Educational Developments

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Quality Assurance through Quality Enhancement

Lewis Elton, University College London

"There is a real danger to the educational developers - we are often seen as only a part of the qualitocracy."
James Wisdom

Thank you, dear Editor, for the warning which you gave me when you invited me to write this article, for if we educational developers should ever be seen as part of the qualitocracy, we are doomed. So this article is in part an explanation as to what our task should be.

Historical background and personal history

My interest in quality matters goes back to my response (Elton 1986) to Christopher Ball's question 'What the hell is quality?' (Ball 1985), namely that quality for a professional consists of the duty to maintain one's own standards and that of one's profession. This conviction that the basis of quality and its assurance had to lie in professional integrity served me well when in about 1992 I took part in the training of the assessors for the Academic Audit Unit (AAU), which had been set up by CVCP. The scheme produced by the Director, Peter Williams, was very promising, which was probably why it was treated with suspicion by both the universities and the Funding Council. Peter Williams, consummate diplomat that he is, would never admit to this, yet the fact that he is now again in charge, even if at present only temporarily, gives hope.

The same conviction guided me four years later, when I was asked to evaluate quality assessment in Wales (Elton 1996). There was real cooperation there between the universi-

ties and the Head of the Quality Assessment Division of the Welsh Funding Council, Mike Laugharne, in a common aim to move towards making quality a matter of institutional self-assessment with external audit. I pointed out at the time that this was a dialectical development that was not easy but also not impossible to bring to fruition, but the opposition of the English Funding Council was too strong and my proposals were quietly scuppered. Instead, the AAU was sidelined into a new organisation without real power, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), and a powerful Teaching Quality Assessment Unit was established within the Higher Education Funding Council for England. An enormous growth of bureaucracy followed and when in due course the two units were amalgamated into the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), it led one Vice Chancellor to remark that that would save no more than one postage stamp, since the two units now worked from the same address. That power and influence can diverge is illustrated by the fact that the current plans of the QAA have been strongly influenced by lessons learned from the HEQC.

Recent history of quality assurance

It is important to understand past history in order to avoid repeating it, this time as farce. However, the Consultation Paper (Higher Education Funding Council in England et al 2001) which invited comments on a new audit proposal was not encouraging, for what has remained unchanged is the adversarial attitude and the paper work, which

were the proud achievement of QAA. The problem with the paper mountain was not so much that it was excessive - the Director John Randall may have been quite right when he said that the universities would have to evolve a similar, although surely significantly smaller, mountain if they were to assess themselves - but that it was ineffective, as it led to a compliance culture, which in fact failed to assure quality. And the QAA, in contrast to the TQA which was evaluated and found wanting, has not so far been independently evaluated. What is sauce for the goose ...

So now, according to the recent Consultation Paper, we are back with audit, but what has not changed is the adversarial attitude to the relationship between universities and the QAA, which led to the developing compliance culture in the first place. This was not spelt out in detail in the Paper, but was implicit in its total lack of discussion of fundamental principles. Although the first two questions asked for responses on 'the objectives and principles' of quality assurance (paras 7 - 11) and the audit model (para 12), these paragraphs tacitly assumed an agreement on fundamentals which formed the basis for the rest of the questions and so made radically different approaches impossible within the framework of the questions. If instead one ignored the advice that 'it would be helpful if [the responses] could be structured to address the listed questions', then one was of course the odd person out and easily ignored in what was sure to be a statistical summary of the responses received. A typical Civil Service way of avoiding dissent.

A modest proposal

So let me give here my response, which starts with the following assumptions:

1. Quality assurance should follow from quality enhancement, as has been outlined by Biggs (2001). Assurance in itself is a negative concept which can at best ensure that things are done well, but it can never ensure that things are done better or better things done.

2. An institution dedicated to quality enhancement will provide quality assurance as a by-product; one dedicated to quality assurance has no incentive to extend this to quality enhancement.

3. Quality enhancement can only happen if it is a credibly declared part of the mission of an institution. (If this should not be the case, then the institution would *ipso facto* not be pursuing quality enhancement.)

4. It is therefore at the mission and management levels that an audit must take place in the first instance.

5. Only if this audit throws up doubts should there be audit trails into how the mission works out in practice.

Underlying these assumptions lies the principle of a collegial, as opposed to the current adver-

sarial approach, which in the first place trusts an institution staffed by professionals to want to carry out its work professionally. However, such trust cannot and therefore never should be absolute, as we are all weak vessels and might be tempted to abuse it, and it is for that reason that Yorke (1994) introduced the felicitous idea of a 'modified' trust, ie. a trust monitored by audit. This audit must in the first place be built into the internal management of an institution, which thereby can verify whether practices are in agreement with the declared mission. Similarly, the external audit must start at the level of mission (see 4 above).

Professionalism

What then are the conditions that have to be satisfied for quality enhancement to be a normal feature within a given institution? They arise from the demand for professionalism which, while normal in the research function of a university cannot be taken for granted in its teaching function. In fact (Elton 1993), the very opposite is the case; traditionally, university teaching is at best a craft, where novice teachers benefit from the experience of *their* elders, who of course themselves have to rely on the experience of their elders, all the way back to the first universities in the middle ages. (This undoubtedly accounts for the continuation of out-dated practices.) Often, university teaching is not even a craft, because - once past the probationary stage - university teachers rarely if ever receive evaluative feedback on their practices. So the prime and crucially important task for educational developers is - and here I am responding to the Editor's concern - to provide not only initial *formation*[1] for new staff, but continuing professional development throughout an academic's career. To fulfil this task, they must be proactive and not merely reactive to needs as expressed by management, although naturally in such a way as to gain the latter's support. The guiding principle for it - and it is this which is an appropriate matter for audit - is that university teaching is as problematic an activity as university research and requires very similar fostering, through a basis of research, a knowledge of research outcomes and their relevance to practice and the development of good practice. This task has been made easier, at least in theory, by the work of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) which in turn was based on the earlier work of the Staff and Educational Development Association, although the present ILT membership regulations still fall somewhat short of the above guiding principle.

Another aspect of professionalism is a regular and effective scheme of staff appraisal, where appraisal is both from above and below in the institutional hierarchy, and affects all staff from the newest lecturer to the Vice Chancellor, as

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[1] The French 'formation', as well as the German 'Ausbildung' have aspects of both training and education, thereby demonstrating that these two concepts are not in opposition but support each other.

well as all academic related and non-academic staff. Such a scheme must not be punitive, ie. the outcome of an appraisal must, in the first place, be formative and lead to appropriate staff development activities in connection with quality maintenance. Since neither appraising nor being appraised has ever been a normal professional activity in universities, the training of both appraisers and appraisees is another necessary staff development activity. Incidentally, such appraisals should provide evidence also for lack of teaching quality control, ie. the present almost universal variability of the kind of teaching which students receive (see eg. Tobin 1996).

To go beyond quality maintenance to quality enhancement requires two further areas of institutional development, ie. the encouragement of innovations and effective change management. But perhaps the most important indicator of institutional commitment will arise from the recognition of the importance of the teaching function and the reward schemes and promotions for teaching excellence.

All this will cost money, but it may be hoped that the sums which in the past few years have been spent so unprofitably on paper mountains would go a long way towards financing the proposed changes. If universities should attempt to retreat into a supposedly golden past, where such matters as I have outlined were not considered necessary and where academics were largely left to their own devices, they would have to learn differently. My proposal does not constitute the kind of easy way out that universities, and in particular the Russell group, are apparently now demanding (Baty 2001).

Genuine self-assessment

The scheme which I am proposing consists of a self-assessment, in which an institution declares and evaluates its own practices, followed by an internal and then an external audit. All of these processes should be carried out collegially, with the internal processes greatly strengthened through the appointment of external consultants and external auditors acting as consultants and not as judges, as is the case in the Netherlands (Vroeijenstijn 1995, p. 58):

> The task of the review committee is to form an opinion on the basis of information supplied by the faculty and by means of discussions held on the spot ... The concept 'forming an opinion' should not be interpreted as 'sitting in judgment and handing down a verdict good or bad' ... The aim of external quality assessment is to detect, in a dialogue with the faculty, strong points and areas for concern.

Powers of universities and Funding Agencies - need for trust as well as independent agency

How might a scheme of this nature meet the needs of appropriate stakeholders? The question of stakeholders was raised quite rightly in the Consultation Paper, para 9a:

Meeting public information needs, so that stakeholders - and above all students - have information which is up-to-date, consistent and reliable about the quality and standards of teaching and learning at different HEIs and in different subjects.

Employers were not mentioned explicitly, but clearly they and students are the stakeholders most in need of such information. Funding Councils require this information only indirectly, ie. they must ensure that the information satisfies students and employers, not that it satisfies them independently. So clearly, the first step to be taken is to find out what information these two direct stakeholder groups really want in order to influence their actions. Roizen and Jepson (1985) showed just how varied employers' demands are - although 'a large number of employers mentioned [certain] general skills' (p. 154) - and more recent simplistic conclusions as to 'what employers want' would do well to revisit that research. That these general skills seemed in part at least to correlate with middle class values is indicated by the conclusion that 'Oxbridge graduates and those from other leading universities have a very much better chance at "top jobs" than others' (p. 168). This tendency to recruit from the 'best' universities for the 'best' jobs seems in line with the Government's attitude to 'best' universities, which might be called the Laura Spence principle, after the student who, when rejected by Oxford, went to Harvard. Such an approach completely contradicts any considerations of fitness for purpose and while it is true that the Consumer Association at times identifies 'best buys', it generally describes products in terms of a variety of features and leaves it to consumers to make their choice in the light of this more detailed information. Are students and employers really less sophisticated than the average buyer of, say, a toaster, and if that is so, what does that say about higher education, which is supposed to have as one of its functions the development of the critical appraisal of evidence? One outcome of this critical appraisal is surely the opposition of universities to being assessed in terms of an overall numerical grade, an opposition that would be more credible if universities did not apply exactly that approach to the reporting of student performance in terms of degree grades. This is another case of 'What's sauce for the goose, ...'

What the scheme proposed in this paper suggests is that if, and only if, universities are, and are allowed to be, genuinely professional, then this would be the best guarantee for students to receive an excellent education. The provision of information, which can never be more than a minor part of that guarantee, would then at least be produced in a balanced fashion, an approach their staff at present are likely to follow when writing a research article.

Conclusion

The present entrenched position of universities and of the QAA indicate that we have here a conflict situation. So far, the QAA has appeared to be on top, but the universities' defence via

compliance has been remarkably successful. If in the future, the universities should come out on top, there is a serious danger of their reverting to a less than glorious past. Both sides will have to accommodate, if there is to be a resolution of this conflict, and only if that resolution can be achieved can real quality improvement be obtained.

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Biography

Lewis Elton is Professor of Higher Education at University College London, recently made a College wide position. He is an Independent Consultant in Higher Education and in this capacity acted as a Higher Education Adviser to the Employment Department and later the Department for Education and Employment from 1989 to 1996.

He is also Professor Emeritus of Higher Education at the University of Surrey.

Editorial

When Phil Race opened the recent Developing the Developers conference in a shower of teaching taxonomies and post-it notes, you could be forgive for thinking that not much had changed since the first SEDA Annual Conference six years ago. You would be wrong. From Phil's new take on Bloom's taxonomy of teaching verbs to Carol Baume's summary of the current national scene, it was clear that much had moved on. Three kinds of change could perhaps be identified: (a) educational developers were engaging more thoughtfully with the research issues than ever before; (b) new kinds of developer were emerging, often with a specialist interest in for example new technologies; and (c) developers were becoming more closely involved in the strategic thinking of their institutions. Kyriaki Anagnostopoulou and Michelle Haynes' session on 'Managing Ch@nge' seemed to accommodate all three themes, with a bonus point for twenty-first century spelling.

Each of these new demands - the focus on research-led practice, the increasing specialisation among staff working as 'developers', and the strategic focus on institutional change - require specialist resources. This issue of *Educational Developments* aims to provide some timely materials for educational developers and their allies. Graham Gibbs' article on the Impact of Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies (page 12) details some of the strategic changes that have taken place, and that remain to be undertaken, in the role of staff and educational developers. In a survey of 134 institutional strategies he finds evidence of 'extraordinarily rapid' change. Developers have become more 'strategic', 'proactive', 'mainstream' and 'accountable' in their institutions, but at the same time have sacrificed a degree of tactical autonomy. The devolution of budgets for development away from central services poses problems for coordination of effort, even while it supports a more diverse ecology of development practices.

Lewis Elton's article (page 1) explores of a further paradox of the growing strategic importance of educational development: its tendency to be identified with management initiatives, particularly around issues of 'quality'. Elton's call for quality assurance measures based on a commitment to quality enhancement and collegiality suggests one way in which a strategic alignment with 'management' can be used to promote developmental values. His words are invaluable as a guide to current Funding Council politics as well as a call to arms. Gina Wisker's article on page 8 provides a view of how a single institution has supported educational development within the broad strategic environment described by Gibbs and Elton.

Within the broad theme of specialisation, Judith Vincent (page 5) considers some staff development issues in Foundation Degrees and Graduate Apprenticeships. These two initiatives suggest new ways of bridging higher education and the world of work, respectively at the beginning and end of a traditional undergraduate programme. If these initiatives are to benefit students, they require staff and educational developers to work with other specialists in areas such as key skills, course design and work-based learning. Tina Overton (page 15) looks at a second growing area of specialism in learning and teaching - problem based learning - and reviews some web resources to support educational development in this area.

Finally, two articles look in more detail at educational development practice itself. Helen Gale reviews a SEDA 'Networking the Networks' meeting and asks some difficult questions about why networking is such an obviously 'good thing'. And a research study reported by Helen Beetham sets out to ask 'How do representations of our practice enable change to happen?' Like teaching staff, it appears that educational developers too must examine the nuances of our own practice if we are to survive the present educational climate and surf the whitewaters of continuous change.

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- those compiling their portfolios
- and existing Fellowship holders, who may use this opportunity to consider their CPD.

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Foundation Degrees - some staff development issues

Dr Judith Vincent
Dean of Students, Thames Valley University

In the summer of 2000, HEFCE issued invitations to universities to bid for funding for two new developments in vocational education, Foundation Degrees and the Graduate Apprenticeship. David Blunkett first announced the Foundation Degree in his speech at Greenwich in February that year in which he looked forward to an HE system that would 'look very different to the system which evolved in the second half of the twentieth century'. The Foundation Degree is intended to prepare students for employment within a particular sector by drawing on relevant National Occupational Standards in its design, embedding key skills, enabling students to demonstrate their skills within the workplace, and involving employers. It shares these characteristics with the Graduate Apprenticeship (GA), though the two are aimed at different markets. The Foundation Degree is designed as a qualification below honours degree level while the GA, first piloted in 1998, is now intended to focus on provision at honours degree and higher levels. As we now begin to move towards delivery of these two new initiatives, some of the staff development implications of building the new HE system for the twenty-first century are beginning to emerge.

Thames Valley University (TVU) is the lead higher education institution (HEI) in a consortium funded to design and deliver three prototype foundation degrees and TVU is also funded to develop frameworks with the relevant National Training Organisations (NTOs) and implement three Graduate Apprenticeships. The University sees opportunities in these developments to fulfil objectives in the Government's wider agenda, such as social inclusion, enhancing employability of individuals and working with employers to meet the labour market needs of the local and regional economy. We intend to develop the foundation degree primarily for people who want a qualification and career development through work-based learning while continuing in their existing employment. We are targeting it at mature students, typically those in their mid or late twenties who have not previously considered HE but who are now looking for career progression within their existing company or employment sector. From an employer's perspective, the foundation degree can enable a company to 'grow its own'; developing the skills of existing employees through this route can be a cost-effective option to filling skills gaps at the intermediate level. The GA we intend for students moving into their first graduate employment; it may be particularly useful to employers who recruit students from a wide range of disciplines and from non-vocational areas, or to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises which do not run a graduate training programme. The GA's offer of a range of optional units from occupational standards or NVQs and higher level key skills enable it to be tailored to the needs of specific job roles and to an individual's requirements. To students, these new initiatives provide a genuine choice of routes. Each gives a different emphasis to vocational or academic skills, but each provides options to transfer from one route to the other as interests or needs change, as the diagram below illustrates.

Both of these new developments rest on the premise that these courses must differ from those already existing in some fundamental ways.

As a first step to the development of foundation degrees at TVU, we designed a template specifying the characteristics of foundation degrees and providing guidance to course design teams. The headings within our template are as follows:

- Use of occupational standards
- Work-based learning
- Utilisation of e-learning tools
- Key skills
- Progress Files
- AP(E)L opportunities.

Foundations degrees validated by TVU are expected to include all of these features. The headings are derived either directly or indirectly from the requirements set out in the HEFCE invitation to bid to develop prototype foundation degrees. The provision of work-based learning opportunities for all students and the mapping of programme and module outcomes against national occupational standards, for example, are HEFCE requirements. The use of e-learning tools however was a local decision taken in order to provide convenient and flexible delivery and communication channels to learners who may be studying in a variety of contexts, and to share resources within the consortium. The template was designed by the TVU consortium Foundation Degree Development Group. The membership of this group is drawn from the employer, HEI and FE college (FEC) members of the consortium; NTOs and the three prototype subject areas are also represented. The work of this group, which brings together a wide range of perspectives and different kinds of expertise, has resulted in a model we feel confident distinguishes the foundation degree from existing HE level 1 and level 2 qualifications and should ensure consistency of approach across subject areas.

Many academic staff from the University and the partner FECs will have little or no experience in one or more of the areas of the template, and very few staff will feel experienced and confident across all six areas at the outset. Staff development issues arose immediately at the design stage. For example, all foundation degrees must include key skills: to ensure consistency across courses, the consortium requires QCA Level 3 standards in each of the six key skills to be embedded in the learning outcomes of each foundation degree course. Most HE staff were unfamiliar with the QCA standards, and amongst the FEC partners expertise in key skills assessment and portfolio development was largely held by key skills specialists and not

Diagram to illustrate how individuals may transfer from one route to the other
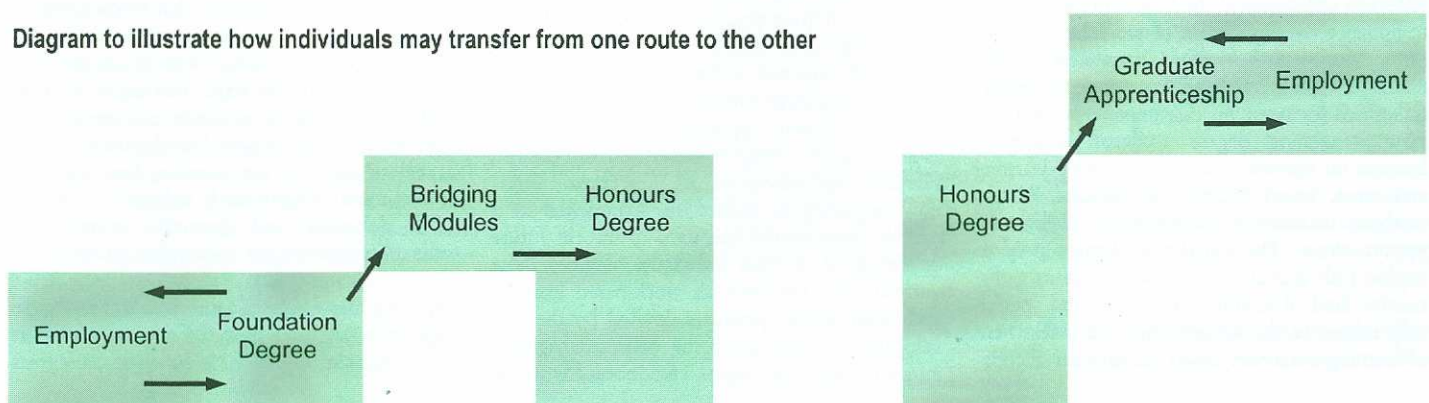
Useful Web Links

Foundation degrees have a web site of their own:
http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk

More on graduate apprenticeships can be found at:
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/graduateapprenticeships

National Occupational Standards can be found through each National Training Organisation, which in turn can be found through the National Council of National Training Organisations, at:
http://www.nto-nc.org

Key Skills specifications can be found through the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority:
http://www.qca.org.uk
or through
http://www.keyskillssupport.net

Information about Progress Files is at:
http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/projects/pdp/

widely shared by subject specialists. Course design teams needed considerable support from key skills specialists in the processes of mapping key skills across the course modules and in writing learning outcomes which would enable students to generate appropriate evidence of attainment of key skills. Similar issues of unfamiliarity amongst academic staff arose in relation to the mapping and embedding of occupational standards as learning outcomes.

Each element of the template has required careful consideration of course teaching and learning strategies and each has thrown up a new set of development issues. Both the University and the partner FECs are in the early stages of introducing virtual learning environments. While the potential of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) to support students through features such as on-line self-assessments, inter-active course materials and discussion groups has been recognised and welcomed, most teaching staff have as yet little experience of the use of these tools and how to integrate them effectively into the design and delivery of courses. The introduction of successful e-learning and teaching strategies within courses presents a formidable staff development task on its own. However in this development it has had to be cross-referenced with other design issues from the template.

Effective utilisation of the VLE can be expected to enhance the experience of work-based learners. Work-based learning is central to the course design; it has been important, therefore, to remain focussed on this experience and not view foundation degree students as remote learners on conventional courses and e-learning and work based learning as simply delivery methods to increase the flexibility of learning opportunities. The foundation degrees need to exploit fully learning in the workplace as a distinctive kind of learning experience and specifically related to the achievement and assessment of learning outcomes based on national occupa-

tional standards. The approach to work-based learning established in the template is based upon the following principles:

- Work-based learning must form part of the teaching and learning strategy of all foundation degree courses.

- All modules must be designed so that they are capable of delivery and completion through work-based learning.

- Work-based learning should be regarded as a new learning skill; all students should receive support and academic credit for the development of this skill.

- All students should normally have a workplace mentor while undertaking work-based learning.

While some of the consortium's prototype foundation degrees are in areas where there are already strong partnerships with employers and existing experience of work-based learning, others are in areas which have previously been predominantly college-based. To tackle this diversity of experience between course teams, a subgroup of the Foundation Degree Development Group was formed with employer, HEI and FEC members from the three prototype degree course teams; the group developed guidelines and codes of good practice to ensure the sharing of existing good practice and expertise. The sharing of expertise within the Foundation Degree Development Group provides a powerful staff development opportunity, pulling together as it does such a range of expertise from the FE, HE and employment sectors. The consortium is now beginning to collect this experience so it can be disseminated and used to inform future development of other foundation degrees. The template, the guidance on work-based learning and other similar products devised by the Development Group are being collected together into a Foundation Degree Handbook for future

designers and deliverers of TVU-validated Foundation Degrees.

As well as developing guidance on particular parts of the template, it has also been necessary to ensure that its various elements are appropriately linked. The principle that work-based learning should be recognised as a learning skill and given support and academic credit, for example, is being realised by integrating this with key skills development and the introduction of Progress Files. An electronic progress file is being piloted with the first cohorts of foundation degrees students. The personal development plan section of the progress file will include the student's negotiated learning agreement which can be shared by electronic means with the course tutor and the work-place mentor. The personal development plan and learning agreement will be reviewed regularly and can be used in appropriate goal setting by the student, the development of reflective learning skills and the management of the student's progress. Use of the personal development plan with tutor and mentor support will enable the student to generate evidence towards claiming competence against the key skill of improving one's own learning and performance. Again, however, the tools and the learning approaches implied here are not familiar to all members of staff in the consortium institutions or to the work-place mentors. There has been little time to address such issues prior to the launch of these new degrees.

Devising and implementing a staff development strategy and action plan for foundation degrees has been greatly complicated by the timescale for the introduction of these new degrees. The invitation to bid for the development of foundation degrees was issued in July 2000. Bids had to be submitted by October, and news that the bid was successful was not received until late November. The first meeting of the TVU Development Group did not take place until January, the degrees were validated in July and enrolment of the first students took place in September. Staff development in the first six months had to focus on the needs of the course designers. In addition, the shortness of the timescale has meant that in many cases it has not been known till very late exactly who would be teaching on the new courses. It is going to be important to the success of these new degrees that the designers' vision of the foundation degree is shared by all staff involved, in FE Colleges, the University and in the employer organisations. Not only that, but support in realising that vision needs to be available to that whole range of staff in these disparate locations. How this is to be carried out in the longer term is not yet clear. During the prototype stage, funding to support staff development is available and the consortium Foundation Degree Development Group is able to assist in the planning how the staff development programme is delivered, to whom it is delivered and generally oversee co-ordination between the consortium partners.

Once we move beyond the funded prototype stage, it is not clear how the necessary support to the next round of new foundation degrees

can be provided. If there is no funding to support this work or to co-ordinate the work of HEIs and FECs it is difficult to see how such a radically different award can continue to move forward. There will be a danger that the foundation degree will slip back to resemble existing undergraduate provision if staff are not supported in the introduction of new learning and teaching methods. There is also a danger to the quality of the provision if there is not adequate and appropriate staff development across the HE and FEC providers to support the introduction of this new award.

There are many challenges that lie ahead in terms of staff development to get Foundation Degrees safely off the ground, and the Government's timescales do not seem to take account of this. However, these are very exciting developments. The foundation degrees and related developments such as the graduate apprenticeships have the potential to reshape vocation education and bring about the fundamental changes in the system that David Blunkett envisaged in his Greenwich speech. But to effect such a change will require HEIs to address a number of inter-related and complex curriculum development issues, all of which have considerable staff development implications. Their complexity and the amount of time needed to introduce very different learning and teaching strategies must not be under-estimated.

International Conference Announcements

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12-15 June 2002
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http://www.mcmaster.ca/learning/stlhe2002/

4th World Conference of ICED
Spheres of Influence: ventures and visions in educational development
3-6 July 2002
Perth, Western Australia
http://www.csd.uwa.edu.au/iced2002/

HERDSA Conference 2002
Quality Conversations
7-10 July 2002
Perth, Western Australia
http://www.ecu.edu.au/conferences/herdsa

TLHE Symposium 2002
Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
4-6 September 2002
Singapore
http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/tlhe/

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Details of how to apply for SEDA membership can be found on the SEDA website at:
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Learning and Teaching Strategies in Action: Fellowships and Learning Research at Anglia Polytechnic University

Gina Wisker FSEDA
Director of Learning and Teaching Development, Anglia Polytechnic University

When deciding how best to use the HEFCE learning and teaching funding to ensure supported quality learning and teaching, many universities will have similar choices to those taken by the Learning and Teaching Unit at Anglia Polytechnic University (APU).

Our decisions were, of course, in line with both the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, and the expectations of HEFCE, who recognise the strategy and fund much of its implementation. The University and its schools also fund significant elements of our developments from their own resources. We set up a Learning and Teaching Unit with a Director of Learning and Teaching Development (Gina Wisker) and a small administrative and support team. We decided that we wished to offer a variety of services to support the variety of learning and teaching needs around the university.

Issues specific to APU have been taken into consideration. The university is split site and regional, involving partner colleges and NHS trust contacts spanning a radius of over 120 miles in the East Anglia, Essex and Cambridge areas. It has profiles in successful Widening Participation activities, work related professional learning, and internationalisation.

The decision was to divide energies and funding into several strands:

1. Learning and Teaching Fellowships

2. Learning and Teaching Research

3. Advisers in the Schools

4. A central programme involving workshops, consultancies and support for Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA).

1. Learning and Teaching Fellowships

Three levels of Fellowships were advertised internally: Learning and Teaching Fellowships, Senior and Principal Learning and Teaching Fellowships.

The six Senior Learning and Teaching Fellows were appointed for three years and are working on projects covering the following areas:

- Identifying and Promoting Excellence in Teaching

- Impact of Curriculum 2000 for APU

- Extending Open and Distance Learning using the new technologies

- Development of a learning and teaching strategy for the creation and operation of flexible learning environments.

Fellows are appointed twice a year with March and September starting dates. Most projects last a full year and are awarded up to £5000.

The first appointed Learning and Teaching Fellows (approx 20) worked on project areas including:

- Mentoring

- Learning and Teaching styles and outcomes of International Degree Access students

- Using video to support development of quality teaching

- Developing use of games, role-play, scenarios and related techniques in teaching of History, Politics and so on

- Making a variety of videos by filming English Language at various levels

- Researching Student Feedback systems.

Subsequently two Principal Learning and Teaching Fellows have been appointed to work half time with the Learning and Teaching Unit. One has a regional base and comes from a partner college where he is also working on an e-learning project, and the other leads the university's 'E-Learning Taskforce'. For a full list of projects see our web site at http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ltu/

Support and development for the Fellows

The large shifting fellowships team is very exciting and dynamic to work with. They not only have their own innovative ideas, experience and projects, but share these with other fellows in organised sessions, and encourage other colleagues to become involved (some of whom then later bid for fellowships).

We have an initial induction meeting establishing a group dynamic, clarifying processes and sharing ideas and projects. New Fellows then share work with established Fellows in a series

Fellowships are aimed at encouraging some or all of the following:

Fellows are expected to undertake substantial work in learning/teaching/assessment and / or learning and teaching research. Some fellowships involve small collaborative teams working together, and several have also costed in researcher support.

- Developing, innovating/problem solving using active research and other models.

- Working with the rest of the Learning and Teaching team in action research formats as an action learning group - fellows meet several times a year for sharing and development work.

- Working with others in relation to needs identification, development, research and facilitation of others' uptake of the development via group and committee work and dissemination of findings.

- Working with others regionally, nationally and internationally.

- Publications in approved form and conference presentations.

- Those involved in cognate development are encouraged to work together in sub groups in action learning format discussing information and sharing ideas

- Fellows are expected to deliver internal workshops and to contribute to the Learning and Teaching Conferences.

of structured support, planning and development sessions. These usually comprise 'What's on top', reporting of the projects and other school, national or international developments; planning towards our twice yearly conferences at which fellows disseminate and run workshops; and a development session, at which we 'teach', 'train' or 'facilitate' each other tackling such issues as project management, consultancy, games and simulations, Curriculum 2000 and writing for publication. Fellows are also encouraged to present and publish their work both inside and outside APU, facilitated by writing reports and by individual support.

The aim behind development sessions, individual meetings and the encouragement of teams working together on related projects is to *fully embed* good practice and change by building a 'people culture' and a culture of supported, positive learning and teaching development.

2. Learning and Teaching Research

Many of the fellowships involve learning and teaching research as an element which ensures that projects are underpinned by research into student learning and the links between teaching and learning, and that effects are evaluated. Other staff are involved in this research also.

The research is centred around three core groups; Postgraduate learning - with PhD students; International Business Studies students; and the Disciplinary Group (comprising undergraduates in English, Women's Studies, Law and Dip Social Work). The PhD research is in its fourth year, the discipline research is in its third year and the international business research, its first year.

In each of the three different research projects an action research format is used comprising questionnaires and focus group interviews. In the PhD research, research provides information on the possible dissonance between research-as-learning approaches, research methods chosen and hoped-for research outcomes. In each instance the action research is shared with the students and informs staff understanding of how students learn and how various strategies we pursue can better enable students in their learning.

The first two projects have led to several conference presentations, eg. at EARLI (European Association for Research in Learning and Instruction) and the ISL (Improving Student Learning) - and fed into at least two publications: *Good Practice Supervising Postgraduate Students (1999)*, and *Good Practice Working with International Students (2000)*.

Some of the current research areas include:

1. Discipline-based, Undergraduate Learning Styles Action Research

2. Postgraduate Student Learning

3. Good Practice in Working with International Students

4. Researching Our Teaching

5. Internationalising the curriculum and employability

6. Enhancing the language for study skills of International Postgraduate Students

7. Student Retention

8. ESF - Empower.

3. Advisers

Each school has an adviser for learning and teaching development and this role involves co-ordinating, supporting, liaising and encouraging learning and teaching development across their schools and in relation to the rest of the university. Now they are becoming more established in their posts, they are running workshops, supporting colleagues writing their Institute for Learning and Teaching submissions, supporting TLA for QAA visits. Advisers are also supported with development sessions and regular meetings which help build networks and practices of *sharing*.

4. Central Programme - Videos and Publications

To support staff new to teaching and their roles at APU, the Learning and Teaching Unit has produced to date, 2 booklets to date:

Surviving the First Year: Preparing to Teach is a brief introduction to teaching for those embarking on their new career at APU. Short and succinct, the booklet is full of easy-to-read bullet points and boxes of tips. Topics include preparing for your first class and facilitating active learning.

Surviving the First Year: Settling In provides staff members with brief information on APU at a glance, when you need it in a hurry and don't want to be hampered with intricate detail. It covers such issues as how to change your contact details on the Intranet staff list, where to get a free panic alarm and what to do when your equipment malfunctions.

We are currently putting together videos to support all staff in their learning and teaching roles, with the first couple on lecturing and working with small groups.

It has been exciting and enjoyable working together to build these various roles and networks. We hope they all bear fruit as *colleagues* perceive the genuine opportunities to recognise and support learning and teaching development, and *students* appreciate and benefit in their learning from the shared, embedded good practices arising from projects, fellowships, advisory roles, materials development and the learning and teaching research we are all involved in.

References

Gina Wisker and Nick Sutcliffe (Ed.) (1999) **Good Practice in Postgraduate Supervision**. Birmingham: SEDA Paper 106

Gina Wisker (Ed.) (2000) **Good Practice Working with International Students**. Birmingham: SEDA Paper 110

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Would You Recognise a Network If You Bumped into One?
Review of the 5th SEDA "Networking the Networks" Meeting
17th-18th October 2001, Manchester

In October this year 25 participants gathered at the Manchester Conference Centre to 'use time and space for personal and serendipitous networking'.

Under Sally Fincher's thoughtful and incisive facilitation, delegates from Learning and Teaching Support Networks (do you see the LTSN as one or many networks?) and from Educational Development Units began to unravel some of their issues about networks.

Planned as a one day activity, but spread over two days, ie from lunch time on one day to lunch time on the next, this worked as a good model for such an event.

The first afternoon began with what would normally be regarded as an opening round ice-breaker - Who are you? Where are you from? What are your issues? - but developed into the centre of the whole event.

Continual encouragement to commit our thoughts to the ubiquitous post-it soon began to build a wall of ideas. Further activity as we were regularly motivated to 'walk the wall' (below right) began to show patterns within and collation of those ideas.

The question of types of network and hence definitions of the word 'network' began to emerge. It became clear that there were different kinds of issues for the LTSN staff in establishing national networks across institutions and the education developers developing networks within institutions. As usual, such a conference produced more questions than answers and was more thought provoking than problem solving. However, it did give us some foci for our questions, which will prove useful to all and should significantly help in the evaluation of networks.

What?

One of the most interesting sessions involved us in trying to define a network and attempting to suggest models of networks. Is it a solar system or a Milky Way? Is it a website, a series of events or a newsletter? Is it a noun or a verb? Is it a honeycomb? Perhaps it's an Indra's net? (See the web site for an explanation of that reference.)

Who?

There were practical issues of who are 'key contacts' and what you do when you ring up your given key contact to be told 'he's on sabbatical for 2 years' (!) How do we reach beyond the usual suspects? Is networking a female activity while men get on with the real work? Are the significant people in a network those on the 'cusp' who work in overlapping circles?

How?

This was the question that really underpinned a great deal of our issues. Conventional and unconventional methods were discussed and offered as examples of successful networks. Virtual networks - the establishment and maintenance of - were to the front of our thoughts.

The relationship between electronic and face-to-face communication is an area where we could perhaps use developing learning theories.

Within a network, the etiquette of joining, participation and withdrawal and movement between those phases gave some different perspectives. The ways of animating a network led to inevitable conclusions that there is no single model of successful practice, but more an awareness of a range of models which might work at particular times given particular circumstances.

Where?

On the second morning James Wisdom gave us some useful insights into the functioning of national networks based around projects such as FDTL and developing those strengths and expertise into the current Subject Centres.

When?

During this session we developed the idea of the life cycle, both of the individual within the network and of the network itself.

Why?

Why we all thought 'networking' was a good thing to do or what exactly was the value added by a network was a question that we perhaps should have dealt with in more detail. It was, of course, the centre of deep and meaningful philosophical debate in the bar that night!

What now?

So, we still don't know all the answers, but we do have a wide range of questions and some tentative frameworks for analysis. In particular I think I will take away some significantly different ways of evaluating the networks I take part in and the networks I attempt to initiate and maintain.

Our thanks to Sally Fincher and Su White for the work they put in both in front of and behind the cameras and to Kerry Phillips of SEDA who was able to share her experiences of attempting to network members, adherents and just hangers-on of SEDA!

For further thoughts and developments in this area see Sally Fincher's web site:

http://www.cs.ukc.ac.uk/people/staff/saf/
networks/networking-networkers/main.html

Helen Gale
University of Wolverhampton
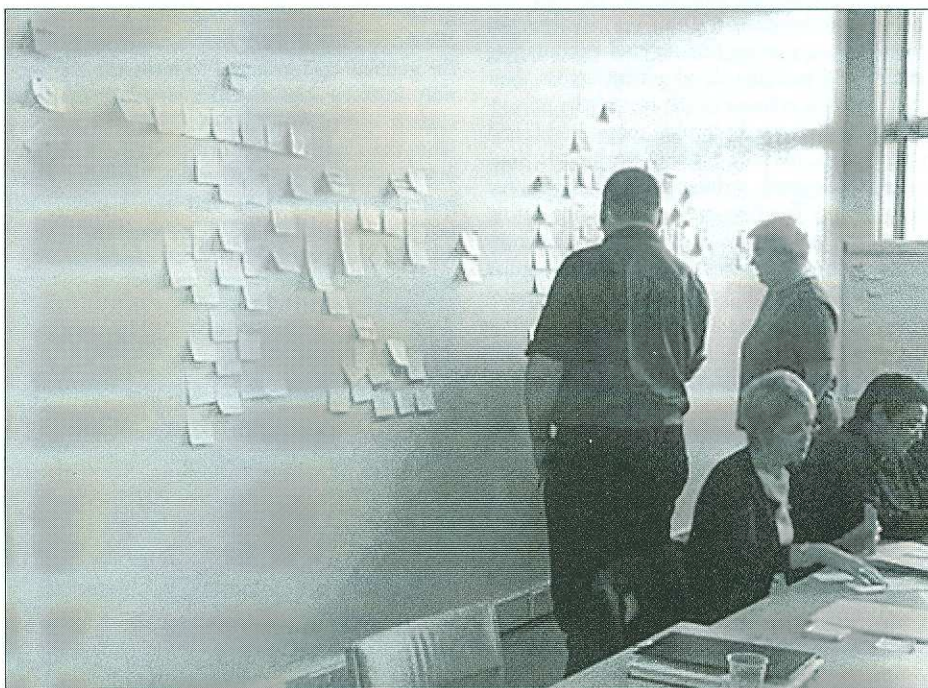
Participants are encouraged to 'walk the wall'

Interview with Julie Hall - SEDA's first Development Officer

At the start of 2002 thirty eight year old Julie Hall will join SEDA's staff as a Development Officer. Julie looks forward to working in Birmingham where she was born and bred and where she still has family. Julie says ...

Although I'll be spending some of my time at SEDA office I'll also be working from home in London and will be doing a lot more travelling around the country to SEDA meetings, visiting other SEDA contacts etc. My partner Tim will be taking over more of the care for the three children and giving me 'my turn' to explore a new career direction.

Julie's degree was in English and Politics followed by an MA in Urban Education.

This reinforced my commitment to issues of widening participation which have been a major focus of my work at South Thames College over the past 12 years. Special needs is another focus. Tim lectures in this area and I am a governor at my children's primary school which is one of the first 'Beacon Schools for Inclusion'. It has involved me in the project to design it to met the needs of a wide range of disabilities. It's an exciting brand new building and looks like an IKEA school.

Like many developers Julie has a range of responsibilities including ongoing Teacher Education, staff development workshops on current issues eg retention, assessment for learning and a HEFCE funded project to produce an electronic and CD study skills package for first year students.

My first links with SEDA were as part of the dissemination of a project carried out in collaboration with London Guildhall University. We had interviewed 60 students around issues of retention. We came up with many of the factors you would expect but also some surprises. For example, many of the students at semester 1 were impatient to gather a body of knowledge and feel validated as a real part of the academic community. Thus study support at this stage was somewhat ignored. It was only later when students saw its value that they were able to refer themselves. I wrote about our findings in Educational Developments, [issue 2.1, Spring 2001] and ran a session with co-worker Andrea Williams from London Guildhall University on 'Good Practice in Collaborative Progression' at the SEDA conference in Glasgow last Easter. This was my first real contact with SEDA and it was a revelation. I was bowled over to discover all these other people who think and care about the same things as I do and who share similar ideas of how we might go about addressing them. I became a SEDA person at first sight.

SEDA took to Julie with equal conviction at her interview where she talked about how her career has been moving inexorably into educational development over recent years. The panel was impressed by her passion and commitment to the issues and ability to convey her beliefs, values and enthusiasm as well as her skills in com-

municating with a range of people. The potential contribution from her considerable experience across the increasingly important areas between FE/HE is particularly welcomed as SEDA Executive had previously identified this as a growing area of concern for staff and educational developers.

I feel I can use my networking skills in liaising with the different bodies SEDA works with as well as bringing an understanding of non traditional students.

Outside work, Julie's interests involve walking, travelling and reading. Most recent reads were Francis Wheen's biography of Marx and 'Fast Food Nation' - read when in the US last summer. Some probing also revealed that she is an avid Birmingham City supporter and holds a season ticket for her local football team Wimbeldon.

SEDA has always been a members' organisation and all the work has been undertaken by enthusiastic volunteers. However this has become more difficult with the need to keep abreast (and / or ahead of) so many developments at the same time as all of us in the sector are becoming ever busier. This is the first time that SEDA has offered a paid post. So what will Julie be doing for SEDA? Well everything it seems. At recent meetings when actions are identified, there's a chorus of 'That's a good job for the Development Officer!'. Although her appointment is part-time for eighteen months, Julie will work full-time initially to get her feet under the table and have some space to find another part-time post which she can fit around her SEDA work. However even full-time won't enable her to do the 'everything' that is being pushed her

way. Currently the chairs are working with her to identify the key themes and those that she can get her teeth into immediately. One of these will be Equal Opportunities. SEDA feels that as this is one of the most important SEDA Values, we should draw up a SEDA equal opportunities statement to inform and underpin this. As this issue relates closely to Julie's experience she will be doing some of the work to pull this together and drawing input or comment from others this area.

Where possible Julie will also be involved with liaising with the LTSNs and will accompany members of the SEDA Executive Committee who, between them, are planning to visit them all. She has already worked with the Art and Design LTSN on a project on retention.

This was a real opportunity to share our findings with other lecturers working at grassroots level with widening participation. I am looking forward to similar collaborative ventures and building on the good work of SEDA. I am very pleased and excited to be taking up this post especially at this time when there seems to be a real momentum to CPD developments and the widening participation agenda. My many years of experience at the interface between FE and HE has provided me, I think with some of the skills required for this challenging post including the ability to work simultaneously on a number of projects while retaining a sense of humour!

Julie Hall speaking to Hazel Fullerton FSEDA, Co-Chair of SEDA, at the 6th Annual SEDA Conference for Staff and Educational Developers held in Manchester in November 2002.

Julie Hall (left) and Hazel Fullerton at the SEDA Annual Conference in Manchester 2002

The Impact of Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies on the Nature of Educational Development

Graham Gibbs

National Co-ordination Team, Centre for Higher Education Practice, The Open University

Background

This paper takes as its starting point some predictions made in 1999 about the way the use by institutions of learning and teaching strategies might change educational development as an activity (Gibbs, 2000). Since then:

- the English funding council has allocated £50m to support institutions to implement strategies and all 134 English institutions now have such a strategy;
- the Welsh funding council has undertaken a similar initiative, though without guidance, support or adequate funding;
- the Scottish Funding council has stated a requirement (linked to funding) that institutions have a 'quality enhancement strategy'.

I and Trevor Habeshaw undertook an analysis of the nature of learning and teaching strategies in 1998, before these initiatives were started, published in the form of a guide to good practice (HEFCE, 1999) and a more analytic article (Gibbs, Habeshaw and Yorke, 2000). I and Sally Harmsworth then undertook a second analysis, of all 134 English strategies, in 2000 in order to understand what progress had been made, and this was published in the form of a second guide to good practice, containing 30 or so case studies illustrating new patterns of activity (HEFCE, 2001a) and a research report (HEFCE, 2001b) quantifying some of what was changing. I have also undertaken visits and consultancies with a wide range of institutions, from Russell Group Universities to FE Colleges with large HE components, and been involved in national meetings in Wales and in Scotland. It seems clear that educational development is indeed changing, and extraordinarily rapidly.

The aim of this paper is to explore what has actually happened as the improvement of teaching has become more strategic in nature, and whether the predictions made in 1999 bear any resemblance to how things have actually worked out. Much of the evidence I have used comes from documentation and this may exaggerate or hide what takes place on the ground. It also represents an 'average' picture and underestimates the sheer variety of approach across institutions. In addition each institution started out on this shift to strategic change at a different point, and even for those that all started together when they were offered funding, the rate of progress has varied and so the past two years represents a different point in the journey for different institutions. Some of the gap between rhetoric and reality, and some of the variation between institutions, was discussed at a session devoted to this topic at the SEDA staff development conference in November 2001.

Predictions

Educational developers would be involved in analysing the context institutions found themselves in and the implications for teaching, learning and assessment, and would provide sound educational rationales for strategies so that they didn't look like 'management speak' hanging unsupported in mid air

In 1999 very few strategies had a clear and justified rationale and most looked as though they were written by people who knew little or nothing about teaching and learning. It was hard to imagine experienced teachers being convinced. Unfortunately little has changed. Even though educational developers have sometimes reported that they were involved in writing strategies, or in some cases wrote the whole thing on their own, most strategies still lack any kind of coherent and convincing rational that would justify the proposed goals or actions. In contrast the University of Trondheim has published and debated a book which provides the underlying rationale for radical changes in their pedagogy, and is now moving on to working out how to implement it. Educational developers may have missed an important opportunity here and institutions may pay the price of trying to implement unconvincing and poorly argued strategies.

Educational developers would progressively find themselves concentrating more on strategy and less on tactics

In 1999 'strategies' were often little more than loose bundles of policies, and educational developers were free to spend a lot of their time working at the level of detail of individual teachers' practice or of course design, unencumbered by institutional priorities or managed change processes. By 2001 more than two thirds of all learning and teaching strategies were genuinely strategic and with a greatly reduced emphasis on tactics.

Educational developers would be more pro-active (and less reactive)

In 1999 institutions seemed unaware that for anything to actually happen you needed to enlist change mechanisms and take the initiative rather than rely on individual teachers or course teams to come forward and ask for support. Only 10% of strategies mentioned any change mechanisms at all and in these were mentioned an average of 1.5 mechanisms each. By 2001 76% of strategies listed change mechanisms, with an average of six change mechanisms each. Educational developers are being expected to go out proactively and do things listed in the strategy (and to do more of them of a wider variety of kinds) rather

than wait in their offices for enthusiasts to turn up. While this may be an unfair picture of the contrast, and in practice educational developers have always been somewhat proactive, the difference in institutional awareness of how to bring about focused change is very striking.

Educational developers would re-orient themselves to new goals and targets

The proportion of institutions with clear goals (such as improving retention or employability) has doubled (to 50%) and the proportion setting explicit quantitative targets against which progress could be gauged has also doubled - but only to 20%. However many goals are still couched in such general terms (such as 'student centred learning' or 'flexible learning') that it would be difficult without further thinking and analysis to operationalise these goals into targets (such as a change in the in- to out-of-class hours ratio from an average of 1:2 to 1:3 by 2005 while improving retention and student satisfaction ratings). This has left educational developers with the problem of interpreting what is meant and working to poorly articulated goals and has allowed teachers and departments to claim that they are already doing it anyway or that it is so poorly articulated that they don't know what to do.

Educational developers would be involved in evaluating the impact of the strategy

Educational developers have always been involved in evaluation of teaching, usually of courses and sometimes of programmes. I assumed that they would become involved in summative evaluation of the entire institutional shift taking place and undertaking and formative evaluation of the change process, so as to feed back into the development of implementation of the strategy. While the proportion of strategies mentioning evaluation has doubled (to 46%) only 3% of strategies had a well developed evaluation component that could have guided educational developers, or where you could see what the evaluation activity might consist of. There are a very small number of well developed exceptions, such as the University of Coventry, and I suspect we have a lot to learn from them.

There would be re-organisation of support functions

Some early learning and teaching strategies focussed on the 'joined up thinking' involved in rationalising student services, educational development, the computer service, the library, the widening access unit, and so on, into a more coherent infrastructure pulling in the same direction. In fact very little of this has happened ...

so far. Perhaps the HEFCE's 'Strategy of the Week' approach to initiatives has simply left people struggling to keep up with incompatible and poorly scheduled external demands.

Educational developers would find themselves managing larger budgets

In England at least there has been a very significant investment in educational development. The proportion of institutions that now have 'innovation funds', for example, has increased from 9% to 49% in only two years, and many institutions have added funding of their own (though a few have cynically stopped internal funding now that they have external funds). There has never been such a rapid rate of change in investment. However while some educational development units are having the time of their life, not all of this funding is being channelled through them. Some is being managed by new committees or groups and much is being devolved straight to departments. While total funding has increased markedly the locus of control has clearly shifted.

New types of educational development staff would be appointed

This is perhaps the most significant change of all for educational development. A third of all institutions have made new types of salaried appointments (such as e-learning co-ordinators) and many more have established new roles for existing staff - such as departmental teaching co-ordinators. This recent change is not confined to England - in Scotland a SHEFC funded project (PROMOTE) has explored the proliferation of these roles and how effective they are. At the SEDA staff development conference about a half of all participants were new to SEDA - an astonishing proportion. These staff undertake different and more narrowly focussed roles to 'traditional' educational developers (with expertise in a discipline or a technology, for example, rather than being general purpose developers), and have extensive personal and professional development needs which must be met if they are to perform these new roles effectively. Educational developers are finding themselves at the heart of a network of these new staff they are now responsible for supporting, while the role of front line support for teachers is now being performed by these new staff.

Emphasising Institute for Learning and Teaching membership to a greater extent

81% of institutions' learning and teaching strategies now commit themselves to supporting ILT membership - often through dramatic policy shifts (such as requiring ILT membership for every level of promotion, right up to Professor). In some institutions, such as the University of Leeds, this has involved a major re-orientation of effort from educational developers. If the ILT's CPD requirements emerge involving any rigour then educational developers will have another big job on their hands.

Educational developers would be involved in developing and implementing new mechanisms for the recognition and reward of teaching

Five times as many institutions have committed themselves to rewarding excellent teaching as two years previously and only a third of institutions have now not built such mechanisms into their learning and teaching strategy. In many cases this is still an aspiration rather than a fully working system. Many of the schemes being developed and implemented involve recognising willingness to lead change in strategic directions rather than rewarding past teaching of a personally oriented kind. A project being undertaken by the National Co-ordination Team at the Open University is currently collating and disseminating case material on the wide range of new mechanisms being developed.

Educational developers would become involved in spotting and addressing infrastructure blocks that prevent innovation at the margins from being mainstreamed

Almost no progress has been made in terms of learning and teaching strategies recognising and addressing what stops change from happening so, at present, there is very little for educational developers to become involved in. However some institution-wide 'teaching groups' and 'change teams' involve close working relationships with senior management (eg. the PVC Teaching) and this passes up though the system the frustrations and blocks of teachers which senior management need to tackle. There is little evidence that educational developers are playing a significant role in this.

Educational development would be seen as mainstream rather than as a peripheral service

Evidence about this is hard to glean from learning and teaching strategies, though the proportion of institutions seeing staff development and CPD as a central plank of strategic change has increased from 6% to 91%. Some educational development Heads have been moved into central committees and groups, working alongside senior management. In other contexts educational development has effectively been by-passed and new frameworks put in place to co-ordinate and manage change. This may depend as much on the standing of key individuals as on models of organisational change.

Educational development would become more accountable, with targets and formal reporting

In the past educational development has sometimes had the image of a nebulous process of unclear and unmeasurable impact which is probably a good thing but which could not be expected to work to performance indicators in the way others have to. Weakly focused reviews took place after about five years if there were general doubts about the value of the exercise but these managed to draw on little evidence. No more. Every English institution has to report to the HEFCE annually on the delivery of its operational plan, usually listing targets for activities (inputs), sometimes listing outputs and very occasionally listing outcomes. Reporting to the PVC Teaching or to new institutional groups has become much more formal and more frequent. This has probably sharpened planning but may have fostered an obsession with volume of delivery over substance of impact. Only when we have some smart targets that reflect important goals and values will educational development be able to report in more worthwhile ways on progress.

Educational developers will work less often with mavericks and will have less autonomy

Funds for innovation are now clearly targeted on institutional goals. Educational development units are signing contracts with departments to deliver support work targeted at departmental priorities. Workshop programmes are designed around the mission and strategy priorities. Some of the teaching enthusiasts have crossed the table and are now part time developers. When individual teachers turn up asking for help educational developers may have to turn them away. Evidence about this is largely anecdotal but developers appear to have traded autonomy for influence, and those that have not done this deal have been by-passed.

Conclusions

Some of my predictions were optimistic or just plain wrong. Some of the changes I anticipated are just too difficult and simply take longer. But many have already happened - astonishingly quickly and to an extraordinary extent. The documentation may be a little ahead of practice, but it is clear what is going on. The challenge for educational development as a profession is to be fully aware of the scale and nature of these changes and to drive them or at least keep up with them, rather than be left behind. We have special expertise that is desperately needed. We must engage with the new types of staff adopting new development roles and learn how to engage effectively with middle and senior management in their strategic planning. Much of this will be uncomfortable and few of us actually know how to tackle these new tasks yet. But we are clearly crucial to the large scale changes going on. Institutions are relying on us to deliver. This is a step change in our profession and an 'organisational crack' within our institutions of a kind we have rarely seen before. Lets get it right!

References overleaf ...

References from previous article

Gibbs, G (2000) Learning and Teaching Strategies: the implications for educational development *Educational Developments* 1,1, pp1-5

Gibbs, G, Habeshaw, T and Yorke, M (2000) Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies in English Higher Education. *Higher Education*

HEFCE (1999) *Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies - a guide to good practice.* Circular 99/55. Bristol: Higher education Funding Council for England

HEFCE (2001) *Strategies for learning and teaching in higher education - a guide to good practice.* Circular 01/37. Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England

HEFCE (2001) *Analysis of strategies for learning and teaching.* Research Report by Graham Gibbs. HEFCE 01/37a. Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England

Bidding Announced for FDTL Phase 4

In October 2001, HEFCE announced their invitation for projects to bid for funding under FDTL Phase 4. Documents have been distributed to all HEIs and FEIs with relevant HE courses. These are also available to download from the HEFCE website at:

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/
hefce/2001/01_60.htm

The timetable for Phase 4 is as follows:

25 January 2002 - first stage bids to reach HEFCE by midday at the latest

20 March 2002 - feedback and decision from the HEFCE

25-26 March 2002 - HEFCE / NCT seminar for successful stage one projects

17 May 2002 - submission date for stage two bids

26 July 2002 - final decision made by the HEFCE

From October 2002 - projects start

Further information can also be found on the TQEF National Co-ordination Team's website at:

http://www.ncteam.ac.uk/projects/
fdtl/fdtl4/

Contents of Vol 2 (2001) to date

Back issues of all the above are available from the SEDA Office, price £4 per copy.

Web Resources for Problem Based Learning

Tina Overton
Director, LTSN Physical Sciences
University of Hull

Whilst preparing to present a workshop on problem based learning recently, I carried out search on the internet for relevant resources which might be useful to participants. The Google search engine came up with 1.5 million hits with no trouble at all. Of course, no academic is ever going to make even a modest attempt at browsing a tiny fraction of those. What follows here are brief summaries of the some of the more interesting and useful aspects of several sites on problem based learning (PBL) which I discovered.

Most PBL websites give a definition of the key characteristics of problem based learning and extol the virtues of the approach. Most give extensive lists of links to other sites and, consequently, almost any PBL website is a reasonable starting point. Few attempt to give any sort of realistic advice on implementation, overcoming difficulties, preparing staff and students, or writing the problems for students to use. Even fewer sites give examples of problems and many that do so give materials which are, to say the least, disappointing. Much of what is presented as PBL is really no more than reasonably creative problem solving.

Most quality PBL sites originate in the USA, Canada and Australia. Much of what is available is in Medical education but is often still applicable to other disciplines. Many of the sites are interdisciplinary and provide resources and ideas which many practitioners may find useful.

1. The University of Adelaide's Advisory Centre for University Education is home to the 'Leap into PBL' website. (Its sister sites, 'Leap into…' lifelong learning, student centred learning and on-line learning, are also worth a closer look.) This site is aimed primarily at the university teacher who wishes to explore this approach for the first time, but may also be useful to the teacher who has dabbled with PBL. The site aims to provide a structure around which practitioners can build their own course. It includes a step by step induction to PBL and covers a wide range of issues such as training staff, preparing students, assessment, evaluation, dealing with non-participation, keeping the groups going, and timetabling sessions. It also provides guidance on writing problems that do not gloss over the effort and time involved. This is a very useful and practical site and is a good staring point, especially for the lecturer new to PBL.

2. The National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science is a real treasure trove of case studies, most of which easily fall within the PBL definition. There are examples of cases covering many areas of science and links to a large number of sites which could provide ideas for new cases. This is an excellent place to start if you are thinking of writing your own problems.

3. The Problem Based Learning Initiative at Southern Illinois University concentrates mainly on medical education but is very useful for the basics such as the essential requirements for PBL. If you are interested in medical education then they have a range of books, videos, PBL modules and patient simulations to buy. The bibliography is very comprehensive.

4. The University of Samford Center for Problem Based Learning organises their site under the headings Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why? and all the subsections are fairly standard stuff. The section which deserves a closer look is How?, which provides free access to the in-house journal 'PBL Insight', which is a source of some useful articles and invites submissions from authors.

5. The San Diego State University Distributed Course Delivery for PBL site provides an online workshop in PBL which could form the basis of do-it-yourself staff development. This could be another good starting point for academics new to PBL. The 'Learning Tree' section provides comprehensive coverage of the subject and is particularly strong on assessment, implementation and overcoming barriers and obstacles. The site also includes an extensive bibliography.

6. The University of Delaware site is extremely useful. The list of books has links directly to reviews or publishers. There are several full text articles as well as back issues of the in-house journal 'About Teaching' which features many articles on PBL. There are also a number of sample problems taken mainly from the sciences. By far the most useful feature of this site, and perhaps of any that I came across, is the PBL Clearinghouse which is a searchable collection of many peer reviewed problems. The Clearinghouse is accessed via an email username and password but these are easily available and I was signed up within minutes. Once into the Clearinghouse users can search by keyword, author or discipline. There is also an invitation to become an author or reviewer. This is a really excellent resource.

7. McMaster University in Canada has a long tradition in PBL. One staff member, PK Rangachari, has some very useful advice related to writing problems in his 'Writing Problems: A Personal Casebook'. This casebook discusses the many aspects of writing good quality problems and includes many examples drawn mainly from the biomedical and biological sciences.

8. At Queens University Ontario, the School of Medicine PBL site contains a downloadable version of 'The PBL Handbook' which is a useful guide to many aspects of PBL. Although the examples used to illustrate the handbook are drawn from medicine, the book is generic enough to ensure that it is widely applicable and it could be potentially useful to those new to the subject.

9. The University of Maastricht site contains many links to other PBL sites. The advantage of their list over many others is that the links given here are categorised under several headings such as goals and general description, bibliographies, cases, and institutional sites, arranged alphabetically. The most useful list is that to links of full text papers on PBL.

10. Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction hosts a searchable database of links which is more useful than most as the search can be refined, so producing a sensible number of the more relevant links.

11. The final site I will mention is actually the one where I started my search. The **LTSN Generic Centre PBL** site (hosted by Coventry University) is in a fledgling state. It contains useful links to other sites and is organised by discipline, which should make it potentially very useful. However, there is little material available on it at the moment and the UK community need to work with the Generic Centre and share resources so that this UK-based site becomes as impressive as some of the others I have mentioned.

URLs for PBL Web Resources

1. http://www.acue.adelaide.edu.au/leap/leapinto/pbl/

2. http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/cases/ubcase.htm

3. http://www.pbli.org/core.htm

4. http://www.samford.edu/pbl/pbl_main.html

5. http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clrit/home.html

6. http://www.udel.edu/pbl/

7. http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/pbls/

8. http://meds.queensu.ca/medicine/pbl/pblhome.htm

9. http://www.unimaas.nl/index_uk.htm?index_uk.htm

10. http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/pbl/problem.html

11. http://www.hss.coventry.ac.uk/pbl/

Reviews

Books

Lecturing: case studies, experience and practice
Edited by Helen Edwards, Brenda Smith and Graham Webb
Kogan Page (2001)
£19.99 pbk
ISBN: 0 749435 19 4

In this book 17 academics tell us about critical incidents in their careers as lecturers. The stories are written in a personal style and I found that some of them were excellent: grabbing my interest, making me want to hear the end of the story, making me ask 'What happens next?'. All of the case studies follow a similar pattern:

- giving some background to what happened and explaining the incident;

- inviting the reader to stop and think through some questions. This gives the reader an opportunity to think through what has been read, and what he or she would do in that situation, providing for better learning and more interest in what follows;

- explaining what actually did happen in the given situation;

- and finally discussing what happened and why, what could have been done in a different way if the lecturer did not achieve the results that were hoped for, or supporting the actions with some theoretical background.

The case studies come from Universities in the UK, Australia and the US, and cover a wide range of disciplines and class sizes. The book is divided into four sections, looking at 'Key competencies in lecturing', 'Orchestrating learning in lectures', 'Dealing with feedback' and 'Authenticity: living your values in lectures'. Several of the case studies focus on problems that occur when teaching large classes, and this is one of the main strengths of the book. I would therefore recommend this book especially for new lecturers, or lecturers with little experience of teaching large classes. I also think the book could be a very useful resource in staff development courses, since I believe the case studies would offer most benefit from being read separately or perhaps in pairs. The reason for this is that each case study brings up a number of interesting and important issues, and some of the case studies are quite similar even though they have a different focus.

This is not a book that provides a recipe on how to lecture. It provides ideas for how to encourage active student learning and shows examples of the range of activities and flexibility that the

lecture format in general can offer - the only thing we need to do is try. The authors of the book have tried. They did not always succeed the first time - but they learnt something from the incident, and developed and improved as lecturers.

Klara Bolander
formerly University of Glasgow
now living in Stockholm

Action Learning: A Guide for Professional, Management and Educational Development
Ian McGill and Liz Beaty
Kogan Page (2001)
£22.50 pbk
ISBN 0 749434 53 8

At the time I was reading this, I was planning a long bicycle ride in Norway and was struck by the similarities between this book and a travel guide. Now some may take that as an adverse comment, but I mean it as a real compliment.

This is a marvellous book, comprehensive in its coverage and written in a style which makes it a pleasure to a read. But I would not advise reading it from start to finish; it should be used when you wish to visit some aspect of action learning. The book covers all aspects of action learning from 'what is it?' and 'how does it work?' to the skills need to be a good facilitator of an action learning set. In all areas the material is up to date, and a useful bibliography allows areas of interest to be pursued in more depth.

Just like a travel guide, what you visit (or read) will depend on your interest in using action learning. So, what are the 'must see' bits of the book? Well, I suppose it depends on your experience. Beginners should read the chapters on *What is action learning?* and *How a set works*. These provide a clear and illuminating description of the methodology. They could then follow with an appropriate chapter from the final section of the book, on the uses of action learning. In this section there are chapters on learning and development, CPD, Management Development, Higher Education and individual, organisational and social change. All the 'uses' chapters are grounded in solid experience with a wealth of well thought ideas for making the method work in these various situations.

The more experienced reader may wish to reflect on the skills required of a facilitator in this way of working. Perhaps my only criticism of the book, and it's a minor one, is that this section is a bit limited. My own experience has been considerably enriched by reading about (and experiencing) Gestalt and Transactional Analysis as well the work of Rogers (which the authors do refer to) and so I would have liked to see a bit more in this section.

So, having used the guidebook all I can say is go and visit - which can be translated as '*buy this one*'. It really does deserve to be on the bookshelf of every educational developer and, more importantly, *used* by educational developers!

Bob Matthew
University of Glasgow

SEDA Conferences go International

The idea of holding a SEDA conference outside the UK has been mooted for some time and a serendipitous meeting between myself and a couple of delegates from The Republic of Ireland at SEDA's 2000 November conference led to an invitation to the launch of the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) a week or so later. The visit allowed me to not only extend SEDA's good wishes to our newly established sister organisation, but also to discuss the possibility of holding a joint SEDA/AISHE conference.

In spite of the rain and the cold - not to mention the strike by railway workers - about 100 colleagues from all over the island attended the launch ceremony at NUI, Maynooth, on 30th November 2000. Hoping to impress the gathering, I began by saying 'Go mbeannaí Dia daoibh' and concluded with 'Go raibh maith agaibh' *. Perhaps what I lost in the way of accuracy with my pronunciation, I felt I made up for in having the courage to say a few words in Gaelic. A similar kind of 'foolhardiness' led me to promise that we would (hopefully) organise a joint SEDA/AISHE conference in Dublin in the near future. Thanks to a number of Irish colleagues, this wish has come true sooner than we had anticipated, and we look forward to our first international conference in Dublin from 11-12 April 2002. The Irish colleagues are also excited about this joint venture and Barry McMullin, President of AISHE, expressed the following sentiments on learning that the conference was going ahead:

AISHE is a new and barely fledged organisation, but with strong aspirations for the future development of teaching and learning in Irish Higher Education. We very much welcome - indeed rely on - the active support and collaboration of longer established and highly regarded organisations, such as SEDA, in bringing this vision to fruition. The joint Spring conference of 2002 thus represents the first concrete manifestation of what we hope will be an active and ongoing exchange between our respective memberships and communities.

And now for the theme of the Dublin conference: *Supporting and Evaluating Change*. Again, serendipity played a part. A Swedish colleague approached me at the Glasgow SEDA conference
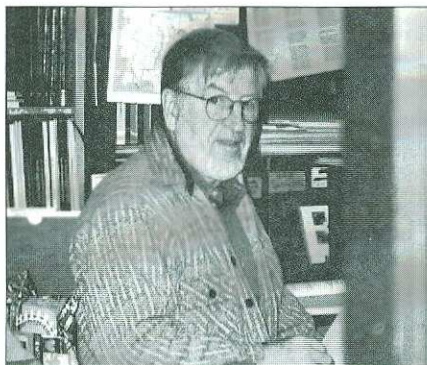
Professor Robert E Stake, who will give a keynote address at the spring 2002 conference

and suggested that I invite Robert Stake (Professor of Education and Director of the Centre for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation at the University of Illinois) as a keynote speaker to one of our conferences. As it happens, we, in Coventry University, are using Stake's model to evaluate the introduction of WebCT across the whole institution, and one of our colleagues has known 'Bob' for many years. We are delighted to report that Professor Stake was more than happy to accept our invitation. The title of his presentation will be "The Incredible Lightness of Education" - *with some lament as to how easy it is for market forces to change the nature of a university* - his words. In addition to the Keynote address, he will also be running a workshop, for a limited number of delegates, on his particular 'approach' to evaluation on Day Two of the conference.

The venue for the conference is Dublin Castle in the heart of Dublin and close to Trinity College. The Conference Dinner will be in the Banqueting Hall in Trinity College Dublin. Accommodation is available in the Jury's Hotel which is located a few minutes walk from Dublin Castle. NB Accommodation in this hotel is limited and you are advised to book early.

My thanks to Saranne Magennis and Terry Barrett for their role in making it all happen.

Rakesh Bhanot
Chair, SEDA Conference Committee

Professional Development and Accreditation

SEDA's accreditation work began with the Teacher Accreditation Scheme, launched in 1992, followed by the Fellowships Scheme, for staff and educational developers. SEDA's third accreditation initiative, led by Pat King and others, was called Professional Development in Higher Education (PDinHE).

PDinHE was intended to accredit what was distinctive about doing any work - for example, administration, management, technical or craft work - in a higher education institution. It was thus intended to complement other professional, vocational or academic qualifications already held or currently being pursued. PDAF (for Professional Development Accreditation Framework), as it is currently called, is a new overarching SEDA development and accreditation framework. PDAF will enable the more rapid production of new development and qualification frameworks to meet the needs of particular institutions and groups of staff. It can be used for initial qualification or for continuing professional development. Schemes are currently under development for administration, developing leaders, supervising postgraduate research and student support and guidance, together with a general scheme. The current teacher accreditation scheme will join PDAF.

Like all SEDA's accreditation work, PDAF is based on a common core of values, this time with an adaptable set of generic outcomes. The PDAF Committee is currently considering how the framework can combine lightness of touch and co-operation with other relevant bodies, low cost with appropriate developmental support and rigour. The first PDAF qualification is for those who embed learning technologies. More on the SEDA web site - http://www.seda.ac.uk.

Ideas and offers of help welcome!

David Baume FSEDA
SEDA Accreditation Co-ordinator

E-mail: a.d.baume@open.ac.uk

Useful Links

The Conference website provides further details about the event:
http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/dublin_01.html

Details of AISHE can be found at:
http://www.aishe.org

* Visit this website for some common Irish greetings and farewells:
http://www.maths.tcd.ie/gaeilge/general.html#A1.1

Up-date from SEDA Publications

It's been a busy and productive summer at SEDA Publications – so this update on new publications comes with very many thanks to the writers and contributors, committee members and SEDA office staff whose work has ensured an excellent batch of five new publications to appear over the next few months.

Peter Davies has produced a SEDA first - but one we intend to follow! His **Active Learning in Seminars: Humanities** (SEDA Paper 112) is a resource pack for lecturers and tutors filled with very practical suggestions for making students active in seminars. The exercises here will be useful for both new and experienced teachers. The resource pack contains photocopyable materials, and as such is ideal for Education Development Units and Department offices. See page 9 for details of how to order your copies.

Philip Frame's **Student Induction in Practice** (SEDA Paper 113) is a very welcome hands-on, concrete addition to the wider body of more abstract writing on the increasingly important topic of student induction (and retention). His practice-focused approach makes this a good buy for Heads of Department, student support colleagues and first-year tutors, as well as colleagues in Education and Staff Development who run training in this area.

Alan Mortiboys has written a SEDA Special (SS12) on **The Emotionally Intelligent Lecturer**. Having just read this, I find that it's still resonating strongly with me and that my thinking about the questions it raised is impacting on how I am evaluating my teaching. It's a short and highly focused piece - very readable in an

hour or so. I think it would be excellent to have copies for new faculty inductions and training, for PGCert materials and for Development Units - at Sussex we'll be using it as a basis for a Developers' away-day.

Alan Jenkins' has produced a very timely SEDA paper on **Linking Teaching and Research** (SEDA Paper 115). It's a compelling mixture of research and trenchant analysis (no lazy or vague understandings of research/teaching links survive the first two chapters) with a wide range of case study materials illustrating how the links have developed - or failed to develop - in different institutional settings. Given that teaching / research links, and the scholarship of teaching, are moving up the educational agenda at present, this paper provides a convenient way-in to the debates for all those of us who need to be up to speed and have a good sense of how to move forward.

My job has been to look back at all the material SEDA has gathered in the **Innovations in Teaching** ... series. These publications were originally produced to promote innovations in specific disciplines, but looking back at them we felt that there was a lot of useful and current material of wider interest and application. To ensure that this material is well disseminated, SEDA Paper 114 is **The Innovations Compendium**, and it also contains an introductory section on transferring an innovation from one area to another productively.

Neill Thew
Chair, SEDA Publications Committee

SEDA Advisory Group

As reported in *Educational Developments* 2.2 (May 2001), the first meeting of SEDA's new Advisory Group has now taken place. The remit of this new committee is to offer advice to the SEDA Executive in relation to SEDA activities, processes and strategic aims and issues discussed at the November meeting included the appointment of a new external examiner for the SEDA Fellowships Schemes and current developments within the sector.

The membership of the SEDA Advisory Group is:

Gill Tucker, University of East London *(Chair)*
Cliff Allen, Learning and Teaching Support Network
David Baume FSEDA, The Open University, SEDA Exec Accreditation Co-ordinator
Professor Philip C Candy, Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Australia
Paul Clark, Institute for Learning and Teaching
Liz Elvidge, University of Cambridge
Hazel Fullerton FSEDA, University of Plymouth, Co-Chair of SEDA
Professor Nicky-Sinéad Gardner
Julie Hall, SEDA Development Officer
Professor Barry Jackson, Middlesex University, Co-Chair of SEDA
Mike Laycock, University of East London, SEDA Executive Committee member
William Locke, Universities UK
Professor Mantz Yorke, Liverpool John Moores University
Su White, University of Southampton, SEDA Executive Events Co-ordinator
James Wisdom, SEDA Executive Publications Co-ordinator

SEDA Summer School
19th - 21st June 2002
Lancaster House Hotel

Following the success of this year's Summer School we are pleased to announce the dates for the 2002 event. This three day course is again designed for those who have a professional role as educational and academic developers in higher education. It is aimed at those with less than three years experience and will support those who are working towards SEDA Fellowship. Participants may include staff in educational development units, those who have a role in LTSN Centres or those responsible for co-ordinating teaching and learning developments in their department or faculty.

The course will be designed around workshop activities and participants will focus on their own work, concentrating on developing the skills and conceptual framework necessary to plan, run and evaluate educational development activities to meet the needs of higher education institutions.

Sessions will be practice based and facilitated by experienced educational developers and grounded in research on learning and teaching. The workshop element will involve example case studies, role play and collaborative problem solving supported by a range of materials. The course will include opportunity for small group work and tutorial time with an experienced developer to support action planning.

The fee for the three day event will be £475 per delegate (to include two nights accommodation, all meals and refreshments), although days 1 and 2 may stand alone. Further details (including a registration form) will be become available in January 2002.

You are advised to register early as only a limited number of places are available.

To register your interest in the 2002 SEDA Summer School for Educational Developers please contact the SEDA Office at:
office@seda.ac.uk

Details will also appear on the SEDA website as they become available:
http://www.seda.ac.uk

How Do Representations of Our Practice Enable Change to Happen?

Helen Beetham
Research Fellow, SoURCE, The Open University

It is a commonplace of educational development that learning and teaching tends to happen behind closed doors. Although teaching observations are becoming more widespread, much of what we know about how other people teach and about what works in other people's teaching comes to us indirectly. Traditional, text-based representations of learning and teaching practice include case studies, guidelines, workshop materials and articles such as those found in *Educational Developments*. Portfolios constitute another, particularly motivated, kind of representation of practice. With increasing technological sophistication we could use video recordings or web-based multimedia materials. We could see educational software as a particular kind of representation of practice, embodying as it does certain assumptions about what makes for effective learning and how learning interactions 'ought' to be structured.

There is surprisingly little research on whether, and how, representations of practice are actually useful in supporting change. Learning and teaching development projects are invariably asked to 'disseminate' their outcomes, often as case studies, guidelines, web sites, software etc. While dissemination is undoubtedly a powerful means of sharing expertise across the academic community - in a way that would not be possible through local staff development programmes, or even through national conferences and face to face events - the notion implies that information alone is sufficient to motivate changes in practice: once staff are aware of the latest innovations they will naturally embrace them with open arms. Educational developers have no excuse for buying in to this myth. After all, we devote much of our professional life to persuading lecturers that students need more than access to information if they are to learn.

The study reported here had two starting points. First, evaluation of the EFFECTS project (Beetham et al 1999; Beetham et al 2000; Harvey and Oliver 2001) found that although staff benefited most from structured programmes of development and support, the documentation developed around those programmes could be independently useful. This included a development cycle, a series of seven learning outcomes with sample evidence, interactive documents to scaffold various learning tasks, and a case study framework. In some cases individuals had used these to support their personal development goals; in others, learning technology teams used them to structure the support they offered to staff with small-scale development projects. The final evaluation report noted that partner institutions were eager to adopt the EFFECTS framework because *'In addition to providing a structure for staff development and assessment, it enabled support to be allocated to each step in the embedding process in a far more systematic way than was previously possible. Moreover, such a structure can be viewed as a 'road map', helping practitioners to embed C&IT more effectively and appropriately, with sensitivity to issues such as student learning...'* (Harvey and Oliver 2001). Staff development materials intended for use in EFFECTS programmes were also widely adopted by SEDA/ILT initial accreditation programmes to introduce staff to working with learning technologies.

This suggests that the EFFECT's framework functioned as a 'shareable representation of practice' (Goodyear and Steeples 1997), which was useful both for peer collaborators, in more formal programmes or between mentors and mentees. What features of this framework made it so useful?

A second starting point was a separately funded study (Beetham et al 2001) which found that people already proficient in the skills of embedding learning technologies had rarely acquired those skills through formal development. The typical learning technology specialist or enthusiast was highly information literate, had a range of strategies for locating online and offline resources, and engaged in collaborative or peer-supported 'experimentation' with new techniques. This suggests that as individuals become proficient in some aspect of learning and teaching practice, they become less dependent on structured interactions with more experienced others (mentors, colleagues, developers) and more self-sufficient in their reading of representations of practice. It is clear that less proficient or confident individuals require much more scaffolding if they are to make sense of the practice of others.

This article reports a study into different representations, their potential uses in the learning technology community, and other factors influencing the degree to which such representations can be used to support changes in practice. The research was carried out by the author on behalf of the SoURCE and RESULTs projects in the period April-July 2001. The aim was to decide on the feasibility of a national resource of case studies, staff development materials and other documents relating to learning technology practice. Full findings have been reported elsewhere along with the theoretical background to the study (ISL 2001). This article focuses instead on some implications for educational developers.

What representations of practice are useful?

A starting point for the study was a taxonomy or structured list of different kinds of artefact currently used to share knowledge about learning technology practice. In describing these artefacts, a distinction was made between 'texts about' practice, which tend to be descriptive and relatively open-ended (eg. case studies, portfolios, action research reports), and 'frameworks for' practice, which tend to be prescriptive and more or less constraining (eg. guidelines, toolkits, interactive documents). Educational software tools were treated as a separate category, in which representation was incidental and application to future practice was highly constraining. A small number of commonly-used resource types were selected from the taxonomy for further study. They were:

a. **Review**: overview/evaluation of a specific technology or technology-based resource from a practitioner perspective.

b. **Guidelines**: 'how-to' advice relating to a specific learning technology, a specific practice or approach.

c. **Staff development material**: hand-outs, exercises or tutorials relating to specific uses of learning technology (more reflective than guidelines).

d. **Case study (curriculum)**: account of the use of ICT in a specific curriculum (i.e. learning and teaching) context.

e. **Case study (strategic)**: account of supporting/embedding learning technology in a dept. or institutional context - focusing on staff or organisational development.

f. **Framework/toolkit (curriculum)**: model, template, interactive document etc to aid learning technology use in the curriculum e.g. student needs analysis, decision-making tool.

g. **Framework/toolkit (strategic)**: model, template etc to aid development of learning technology strategy or support eg. audit tool, staff skills matrix.

h. **Article/report**: any structured account of learning technology use, e.g. chapter, conference paper, journal article, project report, strategy document.

i. **Software - learning tool**: generic application eg. assessment software, communications tool,

authoring tool, VLE, specifically for use in learning and teaching.

j. Software: activity shell: structured courseware or courseware component which may be customised by adding new content.

k. Software: learning object: multimedia content for re-use in new contexts e.g. text, image, animation, simulation, a/v clip, dataset.

l. Information resource: annotated link to alternative learning technology resource e.g. database, portal, journal, image bank or web site.

m. Project/service: annotated link to learning technology project, service or contact.

A second task was to classify the impact which these resources might have on their users. For example, it was important to distinguish between simple access to a resource and the kind of deep engagement which led to radical changes in the user's own professional practice. The six interaction types used in the study were as follows:

I would use this to **inform** myself about learning and teaching practice

I would **adopt** (ideas from) this for use in my own practice

I would **adapt** or customise this to suit my own needs

I would **create** my own resources of this type

I would **guide** or facilitate others' use of this to support their practice

I would **comment** on or evaluate this in light of my own experience

An online questionnaire was used to discover how academic and learning technology specialist staff saw themselves interacting with the various different resource types. The questionnaire was available over a period of 6 weeks in June-July 2001, and was returned by over 120 respondents. As anticipated from the sampling strategy this was a relatively experienced group (mode and median = 'proficient' users of educational software), with 28% describing themselves as academics, 22% as educational developers, 18% as learning technologists, and 32% belonging to another category. A series of structured interviews and four focus groups were also carried out during this period.

Among these relatively proficient users, the most *informative* resources were found to be (in descending order): articles, reviews, curriculum case studies and information from projects. The resources most *adopted* in practice were found to be (in descending order): software learning environments and tools, staff development materials, guidelines and curriculum frameworks. Overall, therefore, the relationship between the *inform* and *adopt* responses seemed

to reflect the distinction between texts about and frameworks for practice offered earlier, with articles, reviews, case studies and information resources being closer to the text end of the spectrum (highly informative but difficult to adopt directly into practice). Software tools were at the opposite end of the same spectrum, being highly adoptable but less informative, with frameworks coming somewhere in the middle. Chi square tests found that these correlations were significant at $p < 0.001$. Therefore, while all resource types were significantly more likely to be used for information than actually adopted in practice, the gap between encountering an idea and making practical use of it seemed to be much smaller in the case of interactive representations such as frameworks, guidelines, and of course software tools.

When focus groups were asked to analyse these findings they came up with several interesting interpretations. Users who were already knowledgeable about the area of practice involved, and who had the time and intellectual resources available for reflection, preferred texts about practice such as articles and case studies over the more prescriptive guidelines and toolkits. These people were also resistant to the use of software tools that they felt constrained their own learning and teaching practice. Users with less expertise or less time, however, wanted faster solutions. Their preferred representations were short guidelines, tips and tricks, snippets of advice and rubrics for 'making things work'. They were critical of the *quality* of much educational software but were happy to use applications that offered a 'solution' to current learning and teaching needs, even if that meant changing their practice to fit with the pedagogy implied by the software.

When asked to express a preference, academic teachers wanted access to (in descending order): staff development materials (usually for self study), software tools/environments, and case studies in curriculum development. Educational developers and learning technology specialists, on the other hand, wanted access to: staff development materials (usually for supporting other staff), information resources, reviews and guidelines. As compared with academic staff, who wanted materials with an exact fit to their own needs, developers were more concerned with finding adaptable resources that could be re-developed and re-used to guide the practice of a range of other staff, in a range of different learning and teaching contexts.

What representations of practice are actually available?

Respondents in the study reported that they were actually involved in creating staff development materials and guidelines (around 40%); and to a lesser extent curriculum development frameworks, articles and information resources (around 30%). Very few were creating software environments or tools, strategic frameworks for practice, or project-based resources, all of which were regarded as very useful. There were fewer contributors than users in every category of resource, though the greatest differential came

with the 'text' type resources: reviews, articles and case studies. Although they were regarded as the most informative (ca. 90%) there were relatively far fewer people actually creating and sharing them (ca. 30%).

There were few significant differences among types of respondent in their use and creation of objects, except in the important category of staff development materials which were both created *and used* significantly more by educational developers and learning technology support staff. This finding suggests that staff development materials are rarely accessed directly by academic staff, but rather that access is mediated through developers and development contexts of various kinds. Focus groups confirmed that this was generally the case. Anecdotally, staff development materials rarely seem to take a linear trajectory from author to end-user, but exist rather in a complex economy, circulating among developers who adapt and amend them for their own purposes, and being inserted into other, structured contexts (workshops, programmes, institutional web sites, learning packs) before they reach the academics who are their target audience. Effective staff development materials may turn out to be those that are most readily adaptable and usable by other staff and educational developers, rather than those which are most directly accessible to academics.

Overall these findings indicate that adaptable frameworks such as EFFECTS, accompanied by interactive documents, matrices, toolkits, guidelines and other representations that can be applied directly in practice, are regarded as highly usable both by specialist learning technology staff and by academics with an interest in learning technologies. Case studies are also an important resource but these are less widely available: targeted effort will be needed to make these available on a national basis in sufficient volume to constitute a searchable resource. The SoURCE project has already begun work on a library of this kind. Over time, however, better incentives need to be put in place for staff to invest the time in reflecting on and writing about their learning and teaching experience in ways that are accessible to other professionals.

Staff development materials in general make excellent candidates for sharing representations of practice as they are both readily available and highly usable. Developers are already willing and in many cases actively working to share materials across institutions: the SeSDL project in Scotland, for example, has developed a database of staff development 'granules' which are freely available for re-combination and re-use. It should be noted, however, that the 'stock' of circulating resources needs regular updating, particularly in the area of learning technologies, where new opportunities emerge all the time. The most useful new materials arise from innovative development projects such as those funded by TLTP and FDTL and to a lesser extent the JISC and the EU. These are also the materials which are most likely to present a challenge to existing modes of academic practice. Unfortunately, funded projects are rarely well integrated into the development practices of institutions (workshops, professional develop-

ment programmes, mentoring schemes, institutional initiatives), which is where our study found that everyday practice was open to being challenged and changed. The quality requirements of 'dissemination' also push projects towards producing highly finished materials that are self-contained, of a large granular size, and difficult to adapt or integrate. The assumption seems to be that staff will access these materials from their own desktops. Our study shows that this is very rarely the case, and the self-contained nature of these materials makes it difficult for them to be integrated into the development practices which offer the real opportunities for intervention.

Interviews and focus groups also identified problems with the way in which different kinds of representation are valued in the academic community. Academic articles and scholarly accounts of educational research are fairly widely produced as they have their own intrinsic rewards in a research-led culture. Unfortunately they are not widely shared because of the associated copyright issues; nor are they necessarily the most useful forms of representation for practitioners. Flexible frameworks and staff development guidelines are far more readily adopted into practice, but attract little academic credibility to their creators and are therefore only produced where individuals are specifically funded to do so. As top-sliced initiatives such as TLTP3 and the Scottish ScotCIT projects come to an end, there is likely to be a gap in production of innovative resources of this kind.

A similar tension was found between users' demand for representations of a low granular size ('tips and tricks', 'words of advice' etc) and producers' habit of creating large-scale, integrated resources around a specific project or to meet the needs of a specific programme. Flexibility, adaptability and reusability are fostered when resources are created to a standard size and format. Unfortunately this does not fit well with the professional values and practices of resource creators. Nor should users' demands for a searchable database of magic 'answers' necessarily be taken at face value. There was very little evidence of participants making use of resources that are already available, such as the excellent Brite Ideas Live from LTDI (http://www.icbl. hw.ac.uk/ltdi/briteideas/) or the theory into practice database (http://tip.psychology.org/). In fact when pressed about the kinds of representation that had actually had an impact on their own practice, academics were much more likely to cite narratives from colleagues about 'what they did, what went wrong, and how they survived'.

How are representations of practice actually used in practice?

Most academic staff interviewed in this study had become proficient in the use of learning technologies with the support of specialist staff from a learning technologies unit, educational development unit or similar. Particularly as less enthusiastic and technically confident members of staff become involved with learning technology use, it must be anticipated that demand for structured support will increase. This makes it

all the more important that representations of practice for dissemination should be capable of adaptation and adoption into new development programmes.

Once staff were relatively proficient in the use of learning technologies, the most effective ways of developing their practice were through peer support, particularly dialogues around collaborative projects where a document, software system or other artefact was being worked on in real time ('the real thing, in the real context, with the real person'). New kinds of dialogical forum were evolving: institutional learning and teaching forums, 'change agent' networks, research seminars or reading groups in which practitioner-researchers talked with educational developers and academics in educational studies. Participants were often members of regional forums ('it's the ability to physically network as well as conduct things virtually'), professional networks and 'self help groups', or had strong personal links with people in similar positions at nearby institutions. These forums provided opportunities to share representations of practice.

Among educational developers, collaborative development and delivery of materials across institutions was also surprisingly common. 'Each institution would host [a workshop] once or twice a year. Whoever was coordinating would collect all the materials together from the presenters and that material was given out to all the staff developers at all the participating universities'. It is interesting to note that the funding model as well as the ethos of educational development promotes a sharing of ideas and materials across institutions, while the funding model for student learning tends to encourage competition. Developers and learning technology staff have at least this advantage over the LTSN networks: that they already come from a centrally-funded and collaboratively-minded sector of HE. This suggests that one powerful way of developing learning and teaching practice may be to focus on shared materials and representations at the level of educational development itself. In other words, a shared culture and a set of shared resources may be most readily developed among those people who are already instrumental in developing learning and teaching in their own institutional contexts.

This in fact is the approach taken by the Net-Culture project in Scotland which has supported regional networks of developers to articulate their own understanding of their development practice ('frameworks for practice') which can then be shared nationally. The process of developing these representations is understood to be as at least as valuable as the end product. The expectation is that an economy of representations will emerge which is highly re-usable and develops dynamically within a community of peers, rather than being designed to travel from expert contributors to non-expert users in producer-consumer mode. In an ideal world the subject-specialist networks will also come to operate in this way. It seems likely that this will require a greater cultural shift, however, and the LTSN networks will remain to some extent at least dependent on the developer networks to support a robust economy of shared representations that can be applied across subject areas.

Among academics there was strong support for the idea of a national network to share representations of practice:

> There are people like me at every university in the country and we could all be working separately to get this kind of information together.

> You need information from outside the system. You can't work in a closed system.

At the same time, there was resistance to having multiple points of access, all of which might need to be monitored for new ideas. Academic staff generally regarded their subject-specific LTSN as the network they were most likely to encounter in the course of everyday reflection on their practice, but to date their use of this network was relatively passive. For confident and expert users the LTSN network will certainly grow in significance. Other academic staff, however, will continue to rely on face-to-face contact with local learning and teaching specialists. This suggests that LTSNs need to cultivate a close relationship with the network of educational developers and should ensure that their representations of subject-specific practice are capable of being integrated into other, more generic, development opportunities.

No significant differences were detected across the different roles in the kinds of practice engaged in, including the practice of 'guiding' other staff in their use of resources. This suggests that participants who identified themselves as academics were nevertheless taking considerable responsibility for the development of others, a finding borne out in interviews.

Implications for educational developers

Most academic staff will not make radical changes to their understanding or practice of learning and teaching without some face to face encounter, whether this is with a mentor, a learning set, a workshop leader or their colleagues. Within these contexts, flexible representations of learning and teaching practice can be enormously useful at scaffolding change and developing a shared understanding of what is involved. Staff development materials are among the most familiar examples here, but interactive documents, structured frameworks, toolkits and guidelines all have an important role to play. 'Texts about' learning and teaching, including case studies, articles, reviews, action research reports and evidence from video recordings or teaching observations are extremely powerful sources of information, especially for more confident and proficient practitioners. They are less likely to be adopted directly into practice, however, and novices will need some contextualising framework of explanation if they are to make good sense of them. Nationally, there are far more users than creators of staff development resources. The aim should therefore be to develop a system of mutually beneficial exchange among those staff (especially educational developers) who are already adapting or creating materials of their

own. This economy will flourish if representations are open-ended and flexible enough to be inserted into different local contexts, and if all staff involved perceive a benefit from the collaboration. Even so, there are likely to be categories of material, including in this study strategic frameworks, case studies and project outcomes, which will not be created and shared without specific investment. This will probably always be the case with particularly innovative examples of practice.

The EFFECTS and SoURCE projects are now working to develop a network of regional learning technology groups, alongside a shared national resource of case studies, staff development materials and evaluation reports to support new practices in learning and teaching. The aim is for the networks and resources to become mutually supporting over time, with materials being adapted, inserted into programmes of staff development, commented upon and collaboratively re-developed. The literature on networks of practice (see for example Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998), McConnell (2000), Kollock and Smith (2000), Foster et al (2001)) suggests that collaborative development of this kind both strengthens the network and allows more useful representations and artefacts to emerge.

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For more information about these projects or the work reported here please contact Helen Beetham (h.beetham@open.ac.uk) or Paul Bailey (paul.bailey@bristol.ac.uk), or see the project websites at:

EFFECTS: http://www.effects.ac.uk
SoURCE: http://www.source.ac.uk

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SEDA STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Student Induction in Practice
P Frame Ed

Induction is a critical factor for students' experience of Higher Education and, indeed, the very survival of HEIs themselves. Students demonstrably stay with those institutions that make them feel welcome and wanted, and which help them succeed. This collection reports a range of ways in which HEIs do this, by focusing on the practicalities of introducing effective induction. Guidance is given for others who wish to try something similar in their own institutions, and aids such as checklists, case studies and questionnaires are included. It is thus a valuable aid for anyone involved in planning, executing and evaluating induction.

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Dialogues

...in which an Experienced (if not always expert) staff and educational developer converses with a *New, and probably younger, colleague.*

1. Who are you?

What are you asking me about? My name? My nature? The world's greatest rock and roll band, and one of their very finest songs ...

... which I heard them perform brilliantly at Wembley earlier this year, by the way. But I was asking about identity. Professional identity. Your professional identity.

?

When you introduce yourself to a workshop that you're running who do you say you are?

I tell them my name, and that I'm from the educational development unit. If I'm outside the University, I say which University. That's it. Maybe mention my subject.

What would you say if you were doing a longer introduction?

I might tell them about my first degree, the PhD, and the job I did before I came to the University.

I see.

What does that look mean?

It means - what would you say about yourself as a staff and educational developer?

I've told them I'm from the EDU.

But what about you as a developer?

?

You have SEDA Associate Fellowship, and you're working towards FSEDA. What about the workshops you've run? The article you've published in 'Educational Developments'? The paper for the International Journal for Academic Development - any news about that?

The referees want me to do a lot more work on it.

They can be tough, I know. Anyway. The SEDA book chapter, the ILT membership of course, the ...

I get the idea. But why? You've said it yourself, in the past; staff and educational developers aren't exactly the most loved people in higher education. What did that Psychology lecturer say to you, all those years ago?

Oh yes - "So you're the one who's come to tell us all how to teach properly!"

Right. So don't we need to lead with our academic credentials?

Yes, and. We also need to take ourselves seriously in our new profession, discipline, whatever staff and educational development are. We need to take ourselves, our achievements and qualifications and expertise, seriously. Why should our clients if we don't?

Do you do it?

I've started to.

How does it go down?

The odd smirk, but otherwise, well.

2. About time

How do you go about selling a new teaching or learning or assessment method to a group of sceptical lecturers?

Selling? Sceptical lecturers? Where do you work?

I love your youthful optimism, even tainted as it seems to be by occasional perceptual difficulties ...

Another of my failed attempts at humour (See Educational Development 2.1 p 27)

Ah.

You were asking?

How do you ...

I listen carefully to their concerns, and then work with them to develop new, soundly-based and locally appropriate approaches and methods.

Very good. A model answer. What are their concerns?

You name it. Student motivation and performance. The marking load. Time is at the root of a lot of it.

Do you work with them to develop new ideas and approaches on the basis that these will save them time?

Not usually, no. I'm not sure why not. Talking to lecturers about 'efficiency' would make me feel like a manager, an even less regarded bunch than developers ...

... than developers *were*, before we decided to stand tall and proud as developers ...

... as you say. But I think I'd feel uncomfortable, bluntly saying 'This will save you time'.

Without compromising quality.

Naturally.

You're a purist.

Thank you. How would you do it?

Very directly. Help them to work out how much of their time is currently going into whatever it is that they're worried about. How many staff hours each week or semester go into, say, planning the course, lecturing the course, seminaring the course, giving feedback, marking, running tutorials ... I did this with an Economics department several years, about their first year course. It turned out that they were spending more total hours marking the final first-year examination than they were spending teaching the whole course. And the examination only determined whether or not students would proceed to the second year, it gave no feedback and didn't contribute to degree grades.

How did they feel when you told them?

I didn't *tell* them. I worked it out with them, in a workshop, using their data.

Right. How did they feel about it?

Surprised. Could you have worked with them, after a start like that, to - what did you say - to "develop new, soundly-based and locally appropriate approaches and methods"?

I rather think I could.

Would you have felt like a manager?

No. More like a developer.

3. It's the subject. Or is it?

In the earlier days of staff and educational development in higher education - the early nineties - all of our work was pretty much generic. We'd offer workshops on assessment, or teaching larger classes, or group work. People - a few people, sometimes a very few people -

Didn't you tell me you once ran a workshop that no-one came to?

Yes.

What did you do?

Felt depressed and ate a lot of sandwiches. And marketed the next ones much much more vigorously, in particular made lots of telephone calls. Anyway. These workshops had to be generic, cross-disciplinary.

Did they work?

It varied wildly. Some people would look suspiciously at people from other departments, and sit as far away from them as possible. But I was ruthless about adjusting the number of the chairs to the number of people attending, which broke the ice a little. Sometimes they would continue to look suspiciously at each other throughout the workshop. Some even snorted on hearing of strange academic practices from other departments. But other times the fine artist and the accountant, or some other equally unlikely pairing, would find in each other's teaching and assessment things that they could adapt or adapt.

Such as?

Poster sessions and crits. for first year accountancy assignments!

Wow!

Indeed.

But now it's all going subject specific, isn't it? LTSN Subject Centres, subject benchmarks. Even moves towards subject-specific courses, or parts of courses, for new lecturers. How do you feel about that?

About some if it, very keen indeed. I think that the discipline is still at the heart of the identity of most academics. I think that research into the teaching and learning of their discipline will make it much easier for an academic to engage productively with pedagogy. I think that research-based innovations in the teaching and learning of the discipline will drive improvement further and faster than can generic research and guidance, however powerful these are.

I hear a hovering 'but'.

Indeed you do. But; teachers of the different disciplines can still learn a great deal from each other.

So the question is - what, around pedagogic research and educational development, is best done generically, and what is best done at the level of the discipline? And how should these two sets of work, generic and subject-based, relate to each other?

Oops. Out of space. We'll return to this.

With the help of our readers?

That would be nice!

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The characters and the Universities in these Dialogues are fictitious.

6th Annual Conference for Staff and Educational Developers

Developing the Developers
professional enhancement for staff and educational developers

20th - 21st November 2001
The Manchester Conference Centre

Phil Race opened the conference with a highly interactive plenary

Delegates enjoy a well earned tea break

Rakesh Bhanot (chair of the SEDA conference committee) with Carole Baume FSEDA, who led the final plenary session

Rakesh Bhanot closes another very successful annual SEDA conference

A full report of the conference will appear in issue 3.1 of Educational Developments

Also included will be:

JISC / DNER Development Programmes
Caroline Ingram
Learning and Teaching Programme Manager, JISC / DNER

Information for Contributors

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

The international audience is drawn from educators in all fields and disciplines. You should therefore not assume specialist knowledge, but write clear, straightforward accounts in plain English. When describing projects, please give concrete detail. Articles accepted for publication may be subject to editing.

All material should be submitted to the Editorial Committee via the SEDA Office, preferably in electronic format.

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

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Articles
Should be between 1000 and 3000 words in length. References in the text should be made quoting the author's name, followed by the year of publication in brackets. Where reference has been made to a number of publications by an author in one year, these should be distinguished by using suffixes: 1998a, 1998b, etc. References should be listed alphabetically at the end of the article, in the following way:

Brown, S and Race, P (1997) **Staff Development in Action**. Birmingham: SEDA.

Saunders, D and Hamilton, D (1999) A Twinning Model for Staff Development in Higher Education, *Innovations in Education and Training International*, **36.2**, 118-127.

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