Educational Developments

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Contents:

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The Implications of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme for Staff and Educational Developers

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Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT)

Early in the new year of 2000, it was confirmed that the ILT would manage the National Teaching Fellowship scheme on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment in Northern Ireland. The scheme was set up as part of an overall programme to raise the status of learning and teaching in Higher Education, and twenty prizes of £50,000 each were made available to individuals who were deemed excellent in their chosen fields of teaching.

The ILT was given the task of setting up a system to implement the scheme. This involved establishing an advisory panel (with appropriate and relevant expertise), identifying a suitable chair for the panel, preparing documentation to enable the panel to identify appropriate selection criteria, putting in place an agreed selection process, communicating with universities over how the scheme would operate, supporting the panel in the selection process for the 20 winners, liaising with the press to ensure good media coverage and organising a celebratory event.

The first four of these tasks were achieved by early March, when letters were sent out to all eligible institutions inviting them to nominate individuals whom they regarded as being outstanding teachers and promoters of learning. Institutions were free to use selection processes which were locally devised as relevant to their own contexts, but it was made clear that such processes should be transparent and available for scrutiny.

Each submission for an institution's nominee comprised of: a citation from the nominating institution (not exceeding 2 sides of A4); a short summary (1 side of A4) of the nominee's track record in teaching and learning facilitation, outlining the range of the nominee's experience and any relevant institutional / national roles in relation to learning and teaching; the claim for fellowship, presenting the applicant's case for the award of fellowship, including a teaching 'philosophy' and having regard for the selection criteria to be used by the Advisory Panel (this should also have included a set of brief reflective commentaries showing how the applicant has fulfilled the criteria s/he has chosen to discuss (5 sides of A4)) and a project plan outlining the nominee's plan for expenditure of the monies associated with the award (2 sides of A4).

The Advisory Panel comprised 26 members and was designed to be inclusive, with representation from old universities, new universities, and colleges of higher education. A balance of men and women,

Continued overleaf ...

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teaching and learning specialists, staff and educational developers and senior managers was sought, with representation from across the UK. A full list of panel members is available on the NTFS website at http://ntfs.ilt.ac.uk

At the first meeting on 24 March 2000, the Panel agreed both the selection process and the criteria for selection. A set of draft criteria presented by ILT staff to this meeting were based on similar schemes in other countries around the world and on schemes to recognise excellence in teaching in UK higher education. These included the Australian Awards for University Teaching, the 3M Teaching Fellowships in Canada and the US Carnegie Professors of the Year. In the UK, they included, for example, a number of schemes run at an institutional level including those from the University of Plymouth, the University of Staffordshire, Napier University and the University of Ulster. Other published material on methods of rewarding excellence, including the criteria for promotion related to teaching for a number of UK universities, together with accreditation schemes used by SEDA and the ILT itself also informed the process.

The criteria by which the nominees were finally judged were refined after extended discussion. It was a major concern of the panel that these should not be too prescriptive and that no particular style of teaching was to be preferred or discriminated against. The criteria used for judging the nominations were:

- the ways in which the application demonstrates the nominee's ability to influence students positively, to inspire students and to enable students to achieve specific learning outcomes as defined by the institution and/or the subject area. (This relates to their own students and/or others in the field.);
- the ways in which the application demonstrates the nominee's ability to influence and inspire colleagues in their teaching, learning and assessment practice, by example and/or through the dissemination of good practice;
- the nominee's track record or potential, as demonstrated through the application, to influence positively the wider national community of teachers and learners in higher education in relation to teaching, learning and assessment practice;
- the nominee's ability, as evident in the application, to demonstrate a reflective approach to teaching or the support of learning.

The long list of behaviours and attributes agreed by the panel as being associated with excellent teaching were appended to the criteria to illustrate the range of what might be considered relevant evidence. A full list of these characteristics is available from the scheme website: these are likely to be particularly useful for educational and staff developers who are keen to implement new schemes in their institutions to recognise excellent teaching.

A total of 95 nominations were received from institutions in England and Northern Ireland. Of these, forty seven were from pre-1992 universities, thirty six were from post-1992 universities, nine were from Colleges of Higher Education and three were from eligible Colleges of Further Education. These were colleges which have 100 or more full-time equivalent students on higher education programmes directly funded by the HEFCE and had staff who were contracted to teach on higher education programmes for a substantial majority of their time, with a benchmark that 'substantial majority' means 75% or more.

Nominations came from across the regions of England and from Northern Ireland as the table (Figure 1) below shows.

Sixty-one nominees were male and thirty-four were female, which is broadly in line with the proportion of males and females working in higher education. A breakdown of the teaching subject areas of the nominees (Figure 2) is given opposite.

The process agreed for the first level selection involved each nomination being read by three panel members who were asked to rate the citations and personal statements on the four criteria on a scale A to D. These ratings were then collated and presented to the second panel meeting on 6 June 2000 in rank order and the panel selected a group of 38 nominations to proceed to the next stage.

These 38 nominations were then each redistributed to a further four different panel members who were asked at this stage to look particularly closely at the project proposals included with the nomination, looking for the potential of the projects to impact significantly on colleagues and on student learning. Rating from this review process were again aggregated and presented to the Panel members at the final meeting on 20 June.

The top ranked group of nominations were accepted as clearly falling into the group who should be awarded Fellowships, and discussion focussed on the twelve nominations that fell either side of the borderline and a further four which statistical analysis of the consistency of panel member's grades indicated should be further scrutinised. Those who had reviewed the nominations explained their grades to the panel and a vote established which ones should be included in the list of twenty Fellowship holders. A full list of those granted the awards can be found on page 21.

The celebratory event was held in London on 12 July 2000. The guests included the Fellowship holders and their partners, Panel members, representatives of HEFCE, AUT, NATFHE, Houses of Commons and Lords, ILT Council members, ILT staff, and members of the press. Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Minster of State for Education and Employment, congratulated the winners and indicated her recognition of the value of the scheme commenting, "There is nothing that universities do that is more important than teaching". Chris Fabby, Vice President of the NUS also lent his support for the event indicating how important the student body considers the promotion of good teaching.

Figure 1: National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2000 - nominations analysis by region

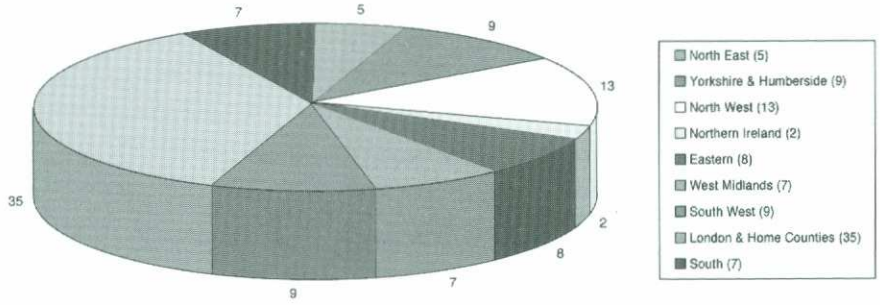
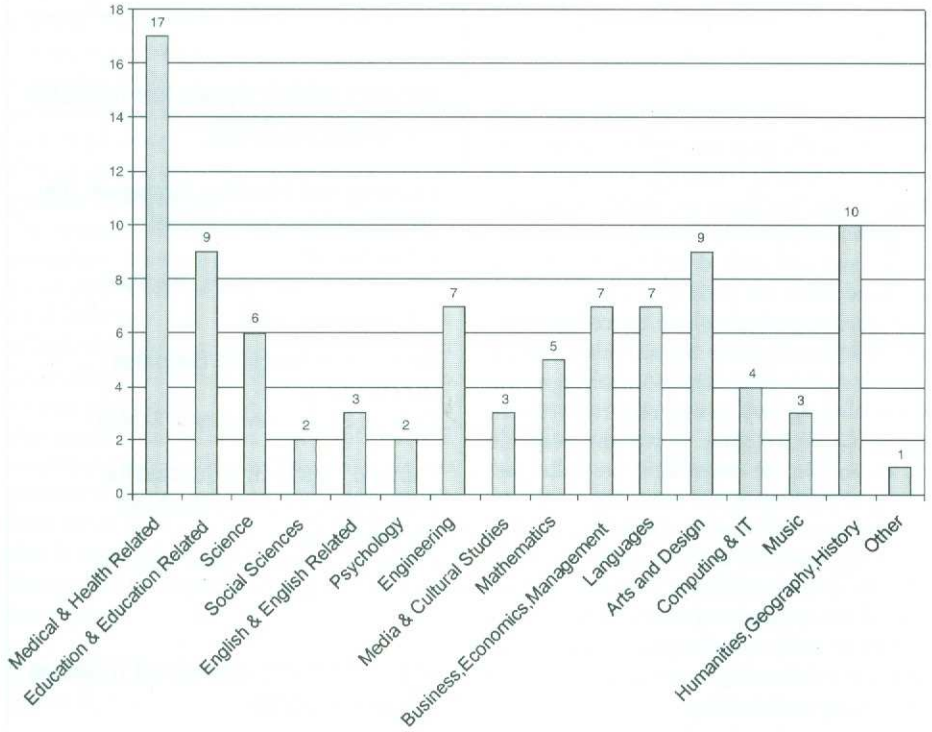


Figure 2: National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2000 - nominations analysis by subject



The twenty Fellowship holders will now have the opportunity to put into the practice the projects that helped to persuade the panel of their merits. A number of the projects involve the implementation of new technologies in teaching and learning, but others focus on exploring and disseminating what comprises good practice in their subject areas and beyond, as well as developing the scholarship of teaching. Problem based learning, the development of students' skills, peer review and ways of promoting student-centred learning are also represented within the projects. Several of the winners already have experience of dissemination schemes, especially through the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning.

Full details of the project plans will be made available in due course via the NTFS website; extracts, which give a flavour of their plans, are available within the NTFS brochure, a limited number of copies of which can be obtained from Dave McCarthy (dave.mccarthy@ilt.ac.uk) at the ILT.

All fellowship-holders will be asked to participate in joint events, because it is seen as imperative that they work together in fellowship to maximise the potential of sharing from the scheme. They have also agreed to participate in publications, events and activities co-ordinated by the ILT.

This first year's implementation of the scheme has worked to plan, but inevitably there is learning to be gained from the process. A particular issue has been the speed at which the process has been implemented, particularly in relation to the short notice given to institutions who wished to make nominations, and the pace at which the ILT team and the Panel had to work in order to carry the process through.

A review will be held in the Autumn of 2000 to enable the Panel to scrutinise evaluations and comments received on the scheme from interested parties, with the view to continuous improvement of the process. Recommendations from this review will be passed to the Higher Education Funding Council for England to inform its deliberations on possible extensions of the scheme and are likely also be disseminated to institutions which are keen to align their own processes of rewarding excellence in teaching with national schemes.

Staff and educational developers have participated in the process either by being Panel members who helped to provide documentation that formed the basis of the judgement criteria or by contributing to the institutional processes leading to nomination. There is considerable satisfaction across the sector that at last the rewards for excellent teaching are beginning to resemble the rewards for excellence in research, which many of us would see as a cause for celebration. This scheme stands out as an example of how this is happening in practice and it is seen by the ILT as being fully in accordance with our aims to enhance the status of teaching, improve the experience of learning and to support innovation in higher education.

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2000 Annual Subscription Rates

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NB SEDA members automatically receive copies of *Educational Developments*.

Editorial

The landscape of our work is constantly changing and in this issue of Educational Developments we have included some of the features which will be prominent in the next few years. One of the genuine pleasures of recent times has been to see the growth of interest in how to achieve the best quality in educational improvement. New colleagues and new groupings are appearing frequently, and the experience and expertise of SEDA's members is in great demand. For us, the key words must be *Collaboration* and *Co-operation*, and so we have carried in this issue reports of meetings and conferences that are important to SEDA's core purpose.

As founding members of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) SEDA enthusiastically embraces the international dimension to our activities. The recent ICED Council and Conference showed the world-wide health of educational development and will provide further opportunities for both collaboration and co-operation. ICED was preceded by the Improving University Teaching conference, also in Germany, so we include a report on that event as well. We also look forward to having Angela Brew, President of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) and a SEDA Fellowship holder, as a keynote speaker at our November conference to further the international theme.

Similarly, with devolution within the UK, SEDA has been keen to support local activity within the home nations. After its re-launch last year SEDA Scotland has followed up with another successful conference. We look forward to holding the main SEDA conference in Scotland next year.

Perhaps another key word for us is *Networking* and SEDA has been pleased to participate in the activities of the Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG). Meeting three times a year, this group acts as a useful source of shared information and experience, as well as acting as a consultation and support forum for others such as the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN). As an informal network representing those with a mandate which includes implementing policy on learning and teaching in higher education, HEDG has been able to get the ear of those central to the determination of those policies.

Having been actively involved in early discussion about the formation of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT), and not least the move towards the professionalisation of teachers in higher education, we are pleased to report the first round of appointments to the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme. Many of the recipients are familiar to SEDA events and publications and we hope they will continue to see their role as developers within their educational contexts.

One of the main ways SEDA members build up their professional expertise is through the annual November conference. This is the meeting-place for many people from different backgrounds but with the central interest in educational and staff development. On the one hand there are participants from subject departments, perhaps whose concern for success in Subject Review has stimulated an interest in staff development - organising workshops, running local action research projects, improving the response to student feedback, and so on. On the other there are colleagues who are developing a specialised interest which depends on sound educational principles - enthusiasts for incorporating e-mail and the web in their teaching, leaders of professional development programmes for new and established staff, or colleagues with responsibilities for delivering institutional strategies for learning and teaching.

When we meet at the SEDA conference we learn so much from the different perspectives and the common interests that it has become the essential annual event. This year it will be supported by a preceding development day for acquiring explicit expertise in (a choice from) twelve aspects of educational development work. We are a learning society, or at least, a learning association. The stronger and more skilled we can become in our professional expertise, the more we will have to offer in collaboration and co-operation with others through a variety of networking opportunities.

Ranald Macdonald and James Wisdom

Forthcoming SEDA Conferences and Events

SEDA One Day Event
Reflection in Learning and Professional Development
16 October 2000
RIBA, London

5th Annual SEDA Conference
Developing the Developers
Manchester Conference Centre

20 November 2000
Pre-conference workshop day

21 - 22 November 2000
Annual conference

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If you have an article which you think would be appropriate for inclusion in a future issue of ***Educational Developments*** the Editorial Committee would like to hear from you.

Information for contributors can be found on page 26 of this issue or on the SEDA web site at:

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

Strengthening Action-Research for Educational Development

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At a recent national meeting conducted by members of the panel for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in education, a participant referred to action-research as less worthy of a quality rating than other forms of research. This panelist's comments are not unusual and doubtless I could find similar ones down any academic corridor. To be fair, the panelist went on to agree with the objection that action-research can be as robust and scientific as any other form of research; it is also fair to accept that action-research has earned a poor reputation in some quarters because, like any other research method, it has weaknesses. I think that we must also accept that such weaknesses may be on display rather more than those committed to the value of action-research would want. Rather than ignore this problem, educational developers involved in action-research need to accept that it has acquired a certain flabbiness because it 'is being used to legitimate any form of methodological deviance from the traditional paradigm' (CARN, 2000: 1). In my view, part of the excess fat here is in what Swepson (1998) calls the 'idealist trap' of conflating values about action-research with its methodology. If action-research is to gain credibility as a research framework for higher education development, it needs to confront issues like these and the purpose of this paper is to offer some research strategy suggestions with which to do so.

Action-Research as Collaborative Research

Definitions and practical guides to action-research abound (see, for instance: http://dh1a-2.coventry.ac.uk/taskforce/actionre.htm) and to frame my discussion about the collaborative content of action-research, I shall use Rapoport's much quoted definition of its aims:

Action-research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework (in Susman and Evered, 1978:587).

and Susman and Evered's (1978: 587,588) additional aim:

.. to develop the self-help competencies of people facing problems.

From these definitions it is clear that centrality is given to user involvement in the research activity. Action-research was formulated in the aftermath of World War II and in the light of failures of other forms of research to get to the bottom of critical social problems like that of antisemitism (Lewin, 1946). It was felt by the proponents of action-research that bringing scientists closer to the problems and the people who had to endure them would yield better knowledge and better solutions. Thus an important principle of action-research is in the refusal of a subject/object dichotomy within its design. The epistemological premise is that distancing the researcher from the researched, as in much conventional social scientific research, risks generating knowledge restricted to the researcher's world and prejudices. What is often paraded as 'objective' research from a distance can be merely objectifying of the human subjects and activities under scrutiny.

Despite the strength of the critique of positivist science (Susman and Evered, 1978) and interpretivist methods (Carr and Kemmis, 1983) against action-research, it is easy to see how proposals to involve subjects as co-researchers had popularity problems in academe. Just a reading of Becher's (1989) account of the corporatist mentality of academic tribes suggests that a proposed partnership between lay and professional researchers might not be well received by a gatekeeping disciplinary community. While this protectionist view of research needs to be challenged, I think that we have to meet it half-way by moderating the claims sometimes made for the collaborative research framework of action-research.

As Webb (1996) has argued, some of the defences for action-research (eg. McNiff (1988), Carr and Kemmis (1983), Zuber-Skerritt (1992)) appear to be erected on moral high ground. Action-research, it is frequently claimed, is more ethical and democratic than other research methods because it positions researchers as co-workers with the client group. To quote passages from Carr and Kemmis (1983) cited approvingly in Zuber-Skerritt's book on action-research in higher education (1992: 12,13):

[Action-research] is participative and collaborative. The researcher is not considered to be an outside expert conducting an inquiry with 'subjects' but a co-worker doing research with and for the people concerned with the practical problem and its actual improvement

and

[Action-research] is emancipatory. The approach is not hierarchical: rather all people concerned are equal 'participants' contributing to the enquiry.

The risks inherent in these claims for action-research are twofold. Firstly, the view that there is no principal research team, hierarchy or 'outside expert' has to be tempered with realism. There are likely to be substantive inequalities within most collaborative research projects whatever their formal democratic structures. Client groups are often socio-economically or educationally positioned at a disadvantage with respect to professional researchers. The best remedy for a sound action-research model is to engage with these inequalities rather than minimise their existence in a rhetoric about group unity of purpose, as Webb (1966: 67) writes in his discussion of action-research:

It has always been a myth that those with common interests start with common abilities or a common desire to contribute to a project group.

Even in the case of educational developers and academic colleagues where collegiality marks the relationships, there will be measures of inequality in terms of the expertise each brings to a teaching and learning intervention. Again to quote Webb (1996: 67):

Often the staff developer has greater general experience of pedagogy and a far better sense of the epistemology and methodology of research projects. The staff developer will be able to interpret a project more generally than other participants, to explain where it fits, point to useful literature and use previous experience to guide the development of the project.

Another source of inequality will lie in differentiated investment and yield from the action-research. Those initiating (and often paid to do so) the research and perhaps aiming for publication will often put more into the research activity than those less centrally involved (such as students). A good action-research model will both value and problematise expert contributions and leadership in the light of diverse levels of preparation and experience among the researcher group (Reason and Heron, 2000:7). Generally, action-researchers need to heed Swepson's (1998) advice about working with

the difference between what is materially and humanly possible and the ideal goals of action-research. In this sense, the ideal of transformative research through collaboration informs the journey, not a state of arrival

The Limits and Scope of Experience

The second connected problem concerns the notion of generating knowledge from the experience of those involved in the research. The idea that people experiencing a problem can see its nature better than others has strong affinities with the radical concept of the privileged standpoint of the oppressed (eg. Freire, 1990). There is no clear evidence that experiencing a problem equips you with special glasses with which to see it. Indeed experience can be so near to the experiencer that they can be barely aware of its shape and presence (Geertz, 1983). Action-researchers often challenge positivist research methods as having a naive view of sense data as 'facts' yet they can run a similar interpretative risk with respect to assumptions about the prima facie value of experience. Valuing the subjective in rejection of notions of the objective should not include an assumption that the former is always reliable. In Webb's (1996) view, the danger here is that the group dynamics of action-research can produce partisan readings of experience which slide easily into dogma. Local knowledge must not become localised knowledge. In this respect, Winter's (1998: 66) concept of 'dialectical' analysis offers an important interplay between individual experience and propositional knowledge (ideas, theory) because it involves:

placing data from a specific situation in a wider social context, looking for tensions and contradictions in the data and considering how these contradictions may both reflect the history of the situation and may also be symptomatic of possible changes in the future.

This kind of analysis, argues Winter, is a way of 'being theoretical' and he further argues for a shift in how we talk about the relation between theory and practice in action-research. 'What I want to suggest' writes Winter (1998: 66):

is that the phrase 'developing a theoretical interpretation' is a better indication of what we need to do within an action-research inquiry than, for example, the phrase 'linking practice to theory'. I think there is a danger in the latter phrase in that it makes the term 'theory' - sound as though it could be simply a body of existing published literature which provides us with an external interpretative framework.

Winter's emphasis is important in that it implicitly addresses the prejudice that action-research is atheoretical because it adheres to a notion of 'praxis' that is more ideological than scientific.

Action-Research and Praxis

In its Guide for Applicants (99-00: 4) the Leverhulme Trust states that its priority is to 'support excellence, novelty and significance' in British university research; it also states that it does not support 'social policy and welfare (especially action-research)' (their brackets). It is hard to resist the conclusion from these statements that action-research is not seen as supportive of excellence, novelty and significance, a conclusion that fits with the informal comments I have already mentioned in terms of RAE ratings. My guess is that this view has something to do with a scepticism about the theorising abilities of action-research and a suspicion that this issue is fudged in the notion of praxis.

A conventional scientific paradigm sees practice as flowing from theory whereas action-research posits a dialectical relationship between theory and practice in which the one is constantly influencing the shape of the other. According to this relationship, theorising proceeds through practice and the Aristotelian concept of praxis (which is counterposed to pure theory) is mobilised to capture this dynamic. Such a view of praxis should not mean, however, that action-researchers enter the research process theory-free in the expectation that practice will beget theory as its natural offspring or can be added on in the manner Winter describes in the quote above. A theoretical underpinning to any action-research design requires the researchers to have a provisional theoretical perspective which will be tested, disputed, modified, etc. through the challenges of practice and engagement with alternative theoretical explanations. The reflective principles of action-research do not simply refer to reflection on the human actions under study but must incorporate an interrogation of the relevant theoretical field (for a full discussion of this question see Susman and Evered (1978) and for some creative ways of theorising in action-research, see Winter (1998)).

Case Study or Action-Research?

The case study approach to writing up action-research can bring with it an under-theorised discussion that treads an unclear path between educational research and good practice reporting. Action-research like any research needs a research question. Reduced to its essentials, theory can be defined as an attempt to answer questions. From this definition, it follows that an absence of research questions brings with it an absence of theory. Where action-research veers towards best practice reporting, as I think it does in some cases, it tends to be answer-driven rather than question-driven, thereby betraying a weak theoretical basis. This problem is compounded when the 'answer' is value laden with the assumption that the change intervention to be researched is a 'good thing' which the action-research process will 'prove'.

According to McNiff (1988), the difference between making a change and researching a change in professional practice lies in turning the latter into a field of public inquiry. By this criterion simply making a change and writing up a report of its effects is not research even if the discussion is theoretically informed by research elsewhere. Sometimes, we are offered an evaluation of teaching interventions which are represented as action-research. What is needed to lift a case study squarely into an action-research field is the presentation of evidence in relation to a clear research question upon which public inquiry can feed. Because all action-research centres on a change intervention as a proposed solution, it is important to locate the research question in this intervention and to be open to testing it fully by gathering rich data.

The Importance of Evidence

Of course any research method can be applied poorly and there is truth to the view that the value of any piece of research rests at least as much upon the quality of the researcher as it does on the appropriateness of the method. There are, however, a number of burdens of proof of quality specific to action-research centred particularly around data gathering. Many models of research rely on straightforward procedures for data gathering especially if there is a clear hypothesis to be tested, eg. a hypothesis that academic performance will be deleteriously affected by students undertaking paid work might suggest that the results of a relatively simple questionnaire to students about paid work be correlated with student achievement levels. While this kind of research might feed into an action-research design, it can never be its entirety because action-research proceeds through a cycle of research activities that are not sequentially ordered. Action-researchers may discover underlying regularities in their data but they do not assume their presence in the messy world of human activity. Action-researchers seek to grapple with the complexity of experiences and the research questions by avoiding premature closure of the research activity through a model of inquiry and discovery that is cyclic.

There is no shortage of graphic models of an action-research cycle (or spiral) but most will

be a variation of Lewin (1946) to include the phases of reconnaissance, planning, acting, reflecting and observing. The acting phase is the planned intervention and the heart of the research is to watch the impact of this intervention and to be open to revising it in the light of data being gathered. The nature of this data varies but it is likely to include reflective diaries, comments from the research participants, notes of relevant discussions and observations, decisions to modify the intervention, etc. along with more familiar fruits of research such as questionnaire findings. Winter (1998) presents a rich discussion on yielding data through action-research in which he insists that generating and interpreting this data requires a procedural framework if it is to be regarded as rigorous. Clearly, the more open its procedures and the more evidence action-research can present, the more credibility it will have and the more able it will be able to offer theoretical advances to its field as well as practical solutions to the issues it addresses. This is not to suggest that action-research should be rehabilitated as science in the conventional sense of the term.

Research Validity

Action-researchers do not aspire to produce value-free 'objective' research and indeed hold the view that this is impossible particularly where human activity is a feature of the research. In opposition to logical positivist research methods which rely on a deduction of truth from 'facts', action-researchers check the validity of their findings by submitting them to the scrutiny of others. In McNiff's (1988) model, the scientific rigour of action-research is ensured by checking findings and interpretations to a point of 'saturation'. If enough co-researchers and critical friends agree with the interpretations, the more sound the data analysis becomes. Crudely put, whereas traditional researchers keep checking their facts, action-researchers keep checking their people. But this is half the story, because it is also important to understand that action-research is a framework that can house a range of other research methods both qualitative and quantitative, and perhaps in this light, it would be more accurate to say that in action-research, the 'facts' are checked with the 'people'. This combination introduces a reflexive dimension to the analysis and in many ways, this is the distinctive feature of action-research. Ironically, however, in making excessive claims about the uniqueness of action-research, its supporters could be contributing to the prejudice that it lacks some of the accepted features of rigorous research methods.

Action-Research and Educational Development

With the increased attention being placed on practice-led research and evidence-based policy, the signs are for a revival of action-research methods and a growth in legitimacy for its procedures. Arguably, educational developers can contribute much to this revival and growth because action-research often fits their needs very well. By virtue of its collaborative and developmental nature, action-research lends itself to the research partnerships of educational developers and academic colleagues (though care should be taken not to avoid objectifying students in such a partnership!); its practice-based emphasis offers obvious advantages for the change agency role of educational development. In summarising my discussion about the development of credible models of action-research, I suggest the following issues be incorporated into them to avoid the kind of weaknesses and prejudices I have discussed:

1. Collaborative action-research involves decisions about leadership, ownership and responsibility for the research phases and dissemination; these decisions will be partly based on the spread of expertise, time available for participation and power relations among co-researchers.

2. Practice and experience must be interconnected with outsider expertise/ experience, developments and research to avoid limiting the research design and interpretation of evidence gathered.

3. The research design needs to ensure that the proposed solution is the product of an interrogation of both theory and practice and that it drives the research as a question rather than as an answer.

4. The research design needs to include a procedure for data gathering which can be transparently reported and evidenced both for data analysis and for dissemination.

5. Report of the research needs to include a section dealing with the implications for the theorising of the issue in hand in the light of the evidence yielded. Validity of the findings needs to be claimed against a presentation of the evidence.

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Glynis would be interested to hear comments on these suggestions from colleagues also involved in action-research for educational development and she can be e-mailed at: g.cousin@coventry.ac.uk

Alternatively, you may wish to share your views with the wider community. The Editorial Committee welcomes letters for publication from readers on this or any educational development topic. Letters should be sent, in the first instance, to SEDA (details on front page).

Reflecting on Innovating the Academic Architecture for the 21st Century: A Singapore Perspective

Tan Oon Seng FSEDA
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Dynamism and Proximity of Change

The 21st century and beyond signals an era of unprecedented breakthroughs in technology and constant change in many aspects of life. The advent of the knowledge economy, the rapid proliferation of information technology, the impact of innovations, information accessibility, globalisation, new industrial and business demands and changing scenarios of political and social landscape call for new paradigms in education. There is an urgent need for educators worldwide, especially those in educational leadership roles in their colleges and institutions, to recognise the implications of these dynamic changes.

This change is unlike previous developments. The initial advent of computers, for example, brought about, amongst other things, the introduction of computer-aided instruction and computer-based learning. These had little impact on the overall systems and processes of education as they were just advancement of educational technologies. Like educational television and videos, these represented only a broadening of the repertoire of delivery modes and the range of instructional technology. Whether one adopted these technologies or not was not a serious concern as their impact, when compared with traditional methods of classroom teaching, was not always significant. These earlier waves thus did not have quantum leap implications and did not call for a drastic revamp of education.

The Internet era, however, has implications far beyond the realm of instructional technology. The roles of teachers as authorities in specific fields of knowledge have been eroded. The dissemination of knowledge is no longer of primary importance. The worldwide web provides ready information anytime and anywhere. The roles of teachers will change dramatically if they are to remain relevant to a new generation of students. In fact the Internet revolution calls for a total revamp in curriculum content, delivery and assessment. How should education address the issues of knowledge management and prepare our students for this knowledge era?

Globalisation and rapid technological innovations also call for new competencies. Content and technical knowledge easily becomes irrelevant in a rapidly changing world. My observations concur with Peterson (1997) who rightly noted that "there has been a revolution rather than evolutionary change in the environment of colleges and universities". The challenges described were similarly argued by Ramsden (1998) who stated that "we face an almost certain future of relentless variation in a more austere environment". Ramsden (1998) further noted that the challenges included "new forms of learning, new technologies for teaching and new requirements for graduate competence".

Given the small geographical size of Singapore, with one of the best IT infrastructures in the world, the dynamism, proximity and intensity of change is easily felt. This is particularly so at institutions of higher learning in Singapore. For academic staff here response to change is imperative.

Education Development: Using An Economic Parallel

When looking at educational developments in the 21st century it may be interesting to use an analogy from economics. It has been observed that successful national agendas for education, apart from social and political considerations, are characterised by a congruence of economic and educational goals. Whilst one may argue about the philosophical underpinnings of education it is imperative that education initiatives must proactively respond to the manpower needs to propel the engines of economic growth.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, for simplicity, the phases of development and sophistication of a developing economy characteristic of Singapore. National agendas of newly developing economies are characterised first by a preoccupation of the practices of what is commonly referred to as the "classical theory". Every developing country has to pass through this phase. The initial phase of physical capital development and human development is an important foundation. There is no short cut to having the basic physical infrastructures, foreign investments and technology transfer. There must be mastery over the management of machines, effective economies of scale practices, getting systems in place and functioning and developing worker efficiency.

Figure 1: A Simplified Model of Economic Development

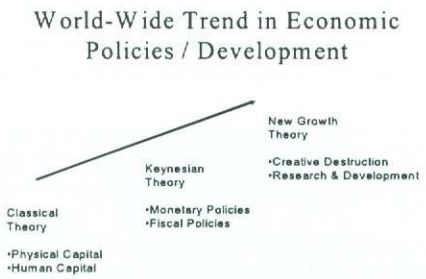
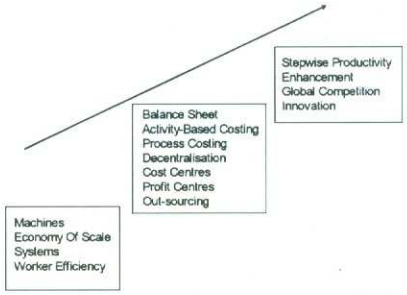


Figure 2: A Simplified Model of Economic Sophistication



The concomitant educational development at this stage is often the massification of education from the primary and secondary levels. Education priorities often include building social cohesion and citizenship. Technical education would be emphasised to support relevant manpower needs of growing economic sectors.

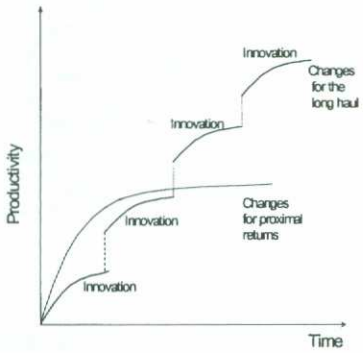
The next stage of development calls for more financial sophistication. At the national level there would increasing complexities of monetary and fiscal policies and management of capital market and establishment of financial structures. The company level is similarly characterised by more sophisticated management of the balance sheet and more innovative financial management.

For the more advanced economies, however, the final phase of development will be characterised by the "new growth theory". This calls for the creative destruction of processes and systems that have outlived their usefulness. This is often about stepwise enhancement of productivity, entrepreneurship, innovation and world-class benchmarking. Stepwise productivity here refers to quantum leap change as contrast to continuous change that would plateau with time.

Figure 3 illustrates the fact that whilst a new process or system will initially yield value as one masters it, the productivity gains will

inevitably reach a plateau over time. The rapidly changing environment and rate of innovations today however call for the installation and learning of new processes and innovations to create leaps in productivity gains. In other words new learning will often be needed and the ability to learn how to learn must be an important attribute of the 21st century worker.

Figure 3: Stepwise Productivity Through Innovation / Creative Destruction



Barring disruptions arising from political and social disturbances the economic development phases described above, however, are very much shortened for developing economies today. There is now much more overlapping of phases and concomitance. This means that education must address the issues of producing innovative and creative people.

Figure 4: Concomitant Capabilities Through Education

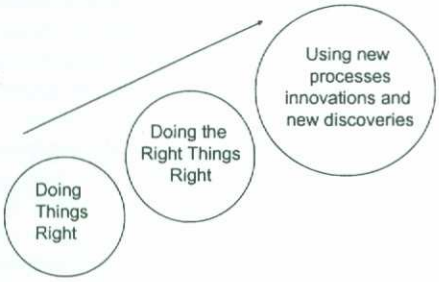


Figure 4 illustrates the parallel developments of capabilities needed to match the demands of economic growth. From "doing things right" in the initial phase one needs to learn to do the "right things right" and eventually to engage in innovation and make new discoveries. (A simple example would be a clerk mastering the type-writer. They may have done everything right but that is an obsolete process. They need to do the right thing to use the computer which would enhance productivity. Eventually using a computer for word processing is not good enough. They now need to continuously learn new softwares and creatively use these new capabilities to do multiple functions and even create new products, new presentations and so on).

All Post-Secondary and Tertiary Students	Potential Leaders
• Morally upright, culturally rooted yet understanding and respecting differences, responsible to family, community and country • Believes in our principles of multiracialism and meritocracy, appreciating the national constraints but seeing the opportunities • Constituents of a gracious society • Willing to strive, take pride in work, value working with others • Able to think, reason and deal confidently with the future, with courage and conviction in facing adversity • Able to seek, process and apply knowledge • Innovative -spirit of continual improvement, lifelong habit of learning, enterprising spirit in undertakings • Think globally, but rooted to Singapore	• Committed to improving society • Proactive in surmounting our constraints • Compassionate towards other • Able to inspire, motivate and draw out the best from others • Able to chart our destiny and lead • Able to forge breakthroughs in a knowledge-based economy • Creative and imaginative • Has tenacity to fight against the odds, not quitting

Table 1: Desired Outcomes of Education for All Post-Secondary and Tertiary Students and Potential Leaders

In the light of the economic analogy education must foster the creation of a critical mass of more creative individuals and also people with higher levels of thinking skills. Singapore has been a classic case of success in transition as described above - today the challenge is one of "creative destruction" with a drastic moving away from old mindsets. Higher education in Singapore is expected to be versatile given that universities and polytechnics must produce the 21st century global worker.

Education would fail if institutions continue to teach content to students without paying attention to how quickly such content knowledge becomes obsolete or irrelevant. Educators need to ask if the skills imparted are really transferable to the workplace. Teachers would have failed if they use learning processes that do not impact on life-long learning. The challenge is indeed for educators to design new learning environments and curricula that really encourage motivation and independence to equip students with learning skills, thinking and problem-solving skills. Indeed workplace expectations are about key competencies and not job descriptions; and results-orientation rather than task-orientation. Thus employers are looking for attributes such as problem-solving skills, adaptability, initiative, creativity, communication skills, technological literacy, real work experience, leadership ability, logic and reasoning, systems thinking and so on. To what extent do our education process address these developments?

Chang and Hung (1999) noted that in a report entitled "Learning, Creating and Communicating: A Curriculum Review" prepared by an external review team for the Ministry of Education of Singapore in August 1997 it was suggested that the education system be re-conceived and re-oriented to produce graduates who are learners, creators and communicators. Chang and Hung (1999, p. 78) further cited the report of the External Review Team as follows:

"Students should develop critical thinking skills, thereby becoming GOOD CREATORS:

- Students should learn problem-solving and system thinking skills.
- Students should develop creative, analytical and innovative perspectives.
- Students should be given opportunities to be confident risk-takers where appropriate, and to become clear thinkers who relish challenge."

The Ministry of Education (1998) in a booklet entitled the "The Desired Outcomes of Education" listed the goals of post-secondary and tertiary education as shown in Table 1.

The call for curriculum innovation in Singapore is also featured in a report entitled "Committee on Singapore Competitiveness" published in November 1998. The report (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 1998), which focused primarily on Singapore's economic competitiveness, devoted a section to discuss human and intellectual capital as a key competitive edge. The report noted that over last three decades Singapore has had a successful education system that supported a "production-based economy". Using our simplified model as illustrated in Figures 2 and 4,

this "production-based economy" is likened to the first two stages.

The report (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 1998; p. 86) further argued that, to "improve the longer-term competitiveness of Singapore, we should refine our education system to help foster creative thinking and entrepreneurial spirit among the young." It stated that three major components of the educational system should be addressed:

- the content of the educational curriculum
- the mode of delivering this curriculum to students
- the assessment of the performance of schools.

The Economic Development Board in a publication entitled *A Knowledge-Based Economy* similarly emphasised that for "our knowledge-based economy to flourish, we will need a culture which encourages creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as an appetite for change and risk-taking" (Economic Development Board, 1999, p.3).

Singapore has also begun to bring in world-class universities and corporate training centres with strong international reputations and cutting-edge research, as well as industrial linkages to set-up centres of excellence in Singapore. The goal is for Singapore to be established as a world-class education system renowned for its intellectual capital and creative energy. Singapore has already attracted institutions such as Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, Cornell and Johns Hopkins and Insead to set-up centres or collaborate with the local universities. The idea, as articulated in the Industry 21 Plan (Economic Development Board, 1999, p.15), is that: "Entrepreneurs and technopreneurs will benefit from an environment, created through the interaction of these institutions, that encourages ideas, creativity and innovation."

The call for a more creative education is for all levels and the need for existing workers to upgrade their education and intellectual capabilities is also an area of concern. Tertiary institutions, especially the polytechnics in Singapore, will need to respond to the "lifelong learning for lifelong employability" agenda. Thus, in another milestone report *Manpower 21: Vision of a Talent Capital*, it is advocated that tertiary institutions adopt a "1-Institute 2-Systems approach" to meet the nation's challenge of being a talent capital. The Manpower 21 report (Ministry of Manpower, 1999) again emphasised, amongst other things, the development of human and intellectual capital especially "innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities."

Curriculum Revolution for an Information and Knowledge Era

Education in the knowledge economy is about enhancing intelligence. The dynamic changes in the world calls for greater capacity to learn from experience and to adapt to new environments. We probably need a curriculum revolution. By curriculum we refer not only to the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Apart from talking about desired outcomes in terms of content, process skills and higher-order cognitive skills, curriculum refers to the learning environment to bring about these outcomes. Can we still have a predominance of the lecture and tutorial mode of teaching and learning? Even active learning in large and small groups seems to have limitations in meeting the challenges of curriculum innovation. How do we emphasise the learning to learn process? Preparing students for adaptation and change implies exposing them to more ill-structured problem situations.

Preparing students to be more creative and more entrepreneurial calls for a curriculum where students confront more real world or less structured problems at the outset and deal with multi-disciplinary sources of knowledge bases. Academic staff are of course primarily concerned with research, especially when advancing the frontier of knowledge is a key mission for their institutional reputation. Here we are addressing the scholarship of teaching and here we have to agree that hitherto the traditional pre-occupations of academic staff is the curriculum, the content they are teaching, their role as an effective lecturer and the student as a learner.

Our argument here is for a curriculum where staff concern would pertain to questions such as:

"What kinds of problems can I design for the students to trigger their learning?"

"How can I pose or design problem situations that will create motivation to pursue certain knowledge-bases?"

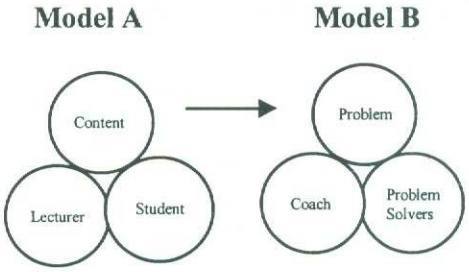
"How do I empower students to become independent learners in knowledge and information retrieval and the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines?"

These are rather different from questions such as : "What should be I normally be teaching in this subject?" or "What content information do I present to students?"

The fact that the shelf-life of knowledge is much shorter and information and knowledge bases are now so accessible should cause a serious re-thinking on the validity of the traditional lecture and tutorial modes of learning. We are talking about how well it is done in terms of how much active learning can take place to increase the quality of thinking going on in a typical lecture.

To put it succinctly and simply the curriculum must shift from Model A to Model B as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: A Model of Curriculum Shift



In Model B, students do not just see themselves as learners but as problem-solvers. Having problems as triggers provides for more goal-directed behaviours so that in seeking to solve the problem the students have the need to seek and obtain certain knowledge-bases. This is rather different from students passively receiving chunks of information. Traditional lectures were often described as economical and efficient ways to transmit a large amount of knowledge but, more often than not, one can now access many versions and sources of a needed knowledge base from the Internet.

The lecturer would of course need to design or obtain real world problems as anchors around which students would achieve the learning outcomes in the process of actively working on an ill-structured problem. In many ways these call for a problem-based approach to the curriculum. It has been argued that by using a "real-life" problem as a focus rather than the content, students would really learn how to learn. Problem-based learning (PBL) is certainly not new, especially in the medical curriculum. Albanese and Mitchell (1993) in their review of PBL from literature in the period 1972-1992 cautioned about comprehensive curriculum conversions to PBL although they noted that there were some positive outcomes. Two major concerns are that of cognitive-processing weaknesses in students and high resource utilisation. This review could not of course take into consideration the transformation of the information world today. The proliferation of IT and technology probably makes the scenario of resource utilisation and information access very different. The cognitive-processing weaknesses relates to the coaching process, thus we advocate the importance of the lecturer's role as a coach. In fact it has been

argued that the lecturer in the 21st century would have to be a facilitator and designer of the learning environment (Tan, 1994). The argument for curriculum innovation here is the shift in mindset of academic staff as authorities of knowledge, whose primary role is transmission, to one of coaching and facilitating, not using learning but the "learning to learn" process. Staff development has a place here for enhancing such competencies.

Ross (1995) when arguing about "conditions necessary for success" in PBL stated that: "Of prime importance is institutional support - expressed at the central level as well as vital at the faculty level and below". Hence the argument for curriculum revolution rather than evolution at the subject level where constraints and limitations of structure hinders multi-disciplinary and integrated approaches.

Boud and Feletti (1996) have noted that problem-based learning is "the most significant innovation in education". Whilst there may be a continuum of definitions and approaches it is not the purpose of this article to present the details of problem-based approaches. My argument is of course delimited by my concern for emphasising the outcomes of more creative and entrepreneur outcomes of learning. It appears that by having real-life problems (rather than content) as focal points, with students as active problem solvers and teachers as coaches, the learning paradigm would shift towards the attainment of higher level thinking skills. Margetson (1996) has noted that a problem-based learning curriculum helps promote the development of lifelong learning skills in the form of open-minded, reflective, critical and active learning. Furthermore it has been observed that problem-based learning curricula are better able to facilitate the acquisition of problem-solving skills, communication skills, teamwork skills and interpersonal skills - attributes that are sought after by industry (Woods et al; 1997).

There is a Chinese saying that if a growing tree is bent, to get it straight you need to bend it in the opposite extreme. Curriculum revolution appears to be needed to ensure education is at the end of the day aligned to the demands of this new era.

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Learning and Teaching Support Network: New Staff Appointments

The Generic Learning and Teaching Centre (GLTC)

The following people (including details of their previous positions) will be joining the GLTC in September 2000:

- Dr Richard Blackwell (1.0), Head of Training and Staff Development, University of Nottingham
- Brenda Smith (1.0), Associate Director of the Centre for Academic Practice, The Nottingham Trent University
- Jill Armstrong (0.8), Director of Learning and Teaching, Liverpool Hope College
- Dr Andrew Booth (0.5), Director of the Flexible Learning Unit, University of Leeds
- Dr Norman Jackson (0.5), Assistant Director of the QAA and Senior Research Fellow, University of Surrey
- Professor John Slater (0.5), PVC Learning and Teaching, University of Kent.

Details of appointments to the Technology Integration Centre (TIC) appear on page 16.

News from SEDA Scotland

The second SEDA Scotland Conference was held at the West Park Conference Centre of The University of Dundee. This one day event, entitled 'Developing Students Higher Level Abilities', attracted 50 participants from across Scotland and a few hardy souls made the trek north.

The one day event was chaired by Bob Matthew and Lorraine Stefani and featured an opening keynote by Phil Race and a closing session facilitated by Ray Land. The conference itself featured eight individual sessions reflecting the activity going on in Scottish HE establishments in the area of developing students higher level abilities. These included sessions on the University of Highlands and Islands Personal and Professional Capabilities framework and its implementation, two sessions from the University of Glasgow, one on the new problem based curriculum in the medical school, the other on ethics teaching in the Biological Sciences. Developing independent learners in the early years of degree study, problem based learning and electronic learning reflective journals, and learning from work made up the afternoon sessions.

The materials produced by the presenters for their sessions are available from the SEDA web site at http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/scotland/postconf00.html

This was another step forward in developing the SEDA Scotland network. As a result of the event a number of people indicated a willingness to help put this group on a firmer footing and so a SEDA Scotland Committee is currently being established. It is hoped the Spring SEDA conference will be held in Scotland in 2001.

Bob Matthew, University of Glasgow
Lorraine Stefani FSEDA, University of Strathclyde

SEDA Scotland

Educational Developers of the World, Uniting!

Carole Baume FSEDA
Centre for Higher Education Practice, The Open University

Introduction

The last week of July saw 103 educational developers from 26 countries assemble in Bielefeld, Northern Germany. We focused on the scholarship and professional practice of staff and educational development. We shared practice, models and theories of educational development. We sought areas for international collaboration. We also ground flour, baked bread and made butter at a local folk museum!

This was the third international conference of the International Consortium for Higher Education (ICED), and included the seventh Council meeting of ICED.

What is ICED, and what is it for?

The International Consortium for Educational Development was formed in 1993 by a group of educational developers from six national networks, brought together by Graham Gibbs. Phil Candy represented the Australian network HERDSA; Maryellen Weimer, Dan Wheeler and Don Wulff the American POD network; Chris Knapper the Canadian STLHE; Wolff-Dietrich Webler the German AHD; Magnus Hakansson the educational developers in Sweden; and David Baume and Mantz Yorke the UK's SEDA.

ICED was set up to:

- Help partner organisations to develop their capacity for educational development in higher education through sharing of good practice, problems and solutions.
- Enlarge the number of partner organisations of ICED.
- Help educational developers in countries where no national network exists to form such a network.
- Support educational development in higher education in developing countries.
- Link with other related national and international organisations.

What does ICED do?

Since 1993, the Consortium has grown and developed into an organisation which links 15 national educational development networks; runs an international conference once every two years and a workshop in intervening years; holds a Council meeting every year; and publishes a refereed Journal with issues twice a year.

Member networks of ICED send representatives to the annual Council meeting, and between meetings communicate via the Internet. There are no membership fees, and there is a very light and flexible organisation structure. Graham Gibbs has remained with the Consortium as its Convenor. I was the first Chair of the Council, elected in 1998, and I've just been succeeded as Chair by Pat Rogers from York University in Ontario who has been representing STLHE.

Over the seven years, ICED has helped educational developers to develop formal networks from informal groupings in Belgium and Sweden, and to establish networks in Spain and Croatia. We have offered advice and support in developing organisational structures and membership arrangements for all partner networks, learning much from each other. We have provided visiting speakers for national events. ICED aims to provide a mutually supportive environment for developers who can sometimes feel professionally rather isolated.

Previous conferences

The Finnish network launched ICED into the world of international conferences with the Preparing University Teachers Conference at Vasa University in 1996. Seventy staff and educational developers from 15 countries came to the beautiful woodlands and lakes of western Finland, where the days extended well into our normal sleeping time and the local people seemed never to go to bed!

Two years later, ICED was hosted by the Professional and Organisational Development (POD) Network at the University of Texas at Austin, where the Conference theme was Educational Development through Disciplines and Departments. Over two hundred participants attended this conference. While most of them were from North America, faculty and academic developers (as we learnt to call them) from 19 other countries also attended. Texas hospitality lived up to its legendary reputation, with line dancing, a barbecue and a shoot-out!

How can I get involved with ICED's work?

ICED's membership is the national networks. So, if you are a member of SEDA, you already are represented at ICED. This year the SEDA representative on the ICED Council was Ranald Macdonald, current SEDA Co-Chair.

You could get involved with ICED by attending the next conference to be held in Perth, Western Australia in July 2002 - watch the web site at http://www.csd.uwa.edu.au/iced2002/

You could subscribe to ICED's journal - *The International Journal for Academic Development* (IJAD) - published twice a year by Routledge. Special subscription rates are available to SEDA members - contact the SEDA office for details. More information at http://www.queensu.ca/idc/ijad/

You could write an article for IJAD - UK editor David Baume (a.d.baume@open.ac.uk) would be delighted to give you more information and receive suggestions for papers.

What were the highlights of this Conference for me?

I gained a strong feeling of being part of an evolving global community of educational developers. I met many new young educational developers from outside UK. And the 'Cannonball J' Jazz band were superb. However, my highlight has to be a keynote presentation from Ludwig Huber from the University of Bielefeld. He challenged us with some really good questions about educational development. Why not have a go at some of them?

- What *key concepts* would educated people from other fields need to understand educational development?
- What *theoretical models* underpin conversations in educational development?
- What *methods* would educated people from other fields need to judge the knowledge I use as an educational developer?
- What *scaffold or framework* is most useful for arranging storing and retrieving knowledge in educational development (as in 'chronological order' in history)?
- For what *patterns of professional practice* would students of educational development have to prepare themselves (patterns like 'diagnosis' for a GP)?

Learner-Centred Universities for the New Millennium

The 25th International Improving University Teaching Conference Goethe-University, Frankfurt, 17th-20th July

Some personal impressions

This was a truly international conference of a nice size (125 approx) with probably a majority from the USA and only a small number of Brits. So it was an opportunity to meet lots of new people, with a good mix between educational developers and teaching staff just interested in improving their teaching and their students' learning.

Too many plenary sessions for my liking, but the way the conference handles papers was interestingly different. Papers for consideration have to be submitted in full (not just abstracts) in a designated format and if submitted they are then printed into a book which you receive before the conference. Papers are grouped with two or three others around similar themes and because everyone has had a chance to read them beforehand presenters are limited to seven minutes to introduce key issues and make observations about connections with the other papers in the cluster. The rest of the session is then open for questions and discussion which seemed to work well in the ones I attended and certainly made the paper sessions more interactive. It also means I have some 60 plus papers from the conference, including those for all the sessions I could not attend.

One of the more interesting plenaries involved three Germans describing different ways they use project-type work. Nothing very innovative in that, you may say, but the title was "Learning through research". This helped to confirm my growing belief that in addressing the "how do we link research and teaching?" question, project work/PBL can perhaps be 'sold' to some of our more resistant colleagues as developing research skills/ adopting research methodologies (and in fact this was also one of a number of suggestions argued for in a paper presented later by Lewis Elton).

The best plenary in my view was probably by Sir John Daniel from the OU (who is also on the Board of the Carnegie Foundation). He included a quote from Walter Perry that the "most important innovation" of the OU was the course team, as it established the "scholarship of teaching" because the course team is "scholars being scholarly".

He, along with many others at the conference, while accepting the inevitability of increased use of e-learning (and its possible advantages) criticised much of the push in that direction as implicitly promoting knowledge and facts, and the poverty of any discussion or thinking about learning. He argued that the characteristics of much current e-learning (asynchronous, web-based) was essentially a return to bad correspondence courses, while in fact the technology is probably best used for communication *about* the course. Linked to this, a recurring question in discussion was the difference between being 'customer-centred' and 'learner-centred'.

Peter Seldin (of teaching portfolio fame) also led an interesting plenary on a research study he has conducted (in 24 countries!) into systems which evaluate individual teaching performance, and what makes some of these systems successful and others not. This is recently published in a new book "Changing practices and evaluating teaching" but I am personally not sure how transferable the findings are to the UK context because I do not think increased judging of individual performance is currently on the agenda.

Another new book highly recommended at the conference was "Learning from Change" (edited by Deborah De Zure, published by Stylus/AAHE) which is collected articles from the American Association for Higher Education's Change magazine.

The overarching impression I came away with from the conference was that there are some three or four truly international themes of growing importance - the research / teaching relationship, scholarship of teaching, a move from teaching to learning with the focus on learning outcomes and abilities rather than content knowledge, but a concern that the push to ICT may be retrogressive in pushing that focus back the other way.

I also came away thinking that in the UK we are actually possibly better off than in many of the other countries represented - both in how far we have got in thinking and dealing with some of these issues, and in the general shift of attitude regarding the importance of teaching and learning. In addition to the effects that increasing student numbers had through the nineties, I think this is largely because of our centralised system (compared with North America) and the combined stick and carrot effects of the various initiatives from Government and the funding councils over the past decade (from teaching quality assessment to the establishment of learning and teaching strategies, subject centres and the Institute for Learning and Teaching).

Chris Rust FSEDA
Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University

Support for Key Skills on the Web

The above conference, organised jointly by Sheffield Hallam University and SEDA, was held on 18 May 2000, and proved extremely successful with over 100 attendees.

The one day event was particularly topical as support for Key Skills is becoming increasingly important across all disciplines in HE. The need to access relevant materials to assist teaching staff to integrate Key Skills development is central to this and the Web provides a valuable mechanism for the delivery of such materials.

The conference had attendees from a wide range of backgrounds, including staff in HE with responsibility for learning, teaching and assessment strategies, educational developers, staff involved in quality and skills support as well as staff from libraries, Learning Centres and computer services departments.

The day introduced participants to examples of Web sites and identified the issues and resources required in implementing such sites. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss these issues with staff who had already developed such sites and, as such, the conference was valuable in sharing information and resolving concerns.

Much of the information at the conference was based on the findings of the TLTP3 'Key to Key Skills Project', led by Sheffield Hallam University, with Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Plymouth, which has made a Web system developed at LMU portable to other institutions. The event also afforded an opportunity for the dissemination of information and experience gained whilst running the project.

The success of the conference again demonstrated the benefit of running such events collaboratively with interested universities and hopefully more will be follow in the future.

More information on the TLTP3 Key to Key Skills Project can be found on their web site at:

http://www.shu.ac.uk/keytokey/

Maurice Teasdale
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Reviews

Books

Inspiring Students: Case Studies in Motivating the Learner

Edited by Stephen Fallows and Kemal Ahmet
SEDA / Kogan Page (1999) £18.99 pbk
ISBN 0 749428 72 4

Many university teachers are - like me - often faced with teaching modules and courses to non-students who initially show little enthusiasm or interest. From such readers, any publication promising practical ideas for enhancing the motivation and achievements of students is likely to receive a warm reception.

The book consists of seventeen, short (occasionally, too short) case studies in active learning, and in academic disciplines as diverse as the natural sciences, communication sciences and the humanities, with a short introduction and concluding chapter by the editors. Contributors come from universities in North America, Australia and Britain. There is inevitable variation of style and analytic focus in such diversity. However, what unites all the authors is their enthusiasm and determination 'to believe in the student and to act as an effective catalyst for learning' (p170).

These case studies generally concentrate on subject interest as a main parameter of student learning. They emphasise that if learning is to take place, then students need to be able to recognize the relevance to their own experiences and aspirations of the formal curriculum. It would be invidious to highlight individual contributions for particular review; however, some illustrate more general themes represented in the collection overall.

Peter Ommundsen, teaching biology at Selkirk Community College in Canada, illustrates the value of creating a problem based learning environment for non-specialist students. Lynn Zelmer (Central Queensland University) and Balasubramanyam Chandramohan (University of Luton) are concerned with interdisciplinary course development, and offer clear examples of the gains to be had from deploying a range of teaching strategies, such as videoed lectures, workplace projects for assessment, e-mail discussion lists. Anne Arnold and John Truran (University of Adelaide) demonstrate how working with students to enhance an unpopular course (here, in statistics) can be invigorating equally to tutors and students.

Most readers already know the benefits to be had from attending to key features of effective teaching, such as clearly communicated learning objectives, the use of timely feedback to students, and targeted assessments. I would have liked the editors to include more on development of transferable skills as an incentive to learners and a principal means of raising both their motivation and standards of achievement. Overall, though, it is a relief to see academic authors demonstrating reflective practice rather than merely rehearsing its theoretical virtues. It is interesting and -well, yes -motivating to read about such efforts in a range of academic contexts and institutional settings.

The publication has a short yet useful Index, includes a contact register of contributors, helpful for networking, and provides a companion to *Motivating Students* in this SEDA series. I recommend it.

John Dolan
University of Derby

How To Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and Their Supervisors (3rd Edition)

Estelle M Phillips and Derek S Pugh
Open University Press (2000) £15.99 pbk
ISBN 0 335205 50 X

As a full-time student, I have on many occasions stumbled across interesting books of the 'How To ...' variety and hoped that someday I might actually have time to read one. I believe most students feel the same and their intention to allocate time for personal development is overtaken by the requirement for more purposeful research. However, after reading *How to get a PhD* I am persuaded that books such as these are helpful, not only in providing effective study advice but also in presenting invaluable insights into university procedures and ethics.

The authors have appropriately subtitled this book *A handbook for students and their supervisors*. Their attempt to provide relevant information and realistic interpretations of PhD research from the point of view of students *and* academics has, in my opinion, proved most successful, dealing with the interests and motivation of students and supervisors in a balanced way. I believe both groups can benefit from reading this text, particularly those considering applying for PhD studies, and those in the early stages of research projects.

The authors' ability to discuss issues from an objective standpoint, the plain language used and even the physical dimensions of the book make it very user-friendly. The book uses subdivided chapters to allow selective reading and supplements this by using bullet points and action summaries throughout. Student orientated chapters include 'Becoming a postgraduate', 'How to do research', 'The PhD process' and most interestingly 'How *not* to get a PhD'. Supervisors might be interested in reading 'How to supervise and examine' and 'Institutional responsibilities'.

This third edition has, appropriately, moved into the technological age and the authors show a good grasp of the importance of IT within the PhD process, including electronic mail systems and Internet searching. I must however bring attention to the fact that the web page reference for the National Postgraduate Committee (p56) is incorrect; replace www.npc.org for www.npg.org - the latter will take you to the National Portrait Gallery!

This very worthwhile book will be an invaluable contribution to my personal library and I will be recommending (and probably lending) it to fellow PhD researchers and to students considering the PhD route.

Orla Murphy
University of Ulster

A Guide to Learning Independently (3rd Edition)

Lorraine Marshall and Frances Rowland
Open University Press (1998) £11.99 pbk
ISBN 0 335203 66 3

This book is wide-ranging and ambitious in scope. It sets out to help independent students to meet the standard requirements of teachers and courses, and to discover for themselves how they learn most effectively.

The first five chapters concentrate on the student, in terms of when to study, how to study and how to ask appropriate questions so as to maximise learning effectiveness. The next five chapters consider how students can find, evaluate and use information in dealing with questions, and they contain guidance on analysing and researching a topic and listening to lectures, for instance. The last six chapters examine how students can best communicate effectively what they learn, both in writing and in face to face discussion.

Not only does the book succeed in its aims, but it also scores significantly over similar books in a number of ways. One of the most commendable aspects of this book is its emphasis on critical thinking, simply defined as 'reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on what to believe or do' (p33). This aspect of learning is emphasised throughout

the book, since students are encouraged and aided to question their assumptions about learning itself, as well as the subjects they study, and they are shown how to be reflective by means of practical examples.

In addition, the book is designed to be easy and convenient to use. It applies a friendly and helpful style, and incorporates aspects such as extensive cross-referencing and well-chosen quotations that illuminate the points in the text clearly. Moreover, the book is designed to be used in an interactive fashion. It poses questions at appropriate points to engage the reader and encourages students to choose from alternatives wherever possible. The book is also fundamentally practical in outlook, providing students with examples of effective learning and encouraging them to try out techniques for themselves. A particular strength is the way in which the book aids students to write effectively at a variety of levels and in a variety of formats for different purposes.

This book will be of great interest to students of all kinds, and teachers will also find its advice beneficial in encouraging and motivating students to improve their learning ability.

John McCarthy
University of Dundee

Computer-Assisted Assessment in Higher Education

Edited by Sally Brown, Phil Race and Joanna Bull
SEDA / Kogan Page (1999) £18.99
ISBN 0 749430 35 4

The more one uses computers in teaching and learning, the more natural, desirable and appropriate it seems also to use computers for ongoing, formative assessment. And finally for the end of course exam. And so one is inexorably pulled further and further into the use of computers in education. This is obvious when reading this book.

However, just as there are untold educational issues entwined in computer assisted teaching and learning, so there are major assessment issues involved in computer assisted assessment (CAA). This book would have gained from an introduction with a theoretical overview of assessment in general in higher education, and its vast literature, before discussing the more specific computer issues involved in CAA.

Another useful separation would have been between formative and summative assessment, particularly because computers are wonderfully suited to the first and more cumbersome in their use for the latter, largely because of authentication and security. In this book all these issues are more or less run together. As a result there is some repetition in the chapters. The division of the book into three sections, titled Pragmatics and Practicalities of CAA; Using CAA for Formative Assessment; and Learning from Experience, is not really helpful and not always justified by the content of the individual chapters.

Another grumble I have with this book is that some chapters have a tendency towards an optimism and faith in the inherent suitability and value of CAA which is not justified with arguments in the chapter itself.

Having said this, there are a number of very sound, interesting and useful chapters, which discuss the practicalities of CAA in light of the theories of assessment. The authors address the specific issues of CAA, pointing out both the advantages and pitfalls in a clear and concise manner. Writing from experience and referring to the wider issues they make clear that what is true for CAL is true for CAA. The costs, both human and financial are high, the effort is great, but there are gains to be made in student learning. These chapters make this book well worth reading.

Marjan Lousberg
University of Otago, New Zealand

What Kind of University? International Perspectives on Knowledge, Participation and Governance

Edited by John Brennan, Jutta Fedrowitz, Mary Huber and Tarla Shah
Open University Press (1999) £65.00 hbk
ISBN 0 335204 29 5

Those of us intimately involved in higher education, whether as an administrator, researcher or teacher, would like to believe that universities will continue to have an important, if not influential, role in this era of globalisation and technology. In this book the twenty authors address three major topics: (i) knowledge - what will count, how will it be organised, researched and taught?; (ii) participation - who will be the students be and how will access to and participation in universities develop?; (iii) governance - how will the management and organisation of institutions change, how will autonomy develop and what will be decided by the market or the state?.

John Brennan argues about coming to terms with diversity from practically every aspect an academic can think of, whether educational or social. John Daniel provides an interesting reflection that points to the importance of opportunities and universities being associated with lifelong learning, as well as transcending boundaries through technology for the service of all humankind.

On access and participation, the writers present some refreshing debate pertaining to the obligations of universities to their societies, as well as issues of equality, meritocracy and democratisation. The impact of technology breaking down national frameworks and the role of universities transforming societies are also discussed.

If universities matter for the future, the above issues must indeed be addressed, and management and leadership will serve to facilitate or inhibit positive changes for the future. The sharing on governance provides some useful insights when leadership chooses to be far-sighted and see that 'in these changes lie opportunities'.

The authors in general tend to see changes as being less drastic than what some may advocate. Bruce Johnston, for example, argues that despite all the changes he sees 'a future university that will be much like the present one, at least in curriculum and pedagogy.' There is indeed a need to guard some 'ecological' balances such as the emphasis on humanities versus science and technology, and human mediation versus artificial intelligence. As Lee Shulman observes: 'Predicting the future is always a risky enterprise'. The recent advent of virtual universities may prove some of the predictions wrong. The University of Phoenix in USA, for example, has some 6000 courses in cyberspace and the fact that is traded on the stock market adds a different dimension to issues of governance! Nevertheless some pervasive and enduring fundamentals are addressed in this book and it is an interesting read for those who care about influencing higher education.

Tan Oon Seng
Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore

NOTICE TO PUBLISHERS

Books for review should be sent to:

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Managing Universities: Guides to Good Practice Managing International Students

Christine Humfrey
Open University Press (1999) £18.99 pbk
ISBN 0 335203 07 8

This book could not have appeared at a more opportune time than in the shadow of the Prime Minister's initiative to attract many more international (overseas fee-paying) students to the UK and the current exercise to brand British education globally. The author has written a comprehensive manual on international recruitment that will be useful at many levels, from new starters in the field of international recruitment, to experienced practitioners in international offices and academics who wish to boost international recruitment on specific courses.

There is an admirable focus on how to plan a recruitment strategy and how essential it is to back this up with good practice in process management throughout the student experience, from initial query through to the period of study and beyond. Useful sections include those on employing agents, quality assurance and resource issues. Humfrey also discusses some issues that many institutions or academic departments will not have considered, or formalised, eg. the tailoring of courses to make them more attractive in the international market.

There were a few areas where I would have liked to see more in-depth discussion, such as the need to make the entire university work together to present a professional and unified face to international students. In a highly decentralised working environment such as higher education, a more in-depth discussion on how to achieve this unity of purpose would have been welcome.

There was also insufficient concentration on the essential marketing skills that need to be acquired within universities to gain knowledge about the global business environment. Most universities do not employ marketing professionals in their international offices, which has resulted in good practice evolving by instinct rather than good judgement. Marketing practices such as benchmarking and competitor analysis are rarely done in a more than superficial manner, if at all, and it is a need for professionalism in marketing and process management that will mark out the universities successful in the international arena in the future.

In short, this text provides a useful background for all those interested in international student recruitment and various chapters can act as a checklist for practitioners in the various areas. The challenge remains for institutions to adopt the "across-the-board" responsibility for international recruitment and towards international students that is advocated in this book, rather than leaving all responsibility for improving recruitment to a few people in international or marketing offices.

Joanne Purves
University of Durham

Return to Study: A Guide for Professionals

Stuart Powell
Open University Press (1999) £13.99
ISBN 0 325201 31 8

and

How to Get a Good Degree: Making the Most of Your Time at University

Phil Race
Open University Press (1999) £13.99
ISBN 0 325200 24 9

I suspect that, as someone who found university study a relatively painless process, my view of 'cook-book' study guides is somewhat jaundiced. However, in the spirit of genuine inquiry I tried to read these two books with an open mind.

Stuart Powell's book reminded me of an ex-student of mine (let us call her Irene). She was older than me when she started her degree and had a very clear idea of why she was returning to study - to get a degree to further her career. So, I would suggest, an ideal candidate as a reader of this book. Well, not surprisingly, this book would have saved me considerable time in personal tutorial sessions had it been available. I spent time with Irene explaining what critical thinking was, in the context of the degree she was pursuing, how her critical thinking could and should be communicated to others in seminars, tutorials and through her written work - and whilst not exactly explained in the same way, the same material appears in this book. It's written in a relaxed and easy to read style - I could imagine Irene picking it up and reading a chapter or part of a chapter on many occasions. For me this is a useful little book that provides sound practical advice to all students, not just professionals returning to study. It is priced at a level that will hopefully encourage students to purchase it and certainly personal tutors of professionals returning to study should commend it to their students.

The other book emanates from the pen, or should that be word processor, of the prodigious author Phil Race, and I must admit it left me cold after the warmth of the previous one. Now, I would want to defend myself from the SEDA hordes who are Phil fans, by saying I like Phil, admire his work and enjoy his workshops - but this book is not for me. Let me explain why. It is full of bullet point lists and tasks that involve completing tables, and so it is not easy to read nor very easy to dip in and out of. It seems to me that the content would make an excellent series of sessions on a study skills course and the book would be a very useful resource for someone preparing such a course. It is also fair to say the comments and information about the tables are extremely thoughtful and useful. But if I cast my mind back to Irene (and many other undergraduate students I worked with over the years) I cannot imagine her buying this book, far less working through it alone. This doesn't mean it isn't packed full of really useful ideas, tips and suggestions for students (and I would add staff) - just that it is not presented in a way I can imagine students using - which is a shame, because it would be of use to them.

So my advice to staff is: have a copy of Phil's book on the shelf to help you plan study skills sessions and encourage your students to read Stuart's book - now, that is what I call sitting on the fence. Finally, in case you are interested, Irene finished her degree, went on to professional practice and is now doing a part-time postgraduate qualification.

Bob Matthew
University of Glasgow

Learning and Teaching Support Network: New Staff Appointments

The Technology Integration Centre (TIC)

The following people (including details of their previous positions) will be joining the TIC in September 2000:

- Dr Tom Franklin (1.0), JISC Co-ordinator for JTAP / JCIEL
- Professor John Slater (0.5), PVC Learning and Teaching, University of Kent
- Dr Clive Stanger (0.5), Enterprise Manager, Barnsley College

Details of appointments to the Generic Learning and Teaching Centre (GLTC) appear on page 11.

A Review of Web Resources On Using Presentation Software

Manuella Essaka
Application of Presentation Technologies (APT) Project Officer
UMIST

Introduction

As the live presentation of information is such a major focus in academic life, we would expect that academic guidelines on the application of technology to such a key activity would be fairly common, in particular with the Web's increasing role as a key resource in Education. It is surprising, therefore, to find so few valuable Web resources in this area. The tools whose tutorials are reviewed are principally Microsoft PowerPoint, the Web, and Corel Presentations, respectively used by over 80%, 14% and 3% of academics to digitally create and / or display slides (Essaka et al., APT survey, 1998).

Web Resources on Using Presentation Software in Academia

Although the Computers in Teaching Initiative (CTI) is no more, their Primer on Presentation and Lectures is still-available and provides a 4-page introduction to using presentation tools in lectures. It is also available for each different discipline covered by the former 24 CTI Subject Centres with additional information on complementary subject-related tools. Go to the CTI web site for a list of the disciplines covered and then follow the links to one of the listed discipline-related centres, and look for the primer in publications, for example, the Biology version of the presentations and lectures primer.

The site for the ATP project (http://www.umist.ac.uk/apt/) is an extensive on-line resource where UK academics can find guidelines, case studies and tutorials on best practice in using presentation software and related Multimedia and Web technologies. The site is content-rich and accessible using different types of browsers and although it uses frames, disabled accessibility has been kept in mind. The most visited pages are:

- The PowerPoint class for academics is a complete PowerPoint tutorial developed with the academics' needs in mind. It covers basic and advanced functions of PowerPoint 97 with references to previous versions.
- Presentation and Web technologies
- A review and comparison of the presentation tools PowerPoint, Presentations, Director, Harvard Graphics, and FreeLance is incredibly still up-to-date even if it deals with the previous versions of these tools
- Multimedia resources and samples
- The planning and design guidelines
- Case studies on using presentation technologies
- The APT mailbase list.

On Microsoft PowerPoint home page, alas, you won't find any tutorial on PowerPoint 2000, the latest version of the software, only some how-to articles and tips & tricks. A good reference remains the PowerPoint 97 tutorial for HE called 'In and Out of the Classroom'. This practical step-by-step guide for teachers and administrators is consistently organised but tends to be repetitive. It helps you get familiar with the basics of the tool: organising a presentation outline, style, and layout, and adding multimedia.

The ACTDEN PowerPoint 97 tutorial is produced by The Digital Education Network. Only its design reminds you that this site is aimed at schools. Otherwise, it is an excellent site for beginners who want to learn PowerPoint 97 in an exciting way. The interface is very friendly and understandable with very clear screen shots and a good navigation, but not accessible to image-disabled browsers. Tutorials are available in print. In terms of content, PowerPoint 97 is described in 8 steps, from discovering the environment to putting your slides on the Web through adding multimedia. Each page that treats a different point has a one-question self-assessed quiz at its end to test your comprehension of that page.

On the Corel site, all you can find about Presentations™ 9, the latest version of their presentation software, is a very quick overview of the tool's feature. I could not find a complete Web resource on the tool or its previous versions. The only support provided by Corel seems to be its Knowledge Base, a search engine that allows you to ask questions to the Corel support base by typing in key words that describe them. However clever, the method is restrictive and not beginner-friendly.

Surprisingly, there is no complete tutorial on using the Web as a presentation tool. An introduction is "Using a Web Browser As Presentation Software" by Edward J Valauskas, and Carol A Dwyer provides "Using Web Software As A Presentation Tool" as a basic example. The APT site also looks at presenting on the Web and, in particular, using Adobe Acrobat and JavaScript, and converting from Microsoft PowerPoint 97 to the Web. The JTAP project SMIL vs. Proprietary Multimedia Formats in Internet Lectures looks at streaming presentations and synchronous multimedia presentations for giving audio and video lectures over the Web. In particular, Macromedia's Shockwave Audio, the Real Media Real Time Streaming Protocol, MPEG3, and the XML mark-up language SMIL (Synchronous Multimedia Interchange Language) are looked at. A complementary paper detailing the results of the project and demonstrating the various multimedia formats can be found on the ALT-C 99 web site.

A full list of links to all the above resources can be found on the SEDA website at:

http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/eddevs/pressoft.html

And on-line versions of the reviews which have appeared in previous issues of Educational Developments can also be found on the SEDA website as follows:

Review of Virtual Learning Environments (issue 1.1):

http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/eddevs/caalist.html

and Review of On-Line Resources for Computer-Assisted Assessment (issue 1.2):

http://www.seda.demon.co.uk/eddevs/virtlearn.html

Reviews of Educational Media

are welcomed and should be sent to:

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s.j.bostock@cs.keele.ac.uk

News from the SEDA Annual General Meeting

24th May 2000, Birmingham

At the first annual general meeting of SEDA Ltd, which took place in May, nominations were taken and overwhelmingly accepted by the Board of Directors for two new Vice-Chairs (Chairs Elect). It is therefore with great pleasure SEDA introduces its two new Vice-Chairs (Chairs Elect) Hazel Fullerton FSEDA (University of Plymouth) and Barry Jackson (Middlesex University), who will take over from the current Co-Chairs, Liz Beaty and Ranald Macdonald, at the next SEDA Ltd AGM due to be held in May 2001.

From Hazel Fullerton:

It's interesting that both Barry Jackson and I both came from design disciplines. This suggests you will have a couple of pragmatists at the helm, which may be just as well with the current rate of change in HE. I hope you are also going to find we have a creative approach perhaps with flurries of flair from time to time. I'm really looking forward to the partnership. In taking this on, I aim to give something back to SEDA which has helped my department, my institution, and me personally. I count many SEDA staff developers amongst my best friends and look forward to making more as a result of the new role.

Background:

- Studied Design in Scotland and followed it with a PGCE.
- Taught in secondary schools, middle school, Further Education, and with problem children.
- HE experience includes Head of TV and Audio Visual Education at Goldsmiths' College (University of London), Open University tutor/counsellor (technology).
- I have been with University of Plymouth since 1985, originally combining video production and staff development with the focus shifting to the latter. We have had a SEDA type course for new lecturers for most of that time, gearing it up a bit every couple of years. Our courses now include SEDA Associate and PGDip modules through to MEd.
- Head of Educational Development since its creation in 1995.
- Director of a couple of national projects; EFFECTS (embedding learning technologies) and JEWELS 2 (work based learning) that we have in the department.
- Other departmental activities cover Change Agents' initiatives; innovation funding and the kind of range of workshops, events; surgeries and working with departments that you might expect.
- In the Institution we have our own Teaching Fellowship Scheme and I am on the Advisory Panel for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

I live by the sea in Cornwall, which I love. My endeavour to give something back to that is the 2,500 trees that I have planted. They're still young but definitely woody. One of the many nice things about trees is that, by and large, you can ignore them until you feel like paying them attention. If only...

From Barry Jackson:

Background:

- Studied Graphic Design at Hornsey College of Art and Royal College of Art.
- Practiced as editorial illustrator and designer.
- Taught design and illustration at Harrow College, Lanchester Polytechnic, Falmouth College of Arts and Middlesex.
- Professor of Visual Communication 1993
- Dean of Art, Design and Performing Arts at Middlesex 1995.
- Appointed Director of Learning Development 1997. Responsible for drawing together, writing and implementing the university's Learning and Teaching Strategy since 1999.

I am getting increasingly interested in the pedagogical implications of networked and online learning, and the literature that surrounds it.

National work:

- GLAD - Group for Learning in Art and Design - committee member since its start 9 years ago.
- run Improving Student Learning (ISL) mailbase - approx. 400 members.
- member of the Advisory Panel for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme.
- member of steering committee for ISL Symposium.
- Steering Group member of the old CTI Art & Design, editorial board of new LTSN A&D Subject Centre.
- Steering group member of TLTP3 ELEN project, FDTL3 GLAADH.

I have been learning the guitar for 40 years. I love listening to all kinds of music, but as a player I'm stuck in the blues (current favourite guitarists: Lafayette Thomas, Freddie King, Robert Jr. Lockwood).

I have accumulated more guitars than I can justify. I am a founder member (with Graham Gibbs) of the blues 'band' called 'Deep Approach' that annually invites participants of the ISL symposium to jam, or simply to listen in awe as two grown men regress to their teens.... Regular player at the Purple Lounge Blues Jam (Thursday nights 8.00-1.00 Goslett Yard off Charing Cross Road - it's free and sometimes good - see the website at www.indieblues.com).

I make paintings when I can, but don't exhibit (yet).

I have always enjoyed SEDA, the events and the networks; I think the principles and values are something which are easy to commit to. I am very much looking forward to working with Hazel as co-chair and couldn't think of a better person to share the role with. I have started to get involved in the role, and my anxiety about doing a good job is somewhat allayed by the fact that there are so many people within the committees and in the Association that I know to be very good.

A Developer's Guide to Major National Initiatives
Part Two - The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council

In Educational Developments 1.1, David and Carole Baume described the main English national initiatives to support teaching and learning. In the second of this series, Jean Ritchie, SHEFC C&IT Programme Co-ordinator, summarises what's happening and being planned in Scotland.

The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) provides financial support for teaching, research and associated activities in Scottish higher education institutions. There are currently (July 00) 18 such institutions funded by SHEFC; shortly the Open University in Scotland will bring the total to 19. The Council is responsible to the Scottish Executive through the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department.

The UK HE Funding Bodies Working Together

The UK higher education funding councils co-fund a number of activities, including the Joint Information System Committee (JISC) and the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN), which were mentioned in the first article of this series. SHEFC contributes a 12% share to all of these.

Two of the new JISC Further Education Regional Support Centres are located in Scotland. One of the new LTSN subject centres - History, Classics & Archaeology - is based in Scotland, at Glasgow; nine other Subject Centres have partner institutions in Scotland; and each of the other Subject Centres is developing an approach which will ensure activity in Scotland and indeed in all parts of the UK.

SHEFC's Learning and Teaching Strategy

During 1999, SHEFC appointed a Learning and Teaching Committee. One of its tasks is to formulate a new Learning and Teaching strategy for SHEFC. The strategy is expected to be in place by the end of 2000, and will form the basis for any future SHEFC programmes in support of Learning and Teaching. Any future project-based funding opportunities are therefore like to be announced in summer 2001.

The SHEFC C&IT Programme: 'From Innovation to Standard Practice'

Previous activities funded by SHEFC (see 'Use of MANs Initiative (UMI)' below) have resulted in a community of innovators and enthusiasts for the use of technology in learning and teaching, together with a body of materials and techniques. SHEFC committed £2.2M per year over three years, terminating in academic year 00-01, to a programme of activities collectively called the SHEFC C&IT Programme. This programme seeks to build on the work of UMI, but with the philosophy that, whilst UMI was largely the work of innovators, the time had come to support the embedding of the new technologies. The aims of the C&IT Programme are to promote further development of the use of communication and information technology (C&IT) in learning and teaching at Scottish HEIs, and to establish appropriate use of C&IT as part of normal working practice of staff at Scottish HEIs.

The activities of the C&IT Programme include:

- Improvements to existing tools for web-based teaching
- Encouraging the use of existing web-based teaching methods into new subject areas
- Investigating the processes of Intranet-based information sharing
- Creation of HEI Intranets
- Improvements to the network infrastructure and videoconference network so that they are suitable and resilient for use in teaching
- Staff development activities in support of the use of C&IT in learning and teaching.

The C&IT Programme website is at http://www.scotcit.ac.uk/, where details of the Programme and projects funded by it can be found, with links to projects' own web pages. Several of the projects have achievements to share:

- **SCAAN (Scottish Computer Aided Assessment Network)** is evaluating three computer-based assessment engines: Miranda, Triads, and WebTest. The project seeks to provide a document type definition which would allow any questions produced to be utilised by any of the engines in the project. It is also trialing the three engines across a range of Scottish HEIs, and investigating how well they meet the requirements of the user groups.

- The **Mini-Engines** project is making authoring tools available to help in creating multimedia learning materials. The project uses using object oriented programming techniques, and a modular design approach, to develop a series of 'mini-engines'. A mini-engine guide, an online 'Guide for Developers and Programmers', and a 'Guide for Contributors' have been developed. The team are also implementing new resources in different subject areas using these techniques.

- Two projects - **WebEng (using the Web in Engineering education)** and **INSIDE (Integrating Networked Simulations In Distributed Education)** - are working on the use of simulations in teaching over the network. WebEng is focusing on Engineering applications, INSIDE is introducing use of simulation software into teaching in several subject areas.

- Groupware and an online learning environment are being developed by the **Tutor and Group Support System (TAGS)**; the TAGS tools are in use at least 5 Scottish Universities.

- The **VLS (Virtual Learning Space)** project aims to use a collection of existing web tools to build a 'virtual learning space' to develop C&IT skills of staff at three Scottish HEIs. The VLS will allow staff to come together to share best practice, exchange ideas and establish self help groups.

- **Hospiweb** is investigating the importance of providing a synchronous element to an online course, by giving students access to desktop videoconferencing facilities.

- **OTIS (Online tutoring skills)** has held an online workshop which gathered experience of designing, using and evaluating models and methods which enable staff to work and support students in the online environment. OTIS hopes to establish a strategy and resources that will enable staff in higher education to map the long established 'tutoring model' to the world of online education.

- **The Scottish Electronic Staff Development Library (SESDL)** is creating a web-based resource centre to facilitate the reuse and sharing of staff development

materials across all Scottish HEIs. IMS compatible metadata will be used; the materials will be broken down into granules and tools will be provided to enable teachers to build customised courses from selecting granules. Consultations have established the type of materials needed, and the issues that are going to be important in assembling the resource, including IPR, quality assurance, potential for other HEIs to use materials for research and consultancy. A Conditions of Use Agreement has been drafted.

- **ELICIT (Enabling Large-scale Institutional implementation of C&IT)** will involve local institutional staff developers. They will provide mentoring and support for course participants, to enable them to use their training to realise specific objectives in relation to the integration of C&IT within institutional course provision.

- The Scottish Middleware project, **SCOTMID**, has made available a series of reports on the issues of sharing information on a university Intranet.

- **SCWEIMS (Student-Centric Web-based Educational & Information Management System)** is developing an Intranet system that can be used by all four of its collaborating institutions. This project is breaking new ground in exploring to what extent a single system can be developed which will cope with the very different structures that exist in different institutions.

Staff Development

Staff development materials are being produced by several projects, for example covering development of portfolios, effective lecturing techniques, and selecting learning tools.

The staff development strand of the C&IT Programme includes a Visual Arts Technology Systems co-ordinator, based at the Glasgow School of Art (http://www.vats.scotcit.ac.uk), and a network of regional staff development co-ordinators. These co-ordinators are tasked with fostering a community of staff developers, which should include the several different staff development communities active in HE -for example learning and teaching, learning technology, libraries, information services and computing services.

SHEFC's Use of MANs Initiative (UMI)

The Use of MANs Initiative (UMI) was funded from 1996-1998, and built on SHEFC's 1994 investment in four interconnected Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs). UMI funded projects explored ways of using this world-leading network in learning and teaching. The report on UMI has recently been published by SHEFC, and is available online at http://use-of-mans.ac.uk/report.pdf. Alternatively if you would like a printed copy, contact Jean Ritchie (details below).

About 40 of the UMI projects focussed on ways of using the MANs. Many of the projects involved collaborations between more than one HEI, and some involved collaborative teaching with students and staff from different HEIs. High quality multimedia learning materials were produced and made available. UMI funded the installation of network-based videoconference studios at each Scottish HEI. The studios were commissioned as a managed network (the Scottish MANs VideoConference Network, SMVCN), and were available for use free of charge - no phone bills were involved. Usage of the studios continues to grow for meetings.

SHEFC Funding for Access

SHEFC contributes to the funding for the JISC and hence benefits from the work of the JISC-funded DISinHE team, which is funded until the end of January 2001. The JISC is in the process of setting up a new service which will work with both FE and HE, to be called JDISS (JISC Disability and Information Systems Service). It is hoped that the new service will commence in Autumn 2000.

DISinHE is based in the Department of Applied Computing at University of Dundee. This department also houses a Digital Media Access Group which provides services, for which it charges, to carry out audits of websites, and give advice about access to websites and other digital media such as learning resources and computer programmes. SHEFC has provided funds to this group to enable them to provide support for the projects in the C&IT Programme. For more information about this group, contact Dr Peter Gregor (details below left).

SHEFC has commissioned projects to carry out Disability Needs Analyses (DANs) at Scottish HEIs, to be completed by Dec 2000. The DANs will assess the way institutional policies and procedures (eg selection, admission, assessment policies, complaints procedures) meet needs of disabled students, and evaluate the extent to which the main types of curricula offered by HEIs (eg. 'arts', 'laboratory based students') are accessible to disabled students. Each participating HEI will receive a confidential report, and overview reports will be produced for SHEFC.

SHEFC Learning Support Programme for Students with Disabilities

A new programme of learning support for students with disabilities started in January 1999, to run for 3 years. A National Co-ordinator, Paul Brown, has been appointed, based at the University of Dundee, and reporting to the Chief Executive's Disability Advisory Group (CEDAG) four times a year. Paul has a delegated budget that he can use, in discussion with the SHEFC Executive, to fund small projects. For more information go to http://www.disinhe.ac.uk/ or contact Paul Brown (details left).

Three projects have been funded:

- **Integrating Disability in Educational Arenas (IDEAS)**; this is a collaboration between the Universities of Aberdeen, Stirling, the Robert Gordon University, and the Northern College. IDEAS will develop a systematic method of integrating disability issues within the mainstream of institutional practices for the direct benefit of the total learning environment of students with disabilities. See http://www.ideas-project.org/.

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- **SUCCEEDS: Scottish Universities Consortium for Career Planning and Employment Experience for Disabled Students** (Universities of Stirling, Paisley, Dundee, Edinburgh, Abertay, and Napier). SUCCEEDS will adopt an integrated approach to careers education for students with disabilities and potential employers.

- **Creating an Accessible Curriculum** (Universities of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Paisley, Glasgow Caledonian, and Glasgow School of Art,). This project will examine the academic curriculum, and increase its accessibility to students with a range of disabilities.

For more information about any of these projects please contact Paul Brown (as above).

National Centre for Tactile Diagrams

The National Centre for Tactile Diagrams (NCTD) is funded for three years to Sept 2002 with contributions from all UK HE funding bodies (SHEFC, HEFCE, HEFCW and DENI). The NCTD provides tactile diagrams and maps, with associated support and teaching materials for visually impaired HE students throughout the UK. It advises students and teachers on use of the materials, and organises staff development activities. The Centre provides a diverse range of educational diagrams, in topics including Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Geography, History, Psychology and Physiotherapy. The NCTD is based at the University of Hertfordshire; for more information see http://www.nctd.org.uk/.

A Thank You

The SEDA Conference Committee would like to extend their thanks to the Peugeot Motor Company PLC for their kind donation of £300 towards the SEDA Spring 2000 conference, 'Reaching Out', which took place at Coventry University from 10 - 12 April.

The Committee are currently overseeing the production of two books containing edited collections of papers arising from the various themes which the conference sessions covered. The money will be put towards expenses incurred by the book editors.

Further details of the publications will follow as they become available.

The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme

As reported by Sally Brown earlier in this issue of Educational Developments, twenty Fellowships were awarded under the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme in July 2000.

The following award winners can all now spend their awards of £50,000 on projects that will enable them to share their good practice with others within the UK higher education community and for further development work in improving the experiences of learning and teaching in universities and colleges:

- Viv Anderson, Learning Support, Leeds Metropolitan University
- Dr Roger Carpenter, Department of Physiology, University of Cambridge
- Peter Edwards, Department of Engineering Mathematics, Bournemouth University
- Dr Patricia Egerton, Faculty of Mathematics, University of Teesside
- Peter Hartley, School of Cultural Studies, Sheffield Hallam University
- Professor Mick Healey, Department of Geography, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education
- Dr Keith Hirst, Faculty of Mathematical Studies, University of Southampton
- Dr Desmond Hunter, Department of Music, University of Ulster
- Dr William Hutchings, Department of English, University of Manchester
- Dr Paul Hyland, School of Historical and Cultural Studies, Bath Spa University College
- Professor Reg Jordan, Faculty of Medicine, University of Newcastle upon Tyne
- Terry King, Department of Information Systems, University of Portsmouth
- Dr JM Klapper, Modern Languages Unit, University of Birmingham
- Dr Susan Lea, Department of Psychology, University of Plymouth
- Dr Carol McGuiness, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, Queen's University, Belfast
- Maggie Nicol, School of Nursing and Midwifery, City University
- Professor Robert Pope, Department of English, Oxford Brookes University
- Professor Mick Short, English Language and Literature, Lancaster University
- Dr Angela Smallwood, English Studies, University of Nottingham
- Jayne Stevens, Dance Department, De Montfort University.

Full details of all their project plans will be availble in due course on the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme web site at:

http://ntfs.ilt.ac.uk

Managing Large Student Groups in the Real World

Professor Jennifer Rowley
School of Management and Social Sciences, Edge Hill College of Higher Education

In an ever-tightening resource climate modules, subjects and topics that are studied by large numbers of students are an increasingly popular option with managers in higher education. Large for the purposes of this article is 100+, but some cross-institutional topics, such as those associated with the development of information technology skills, may run to 500+ students. For such components of courses the teaching and learning process needs to be managed, rather than just allowed to happen. In addition to the fact that the module impacts on the learning experience of a large number of students, such components are often core or compulsory units designed to ensure that a group of students on a set of related undergraduate degree programmes have a common foundation, upon which they can build a number of different study routes or pathways. Large teaching groups are even more likely to occur in Year 1 of an undergraduate degree programme than in later years, and may therefore be important in students' early experiences of higher education. For all of these reasons, it is important that subjects that are taught to large groups of students deliver an effective student experience. But, the reality is that such units are often taught partly by part-time staff, and research students, many of whom may not be enlisted to the teaching team until a week or two before the delivery commences. Further, the role of module, unit or subject leader can be assigned to any tutor, regardless of their level of experience. This article offers some recommendations to those responsible for topics studied by large groups of students.

1. Manage the team membership and development. If possible, try to use some of the same people from one year to the next, and encourage a commitment to the module. Acknowledge the development needs of team members, and encourage even part time staff to participate in limited but appropriate staff development activities, relevant to both their subject, and to teaching and supporting learning. Research students can be encouraged to study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education or other equivalent in-house course that supports the development of their teaching and learning skills, if this can be accommodated together with their other activities. Such a qualification and training will be useful in a future academic career.

2. Create a sense of team identity. Brief, occasional team meetings are useful for reviewing progress and identifying any shared issues in delivery and module design. If such meetings are not possible, use regular e-mail communication to all members of the team, and encourage responses and dialogue.

3. Share good practice and ideas. The team members will have a range of different experiences. All of these should be respected and deployed. Notwithstanding the need to sometimes organise a module before all team members have been nominated, all team members should have the opportunity for input to the design of module delivery, and, in particular, the opportunity to reflect on strengths and weaknesses, and comment on student reaction as the programme progresses.

4. Pay special attention to the design and communication of assessment. Assessment is always close to the student's heart! Ensure that the specification in the handbook, or other documentation given to students, covers all eventualities, and be at pains to stick to the specification. If there is any need for later clarification of the specification, or additional guidance, put it in writing to all students (perhaps through e-mail or notice boards). Avoid any situation in which different tutors are offering different guidance - students will capitalise on such a situation to their own advantage, and your disadvantage! Ensure that all students have similar preparation, and an acceptable length of time to complete the assignment.

5. Anticipate plagiarism and malpractice. In a large group of students, students know that the tutors do not know them individually. One or two will think that they can get away with copying or plagiarism from other sources. Design assignments to minimise the opportunities for plagiarism, and then watch for identical pieces of work, or work that is too well written to be the student's own work. It is surprising how often two identical pieces of work are handed in at the same time, and appear in the marking pile adjacent to one another.

6. Get organised. Prepare a student handbook for the unit or topic that includes a weekly schedule, reading lists, student preparation for sessions, assessment, objectives, and staff details including their roles and contact numbers. The handbook is an important tool for circulation within the staff team as well as with students. Make sure that all staff have a copy of the handbook.

7. Manage students. If there are several sessions or seminar groups at different times in the week, students will choose the one that suits them. Accordingly, students will opt to drift from the seminar or workshop on Friday afternoon to the one at 10 am on Tuesday. The Tuesday group will then be too large for the room. This drift between groups needs to be controlled, because it can have a detrimental effect on the student (and staff) experience, and it also makes it more difficult for staff to build effective relationships with a group of students, and to be sure who is registered for the course.

8. Work on student records. With centralised student record systems, you might be forgiven for thinking that the only task necessary is for each tutor to enter marks into the system. The hazards in this process include:

- The system is down, or other system idiosyncrasies.
- Not all staff have office based access to the system - this is most likely to be true for part-time staff.
- There is a mismatch between students registered on the system, and those attending the classes, and those submitting assignments. This leads to a sense of not knowing who is registered and adequate tracking becomes a big problem.
- Staff have not all been trained to use the system.

Most of the above potential problems can be checked in advance, and strategies for negotiating them, or alleviating them can be put into action.

9. Plan marking and moderation. With a diverse team of staff, internal moderation of marking is essential. Staff need to discuss the way in which marks are to be allocated with each other, and to look at examples of each other's marking. The team needs to be confident that marking is consistent. Again students take significant pleasure in undermining tutors by picking up inconsistencies in marking between different tutors. No academic can realistically be expected to undertake double marking in this age, but exchanges of samples of work, and brief discussion before and after marking not only ensure a level of consistency in marking, but also inform less experienced markers about marking practices. Agree a date by which marking will be completed, and feedback can be offered to students; the schedule will inevitably be tight. Think about the marking task when the assignment is being set. For example, portfolios, laboratory reports and extended

projects are very time consuming to mark. 100 portfolios, at 30 minutes each, require 50 hours solid marking. Do these calculations and think about how this work can be scheduled.

10. Treat students as individuals. Working with large groups of students can feel like a production line to both staff and students. Each member of the team should put some effort into getting to know their group. Students with special difficulties need to be offered support. The best time to offer this support is during class sessions, but if this is not possible, or the matter is confidential, other times should be available. There is real difficulty in modifying the unit or subject experience to accommodate student feedback, because any changes affect so many people. If things are not being delivered as smoothly as might be hoped, the emphasis must be on helping students through the planned experience. Feedback must inform change in subsequent years.

Commonly Used Acronyms:

C&IT	Communication and Information Technology
CAA	Computer Assisted Assessment
CAL	Computer Assisted Learning
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTI	Computers in Teaching Initiative
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EDU	Educational Development Unit
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FDTL	Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
FSEDA	SEDA Fellowship Holder
GLTC	Generic Learning and Teaching Centre
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LTSN	Learning and Teaching Support Network
NTFS	National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
SRHE	Society for Research in Higher Education
TIC	Technology Integration Centre
TLTP	Teaching and Learning Technology Programme
TLTSN	Teaching and Learning Technology Support Network
TQA	Teaching Quality Assessment
TQEF	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund

Heads of Educational Development Group
Summer Meeting 2000

The Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG) held its annual summer meeting following the Institute for Learning and Teaching's first annual conference in York on 29-30 June. As part of the ILT Conference HEDG and other educational developers also met with representatives of the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) subject centres to discuss future collaboration and support.

The HEDG meeting began with a resumé of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats currently facing educational developers. This was followed by a session led by William Locke, Policy Adviser at the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, on progress files. Progress files were recommended in the Dearing Report and have built on a number of Recording Achievement projects funded by the Department for Education and Employment. There has subsequently been extensive consultation and details can be found at http://www.cvcp.ac.uk/CVCPPublications/Consultation/consultation.html. There was general consensus that the two main elements of the proposals - transcripts and personal development planning - should be considered separately; the former as a national framework and the latter as a developmental activity.

The second day of the meeting began with group discussions to consider different experiences in the implementation of learning and teaching strategies. Whilst some institutions have devolved responsibility to departments/schools others have maintained a strong central drive.

During the final session of the meeting participants examined a set of potential performance indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of educational development units. Whilst educational development is currently well regarded there was concern that we need to look to more uncertain times when we may need to prove that we continue to provide added value. This may prove more problematic for those who try to leave ownership of developments with those undertaking them. However, the session provided some useful ideas for evaluating our work as well a further indication of the wide variety of work undertaken by our units.

Future meetings of the group are planned for 27 October 2000 and 9 March 2001, both at RIBA, Portland Place, London, and then around 4-6 July 2001 for the residential summer meeting. If you are a head of an educational development unit, or have a similar role, you can contact the group's convenor, David Gosling, at d.gosling@uel.ac.uk to be added to the Mailbase list.

Ranald Macdonald FSEDA
SEDA Co-Chair and Learning and Teaching Institute, Sheffield Hallam University

Thoughts about the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

In April, SEDA's Executive was asked by David Staniforth (Sheffield University) if there was a ranking of the top journals in staff, educational, professional and academic development. As this was of interest to anyone entering the RAE, we passed the enquiry to three colleagues for their perspectives, and their edited replies are offered here.

From Phil Sheffield:

"The British Education Index routinely indexes around 300 core UK journals in the field of education (and training, to a degree). While I am not aware of anything which ranks titles by subject content (and that's far from saying such a thing doesn't exist), it is possible to get a crude idea of journal content from databases like the BEI and ERIC. The University of Sheffield has access to both of these databases through BIDS.

If you search for references with subject terms "academic staff development", "staff development", "professional development" (and associated terms designated as related in the respective services' thesauri), you should be able to sort the results by the "source" of the reference: that is, the journal or publication which contains the articles for which you have retrieved references. You would still need to do a fair bit of analysis on the results but you might get a useful bibliography along the way. I'm not suggesting that this is necessarily a good solution to your problem but it might be worth bearing in mind if all else fails. It may well be that others to whom your message was forwarded have far better ideas!

Best wishes,

Phil"

Phil Sheffield
Manager: British Education Index
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From Ian McNay:

"Three quick comments:

- Sally Brown insists they have no rankings in the RAE panel; that work will be judged on its quality within itself, not by proxy through esteem rankings of journals. Education is so fragmented a field that comparisons are difficult anyway.

- Research into Higher Education Abstracts uses a filter that reduces descriptive items and some reflective case studies.

- a personal view from a SEDA sympathiser is that the journals based around SD/ED have a lower threshold for inclusion than some of the more general ones in the field of higher education. There is a legitimate brief to share good practice even where not research based. There are issues about Mode 2 approaches to research that still need resolving in professional communities."

Ian McNay
University of Greenwich
Editor, Research into Higher Education Abstracts

From Andy Hannan:

"What follows is a long preamble about the general principles from which I derive several points in response to the original query from David Staniforth.

It is important in all of this to bear in mind the RAE definition of research (RAE 2/99), ie.

'1.12. The definition of research which applies in the exercise is: 'Research' for the purpose of the RAE is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship*; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and analysis of materials, components and processes, eg. for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.

* Scholarship for the RAE is defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases.'

The Education Panel have their own interpretation of what is meant by 'research' and of what counts as high quality. The best way to understand their approach is to consider relevant extracts from the guidelines produced by the Education Panel itself (RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2001: ASSESSMENT PANELS' CRITERIA AND WORKING METHODS, December 1999, RAE 5/99, available in full at: http://www.rae.ac.uk/Pubs/5_99/ByUoA/crit68.htm).

'Quality 3.59.2

The diversity of research in education, in content and in methodology, requires the Panel to be flexible in marking the boundaries of work relevant to the RAE. For example, curriculum, teaching and assessment materials may be included, but only where these are based on, or developed through, research and have been published. The inclusion of such items should be justified explicitly in submissions in relation to the underlying research. It is the quality of the research alone that will be assessed. The characteristics of quality that the Panel will use in making its judgements about research will include such features as originality, the contribution to the advancement of knowledge, methodological strength, scholarly rigour and relevance for other researchers, policy makers or practitioners.'

The message I get from this is that outputs must demonstrably be based on research (presumably understood as 'original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding', although it seems the enquiry can be conceptual as well as empirical).

Descriptive reflections on practice that are not located in the wider literature, that involve very little attempt to substantiate the conclusions reached and that do not add to our understanding in any substantial way would not count. To make it in terms of a 'national level of excellence' would mean scoring highly in terms of originality, advancing knowledge, methodological and/or scholarly rigour, impact, etc. Presumably there is a minimum requirement for all of these, with some expectation of particularly high standards in one or more.

However, research does not have to be of a highly academic theoretical kind:

'3.59.3 Basic, strategic and applied research will all be given equal consideration. In addition to work that develops theoretical understanding, a great deal of research in education is intended to shape policy and practice. As recommended by the Task Group on Education Research, the Panel will ensure that practical or practice-oriented research is considered on its merits alongside more theoretical research. The quality of research will often be demonstrated through its influence on other researchers working in the same field, or on policy makers and practitioners. Evidence of such influence will be taken into account, though the Panel recognises that such impact is not always direct and can take some time to become observable. The Panel is also aware that research can fulfil an important function by offering independent criticism of policy or practice. Submissions should also identify in RA6 research carried out in the department that is regarded by others as "cutting edge" theoretically, substantively, or in methods of investigation.'

Nonetheless, I assume that the requirements set out in 3.59.2 still apply.

We are told that:

'Treatment of Evidence 3.59.14

The Education Panel's collective judgements will be based firstly on: a) The quality of publications and other forms of public research output. and secondly on: b) The vitality of the department's research culture, how that culture is transmitted and how its research is promoted, organised and monitored.

3.59.15 Amongst the characteristics of both the quality of research outputs and the vitality of research culture may be included the educational significance of the research and its relevance for the academic community, policy makers and practitioners.'

Further indication of how 'quality' is to be judged is given by the Panel's statements on how an 'international' level of excellence is to be assessed:

'3.59.20 The identification of international excellence will be based on the quality of the research and not on its nature or scope. Such excellence may be defined as research that is as good as the leading research in those countries where there is a significant body of work in the field. The research would make a significant contribution to the field and might be expected to display at least some of the following: substantial knowledge of developments in theory and practice internationally, significant empirical findings, conceptual contributions, innovative methodologies or techniques, theoretical developments or contributions to innovative developments in policy and practice. .....'

Specific mention of peer-refereeing and the status of outputs is made in the following paragraphs:

' 3.59.21 The Panel will give its greatest attention to research output from those submissions judged to be near the borderline between grades at all points on the scale. Output which has not been peer-refereed and work with which the Panel is not already familiar are the likely focus for its reading.

3.59.22 Consideration will be given to the dissemination of research findings in professional journals and other related media where, for example, the emphasis is on communicating them to practitioners and/or contributing to policy discussion. However, where outputs of this kind are cited it will be important for submissions to indicate clearly their relationship to the underlying research and to how the quality of that research can be assessed. To facilitate this and following the recommendations of the Task Group Report, the Panel has requested the addition of three new fields to Form RA2, to be recorded against each piece of research output. These will cover the field of the enquiry (eg. "teacher education", or "sociological theory developed in HE setting"), the prime audience and educational significance (eg. "policy makers: homework policies in primary schools") and a succinct description of the theoretical and methodological approach. Departments should use RA5 to provide further information.

3.59.23 No ranking will be applied to different kinds of written research output such as books, book chapters, papers in refereed journals, research reports to funding bodies, papers in refereed conference proceedings and articles or books reviewing research. Each will be assessed on its own merits although rigorous refereeing of publications and editorial procedures may be used as one indicator of quality. Departments may wish to argue in RA5 that the relative significance of different kinds of publication varies among different areas of research in education. The same is true for "publication" in other media such as electronic journals, CD-ROMs, broadcasts, etc. The significance of the editorship of books will depend on the involvement of a substantial research role (for example, in having co-ordinated and contributed to the research programme being reported). Editorship of academic journals may be included in RA6 as an indicator of esteem. Teaching or training material and development work may also be included but must have an explicit research content. Reviews evaluating, synthesising and disseminating the research of others may be seen as an important part of research.'

From these references, I take the following points:

1) work that has not been peer-refereed is likely to be subject to extra scrutiny (3.59.21);

2) publications aimed at practitioners or policy-makers must nonetheless be described in terms that 'indicate clearly their relationship to the underlying research and to how the quality of that research can be assessed' (3.59.22);

3) although forms of output are supposedly not ranked 'a priori', as 'each will be assessed on its own merits' , this commitment is then qualified by the statement 'although rigorous refereeing of publications and editorial procedures may be used as one indicator of quality' (3.59.23).

So, anyone, like David, who is considering his/her outputs in terms of their suitability for inclusion in their four cited publications for RAE 2001, needs to take the following points into account:-

1) Are they accounts of research or, if they are more practically focused, is their research underpinning (and its quality) demonstrable?

2) Can the research be said to be original? Does it make a contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field and, if so, is this of a national or international level of significance? Is the methodology at least sound or, better still, innovative or otherwise impressive? Is the scholarship rigorous? Are there actual or potential substantial impacts on policy and practice?

3) Is the mode of publication one that involves a rigorous refereeing process? How difficult is it to get published in the manner achieved, ie. does the author have to demonstrate the same sort of qualities as set out in the point above?

As for journals, the best way to assess their quality is to look at what they publish. If you are a researcher in the field and you think the papers that appear are of a high quality in the sort of terms set out by the Education Panel then the chances are they will agree with you. Where do the most influential articles and authors (including panel members) get published? Check the 'notes for contributors' that often give the journal's policies on content, quality and refereeing. I would suggest that the more general the focus of the journal, the easier it is to demonstrate the wider significance of the research - at least this may be a factor in deciding on the mix of outputs to be included in the four (ideally some specific,

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.

Everyone involved with ***Educational Developments*** works on it only part of the time and so delays in dealing with submissions are inevitable. All papers will be reviewed by at least two people and expert advice sought where appropriate.

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.

Reviews

All material should be sent to the Reviews Editors (see Review pages for details). Guidance for reviewers is available from the Editors or from the SEDA Office.

Reviews should normally be around 300 words; anything between 200 and 400 is acceptable.

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some more general). If you've written something about the nature of learning in HE that has significance for all those interested in pedagogical issues it's better to seek publication in a journal not specifically focused on HE.

The problem is, of course, that many of those who publish papers to do with teaching and learning or staff/professional/academic/educational development in HE are not going to find it easy to meet the RAE requirements, even as interpreted by the Education Panel. Those responsible for putting together RAE submissions will need to be persuaded that the outputs are clearly of at least a 'national level of excellence' and eligible for inclusion as 'research' in terms of the RAE definition.

In my judgement, it's not worth including any outputs amongst the (preferably) four cited for each active researcher that are not capable of being seen as reaching at least a 'national level of excellence', unless others are of such a high quality that they compensate or the researcher is being submitted as a 'new researcher', (although this has its risks!). To do otherwise is to make a lower rating more likely, which might endanger the level of QR funding for the department concerned. Those departments with high ratings from 1996 (4s or 5s) will want to exclude those who might lower them. Those with low ratings will be desperate to avoid the cut-off point below which no QR funding will be received. Not knowing where this will be (3b, 3a or 4?) until after the game has been played obviously makes things very risky and encourages caution.

So, David, I'm afraid I can't provide you with an agreed ranking of top journals to help you, but I hope the above guidelines will nevertheless help you make your own decisions and put forward your case for inclusion in RAE 2001.

Andy"

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A final thought:

The most often-visited pages of D*eLib*erations (http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations) are the listings of the subject specific (as well as generic educational) journals which will publish subject-based pedagogy. Many of them link to the journals' own pages, though often this is only to guides for contributors. If your favourite is not there, I am sure Eddie Ming or David Slater at D*eLib*erations would be delighted to include it.

James Wisdom
SEDA Publications Co-ordinator

Finding Information on Educational Research

The following is a list of on-line abstracting services which are available on the web. A fuller guide to finding information on educational research using the world wide web will follow in the next issue of Educational Developments.

ERIC and the British Education Index (BEI) through the Bath Information Data Service (BIDS):

http://www.bids.ac.uk

To use either of these you will require an Athens password. This is available through your library. ERIC is the largest education database in the World, and is supported by the US Department of Education. It contains over half a million citations since 1966. Its homepage is:

http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com/

The BEI lists information from over 350 journals since 1986. Its homepage can be found at:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/library/bl/bei/intro.html

Educational Research Abstracts has a free 30-day trial currently available and this service covers a total of over 700 journals. The archive is complete from 1995 onwards and can be accessed at:

http://www.journals.tandf.co.uk/journals/ERA/trial.html

Graham Alsop
School of Computing and Information Systems, Kingston University

Dialogues

Assessment

Not to beat about the bush - I think I've solved the problem of assessment.

Whoah! What problem of assessment?

The problem of assessment - how to assess student work.

Haven't I heard you talk about other problems in assessment, how to assess students' work validly and reliably ...

... yes, and how to assess them in ways that the students think are fair, that get students producing work that they value, ways that get students doing tasks they find interesting and engaging, tasks that lead to learning ...

... in ways that the professional bodies and the QAA will go for ...

You are right, the problem of assessment is to assess students in all these virtuous ways.

And you've solved all these?

Tell me what you think.

OK. I'm all ears.

Henceforth, across all of higher education, only one assessment task will ever be needed again.

You're mad.

Be that as it may. Want to know what this single assessment task is?

Get on with it.

OK, the only assessment task we need is this. "Show me that you have attained the learning outcome(s) of this course."

Ah.

(Pause)

Is that the best you can do?

No. Ah - interesting. What if the course doesn't have learning outcomes?

All courses have some kind of goals. Everyone running a course has some expectations about what the course is intended to achieve, what students need to know, what they need to be able to do, or even what they need to be like, to pass it ...

But these alleged goals aren't always written down ...

In that case, you're right, this method of assessment wouldn't work.

And even when they are written down I've heard you be very critical about some written course outcomes, saying they're not clear enough ...

True, I have.

So what would happen if your method was used and the outcomes weren't clear?

Well. You might ask the students to say what they thought the outcome meant before they tried to prove they had achieved the outcome. That would be interesting. Here's a thought - if you were really worried, you could check and agree their interpretation of the outcomes before they set about showing that they'd achieved the outcome. That should keep things clearer and fairer.

I think I see through you! All this melodrama about 'solving the problem of assessment' is just another way of peddling your tired old obsession about clear learning outcomes, isn't it? Do you never give up?

Be that as it may. Think it through. My challenge to the student - "Show that you have attained the outcomes of the course" - sums up what assessment is supposed to do. This method ensures utterly valid assessment, where 'valid assessment' means 'assessment which tests attainment of the outcomes of the course'. If using this assessment task also leads to course outcomes being clarified, fine. It if leads to negotiation and still further clarification of what the outcomes mean, even finer. Go back through the list. What else should good assessment be?

Reliable.

We need to try it before we'd know. Reliability, agreement between markers, should increase as the meaning of the outcomes is clarified over time. Next?

Fair.

No surprises with this method, so, I would have thought it has to be fair. Next?

Gets students producing work they value.

I hope so! If the students chose the course because they liked the outcomes, they wanted to go where the course promised to take them, then yes, they should value the work they produce to show that they've attained the outcomes. Next?

Get students doing tasks they find interesting and engaging ...

Much the same argument as the previous one. Next?

Tasks that lead to learning. OK, I'll give you that one. What about acceptance by the professional bodies and the QAA?

They both want valid assessment. We'd need to try. SEDA can already cope - it's effectively how assessment works on lots of SEDA-recognised courses to train university teachers.

So will you try my solution to the problem of assessment?

What about staff workload - students could produce lots of work. How do I sell it to colleagues? Doesn't it mean opening up assessment rather a lot? Surely it'll have masses of consequences ...

On staff workload, I agree, we'll need to constrain things - 'the work should be capable of being assessed in 30 minutes', or 'comprise not more than x000 words of text or y images or z minutes of audio / video', or whatever's appropriate. As for the rest - I'll leave them to you. But I feel most of the consequences will be good. Opening things up to the light is generally the right thing to do. We won't know 'til we try.

David Baume FSEDA
Centre for Higher Education Practice, The Open University

News for SEDA Fellowship Holders and Candidates on the Scheme

It has been agreed that holders of full SEDA Fellowships will be entitled to apply for automatic membership of the Institute of Learning and Teaching (ILT) before June 2002, providing they are in good standing with SEDA.

Details of the full and associate SEDA fellowship schemes can be found on the SEDA website at:

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

SEDA Small Grants

Towards a Scholarship of Educational Development

Back in February 2000, SEDA invited proposals under the latest round of its scheme for small grants to support the costs of development-related research activity. We are now pleased to announce that six bids have been successful and following are details of three of the successful projects.

The Evaluation of a Prototype Online Journal

Shirley Earl and Elaine Mowat, Napier University

Evaluative research is integral to innovation. During February 2000, Napier University funded the introduction of an online journal for its Teaching Fellows. The journal appears monthly and contains:

- an editorial
- information for fellows and advisors
- a calendar of events
- an idea of the month
- a review corner
- a showcase.

This project will evaluate the first six months of the journal's operation and its effects within the community of Teaching Fellows at whom it is aimed. It is anticipated that the phenomenon of an online journal, and the idea of it fostering a sense of community through shared authorship and reading, is transferable to other learning and teaching related collegial networks.

The In-House Evaluation of Initial Training of HE Teachers

Martin Coffey, The Open University

Most third level institutions run a teacher training course for their academic staff. As with any training programme, an essential component is the evaluation of the training provided. Most course providers evaluate their programmes.

This project will carry out research to determine the nature and extent of course evaluation taking place in institutions in the UK, in order to give guidance to course providers on the range of options available to them.

Understanding the Role of Learning Technologists

Dr Martin Oliver, University College London

To date, there has been no research into the work that learning technologists undertake. Clearly, it is important to develop a better understanding of this specialised area of educational development. This would provide two benefits:

1) an explicit statement of the scope and nature of practice, including the identification of opportunities for improving practice

2) a clearer description of practice, expertise and patterns of work which will help to explain the role of learning technologists to other groups in higher education.

In addition, this may help to support general conclusions about other groups whose role includes liaising with academics in a range of disciplines, such as more mainstream educational developers.

A study will be undertaken to review the values and practices of academic disciplines, involving semi-structured interviews with learning technologists which will be analysed in order to develop a grounded theory of learning technology practice.

The following bids were also successful and more details of these projects will appear in issue 1.4 of Educational Developments:

The Loci of Educational Development within an Institution
John Sweet, University of Wales College of Medicine (UWCM)

'Not up to your usual standard ...': Under-Achievement and Intervention in Relation to First Year Undergraduate Examinations
Mark Liddiard, University of Kent

A Qualitative Study Exploring the Knowledge and Skills which University Lecturers Develop in Their Teaching Role
Adrian Chown, University College London