The Don'ts comprise:

- Don't act superior – this is disrespectful and may lead to resentment or dependence
- Don't bore your listeners – it is the greatest crime of the storyteller who is more interested in the 'telling' than the 'listening'
- Don't scare people or make them feel guilty.

The Dos include:

- Do intrigue and captivate – through authenticity and passion
- Do connect at the level of humanity – *'Your best stories connect your listeners to you and each other at the points of common experience'* (p. 214)
- Do listen – the people who you seek to influence also have their stories and you can gain a huge amount by listening to their stories as much as you would like them to listen to yours
- Do leave them feeling hopeful.

Vignettes and storytelling

There are some quite specific ways in which storytelling can facilitate our educational development practice. One of these is through the use of vignettes. Within the context of research, Christine Barter and Emma Renold have prepared a most useful summary of the use of vignettes in research.[7] Citing the work of Janet Finch (1987) vignettes are defined here as:

> *'short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is*

invited to respond.' (Finch, J. (1987) cited in Barter and Renold, 1999)

A vignette is a fictional account of a 'realistic' situation that is sufficiently ambiguous that the listener has to interpret the situation for themselves. This is especially useful to elicit listeners' responses within the context of sensitive subject areas. Educational developers might use such stories in a number of ways. Obviously, they might use vignettes as a research technique like other researchers. However, they might also be used to stimulate discussion around sensitive topics as a tool in workshops. For example, we might create hypothetical scenarios to facilitate the discussion of principles without having to identify real institutions or people. They are also useful within the context of qualitative research in other ways. For example, as an ice-breaker at the start of a focus group.

A second way in which vignettes are particularly useful to educational developers is in the context of preparing problem-based learning scenarios. Within the context of enabling IT students to learn about project management through PBL methods, for example, Urban Nuldén and Helena Scheepers[8] have researched the characteristics of an effective PBL vignette and conclude that it must have 'soul' – that the author has 'put their heart into it, not just made another vignette'. Secondly, the vignette must engage with real cases and thirdly, students were keen that there should be a 'wow factor' in the layout and delivery of vignettes. The authors conclude by arguing that the vignette in PBL can be enhanced using computer-based technology and multimedia delivery through web pages, including multimedia files to set the scene and simulated emails to enable the vignettes to become more dynamic. Similarly, Lin Norton has outlined the way in which vignettes facilitate PBL in psychology as an outcome of an FDTL4 Project.[9] She summarises Barter and Renold's suggestions for constructing a good vignette as:

'Vignettes should appear plausible and real to engage participants.

Vignettes should focus on mundane rather than bizarre events or characters.

Vignettes should contain a balance of sufficient content for participants to understand the situation but be ambiguous enough to 'force' them to provide additional factors which influence their approach.

Too many changes in a story line are confusing and make it difficult for participants to deal with.

Participants may engage more with the story if they have some related personal experience of the described situation.' (p. 9)

Also, as Deborah Bowman and Patricia Hughes note, problem-based learning can arouse strong emotional responses from students and care must also be taken in preparing appropriate vignettes as well as preparing for the emotional responses that may be stimulated – a important

point in relation to all the uses of Story in learning, teaching and educational development.[10]

Innovation, storytelling and knowledge transfer

An important element of the educational developer's role is to be effective in organisational development including the ability to support pedagogic innovation and the dissemination and embedding of new ways of doing things – often known in management-speak as 'knowledge transfer'. Storytelling has a vital role to play in these activities and there is a growing literature on storytelling and knowledge transfer. As Tom Kelly argues:

'Stories persuade in a way that facts, reports, and market trends seldom do, because stories make an emotional connection. The Storyteller brings a team together. Their work becomes part of the lore of the organisation over many years. Storytellers weave myths, distilling events to heighten reality and draw out lessons.'[11] (p. 242)

Kelly goes on to suggest seven reasons to tell stories within the context of innovation and knowledge transfer:

- Storytelling builds credibility – who am I and why I am here stories
- Storytelling 'unleashes powerful emotions and helps teams to bond'
- Stories give permission to explore controversial and uncomfortable topics as in research and PBL vignettes
- Storytelling, Kelly suggests, 'sways a group's point of view'. Effective leaders tell compelling stories!
- Storytelling creates 'heroes' – someone, often fictionalised, to motivate us to do things differently. For example, we might create a composite 'lecturer new to teaching' who has a PhD to complete, a series of publications to complete for the next RAE as well as new subject areas to teach. What are the techniques and activities we can introduce to enable this person to complete the programme for new tutors as well as meet their other obligations?
- Storytelling also gives us a 'vocabulary of change' according to Kelly. For example, many colleagues engaged in change management use Malcolm Gladwell's notion of a 'tipping point' describing how small changes can bring about transformations in organisations and communities.[12] We collect our 'tipping point' stories to influence and persuade, for example, how changing from using surveys to focus groups brought about a massive shift in students' engagements with giving feedback about the quality of their learning experiences
- Finally, Kelly suggests that 'good stories make order out of chaos'. With an ever-increasing workload and 'too many unread emails' a good story 'cuts through the clutter'. Not only do we remember good stories when emails and phone conversations have long since disappeared from our memory but stories also help to build relationships whatever the context.

As Sole and Wilson point out, storytelling also helps share the norms and values of an organisation, including future norms and values, develop trust and commitment as well as

sharing tacit knowledge.[13] However, they also describe some of the ways in which storytelling might be counterproductive to supporting organisational development. For example, a story might be so compelling that the listener loses sight of the story's purpose to support listener reflection on 'real' situations. Also, stories are told from a single perspective, that of the storyteller, although there are techniques being developed to enable multiple perspectives to be incorporated. Stories, once they are written down, also become static and possibly disconnected from the reader; something that may happen when we use the same 'case studies' in our work without updating them. David Snowden also suggests some 'perils' in using stories in organisational development.[14] For example, informing an audience of academic colleagues within the context of change that you are going to tell them a story might be considered patronising and lead to resistance. Snowden also suggests telling 'factual stories' can be hazardous.

'In order to achieve a story there is a need to select the most compelling of the facts and provide appropriate emphasis: create tension, introduce clear protagonists, build a proper context, spell out the message; in other words all the tools and techniques of a script writer or journalist.' (p. 2)

It only takes one person who was there at the time to say 'It wasn't like that' for the story to be undermined. In short, stories may be used as 'anecdote enhancement' as Snowden terms it, which may be useful in training and development but lack sustainability.

Analysing stories

In analysing stories, McDrury and Alterio focus on the reflective practice processes that occur, pointing out that as the storyteller becomes adept at storytelling the reflections become less focussed on themselves and more oriented towards the contexts and the events that occurred. They will also become more aware of the impact they are having. There is more to analysing stories than the contribution such analyses might make to reflective practice. Searching for the meanings in stories is the work of narrative inquiry, a research method that has been deployed to analyse a range of narrative approaches, including stories. There is not the space to do justice to the myriad ways in which narrative inquiry can be useful in analysing educational development stories, and narrative inquiry itself has its critics.[15]

Afterword – tell me your story

Notwithstanding the critique of storytelling, many subject areas and professional practices continue to find storytelling to be a useful tool in learning and teaching. Educational development is no exception and I would be delighted to discuss these ideas further and develop an analysis of educational development stories.

Tell me your story.

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Editorial

Anthony Brand, University of Hertfordshire

This Edition

It is usually unwise to miss, as I did recently, an editorial meeting. You find that you are given a range of tasks in your absence which is likely to include commissioning and chasing authors and editing the next edition. However, I'm pleased to report that editing this edition has been a joy. There has been a rich harvest of articles enabling us to publish a full edition and we are already in the fortunate position of holding a number of articles in reserve for later in the year.

A conscious decision was taken in the selection of a wide variety of articles to suit many tastes. They range from the chatty to the scholarly; from a participant on one of the sector's postgraduate certificates reporting on the impact of the award to a report on leading and protecting an educational development unit. We have decided to publish two articles on peer review/support systems. While providing different perspectives they are informative and complementary and we anticipate them generating a fuller discussion in the form of feedback letters.

SEDA is known as an organisation which anticipates, develops, fosters and nurtures important initiatives for the sector. Typical is the new SEDA-PDF award *Staff and Educational Development* which has been designed to support and recognise individuals who form the growing community of developers. Elsewhere in this edition you will find details of a pilot version which is being provided through SEDA's Fellowship Scheme in association with and supported by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Current themes

The acceptance and ownership of a sector-wide National Standards Framework places institutions in a pivotal position in regard to the initial and continuing development of all staff who contribute to students' experience of learning. It appears that there will be greater institutional autonomy in the application of the levels contained in the Standards. Many forward-looking institutions are progressing their own individual frameworks for CPD. A number have found the SEDA-PDF valuable in supporting and enabling such initiatives. Perhaps an unintended casualty of the introduction of the Standards is the failure by the HEA to enact a CPD framework based upon the outcomes of the recent pilot phase. The Academy has *'decided to undertake a wider review of the sector's expectations in relation to professional development and the new standards. We will undertake this review alongside the on-going work with the HEIs involved in the CPD Project. This is likely to lead to a more formal review in the next academic year.'*

Perhaps of greater significance is the HEA decision to establish a working group which will look into the implementation of a *'process for optional certification of Continuing Professional Development'*. As a consequence SEDA-PDF currently continues to be the only viable national framework to recognise institutional approaches to CPD. In June the ICED conference was hosted in the UK and provided many opportunities for educational developers to share international perspectives and approaches. One feature which surfaced was in relation to the perceived value of postgraduate certificates in learning and teaching for new lecturers. A shared realisation was that such awards are subject to the most intense scrutiny as indicated by the recently published HEA evaluation report of accredited programmes (**http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/research/formativeevaluationreport.rtf**). Overall the key findings contained in the report provided positive indicators for such programmes, which developers will find helpful at an institutional level. A parallel but methodologically different study run through the OU's Institute of Educational Technology, in association with seven other institutions, indicates highly positive feedback from participants. The OU study enabled a set of meta-themes to be established from the feedback. These include:

- the importance and impact of non-formal learning about teaching (learning by doing)

- work and practice based learning about teaching

- academic communities and identities

- professional standing – do standards indicate a threshold level of attainment or are they part of a trajectory?

A full paper will be presented later in the year and it is anticipated that the initial findings will be reported at the SEDA Conference in November.

My heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed articles and to colleagues at the ACU for their support in delivering an outstanding edition.

Anthony Brand is Head of Learning Development at the University of Hertfordshire.