EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Magazine of the Staff and Educational Development Association Ltd (SEDA)

SEDA
STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Issue 11.3
September 2010 ISSN 1469-3267
£8 Cover price (UK only)

Contents

SEDA Ltd
Woburn House,
20 - 24 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HF
Tel 020 7380 6767
Fax 020 7387 2655
Email office@seda.ac.uk

More information about SEDA's activities can be found on our website:
www.seda.ac.uk

Registered in England, No. 3709481. Registered in England and Wales as a charity, No.1089537

Implementing the new SEDA Fellowships scheme

Ranald Macdonald, Sheffield Hallam University

How we got here

In the March 2010 issue of *Educational Developments,* Stephen Bostock outlined proposed developments in the SEDA Fellowships scheme, what differences they would mean and the position of existing fellowship holders and registrants. Stephen also noted that I had been asked by the SEDA Executive to lead on the detailed developments with a view to launching the revised scheme at the conference in November 2010.

At our two-day residential in June, the SEDA Executive received a further paper from me, discussed and agreed some changes to the proposals and asked me to prepare for the launch in November. In preparation for the Executive meeting I had circulated a paper for comment to the Fellowships discussion list and received a lot of helpful feedback which I have taken into account, if not fully incorporated, into the proposals. It is worth mentioning that there was significant comment about my use of the term 'academic development' rather than 'staff and educational development' to describe our profession. This term is not meant to be exclusive but to be encompassing of those engaged in a wide variety of roles and activities in relation to learning and teaching in higher education.

In that earlier paper I also set the context of the SEDA fellowship as including:

- The wish to develop and promote SEDA as the professional association for academic developers, wherever located and at whatever stage of their careers
- To see the specification of 'hold or be working towards the appropriate level of SEDA Fellowship' as a desirable, if not essential, requirement for academic development posts whether in central units/departments or faculties/teaching departments. AFSEDA would typically be for early career/new academic development roles, FSEDA for main grade development posts and SFSEDA for heads of units, policy leaders, senior scholars/researchers, *etc.*
- That this work represents an attempt to relate the SEDA Fellowship scheme to other external recognition schemes in the sector but specifically focuses on the development, progression and recognition of those who are in academic development roles
- Over time we should expect the SEDA Fellowship awards to become used in institutions as a recognition that individuals have demonstrated outcomes and values appropriate to particular levels of appointment as academic developers, articulating this attainment with internal appraisal, reward and recognition processes. As such, the various levels of the SEDA Fellowship should become a valued qualification which is as widely available as possible.

Some changes to the previous proposals

A couple of significant changes were agreed by the Executive.

Firstly, the Associate Fellowship (AFSEDA), rather than being an award recognised

EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS
The Magazine of SEDA

Issue 11.3
2010

2010 (Vol.11)
Annual Subscription Rates

Individual subscriptions are £32 sterling per year (4 issues) within the UK. Overseas subscribers should add £5 sterling postage and packing for delivery within the EU or £8 sterling for the rest of the world.

Packs of 10 copies (each copy containing 4 issues) are available for £240 sterling.

All orders should be sent to the SEDA Office, either with payment or official order.

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

using SEDA's Professional Development Framework (PDF) is now being viewed as primarily a developmental stage on the path towards achieving the Fellowship of SEDA (FSEDA). Associate Fellowship is likely to be taken up by early career academic developers, those in a part role involving academic development such as departmental learning and teaching co-ordinators, and others such as learning support staff.

On registration, individuals will be designated as AFSEDA and allocated to an online support group with initial engagements facilitated by either an FSEDA or Senior Fellowship (SFSEDA) holder. At the end of their first year of registration, AFSEDAs will be invited to prepare a statement of how the SEDA values are demonstrated through their practice and a brief personal development plan for the achievement of FSEDA. During their second year as an AFSEDA individuals will normally take the accredited course, *Supporting and Leading Educational Change*, which will be formed from the merger of the two existing courses – Supporting Educational Change and Leading Educational Change – and which will qualify them as FSEDA.

No significant changes have been made to the proposal for the new SEDA Fellowship (FSEDA) in that it will be similar to that of the previous AFSEDA and be achieved by successful completion of SEDA's new professional development course, *Supporting and Leading Educational Change*. However, in exceptional circumstances, an individual route supported by a mentor may be appropriate, though a prior case will need to be made to the newly formed Fellowships Assessment Panel. Candidates on the individual route will provide evidence as to how they have attained the core and specialist development outcomes in their work and how the SEDA values are demonstrated through their practice. They will also need to provide a testimonial from a suitable person, verifying the claims made and the evidence provided.

With respect to the Senior Fellowship (SFSEDA), applicants must show how they have attained the core and specialist outcomes in their work and how the SEDA values are demonstrated through their practice. For those who have not achieved FSEDA, they must also demonstrate their achievement of the FSEDA specialist outcomes. Their claim will be made using templates provided on the SEDA website and/or an annotated curriculum vitae, rather than through a portfolio of commentary and evidence. Applicants will also need to provide a testimonial from an SFSEDA, Deputy/Pro-Vice Chancellor or equivalent senior post-holder who knows the applicant's work well, verifying the claims made and the evidence provided. Applicants for SFSEDA who do not hold FSEDA will be supported by FAQs, SFSEDA-holder advice, workshops or meetings and/or online support groups. Applicants will register with SEDA and will need to be individual members of the organisation.

Interim arrangements for upgrading existing AFSEDA to FSEDA and FSEDA to SFSEDA

Upgrading from AFSEDA to FSEDA and from FSEDA to SFSEDA will be given on request, the latter being a significant change from the situation outlined in the previous article. In both cases, the core and specialist outcomes and commitment to the values have already been demonstrated at the appropriate level. Claims for upgrading will need to be made within three months of notification of the option to do so.

Continuing professional development

CPD involves continuing and active demonstration of, and engagement with, the development and specialist outcomes and the SEDA values and is engaged in at all levels of Fellowship, though possibly with different processes and outcomes. For AFSEDA, CPD is a developmental process normally leading to achievement of FSEDA on completion of the assessed course and will involve a short annual account of how the outcomes and values are being developed in the individual's practice.

CPD for FSEDA and SFSEDA may include a range of options including the current triads (whether self-selected or random, changing annually or with some continuity), or co-mentors, online engagement, a retreat or annual meetings (national or regional), and/or action learning sets. Core to all will be the maintenance of an e-portfolio, elements of which may be shared with others, but which builds a record of the individual's continual engagement with their professional development.

Individuals holding FSEDA and SFSEDA will need to engage in a regular CPD process in order to remain 'in good standing'. There will be a register of all categories of Fellowship holders on the SEDA website to show those remaining in good standing as a result of having engaged satisfactorily with the CPD arrangements.

Fellowship Assessment Panel (FAP)

The Fellowship Assessment Panel (FAP) will comprise five or six SFSEDAs, a Chair or Vice Chair of SEDA and a professional secretary. There will be an independent Chair and Deputy Chair of the FAP who will be appointed by the SEDA Executive and the posts can be held for three consecutive years.

The FAP will normally meet twice a year to consider SFSEDA applications and those undertaking the individual route to FSEDA. Decisions will be made against clear criteria for assessing evidence against outcomes and values, and the FAP will provide clear feedback to individuals and generic feedback to participants through FAQs and to SEDA Executive. The newly formed SEDA Services and Enterprise Committee will monitor the Fellowship scheme and operate the appeals procedure.

What next?

The new Fellowship scheme will be launched at the November conference in Chester (http://www.seda.ac.uk/events.html). Those registered on the current SEDA Fellowship scheme are encouraged to either complete according to the existing FSEDA criteria by the end of 2011 and be awarded the new SFSEDA, take the *Supporting and Leading Educational Change* course for the FSEDA award, or to switch to the new individual routes. The new SFSEDA should prove equally rigorous but less onerous than the current SEDA Fellowship. Note that specialist topics, in particular, do not form a part of the new SFSEDA scheme.

There are various technical issues to be completed, including recognising the revised FSEDA and new SFSEDA awards through SEDA's Professional Development Framework. In due course we will look at the relationship between the SEDA awards and the UK Professional Standards Framework, though this is currently under review and relates primarily to teaching in higher education rather than academic development.

We look forward to increased numbers engaging with the SEDA fellowship scheme and achieving our aim of seeing it as the qualification recognising achievement of outcomes and commitment to the values of the organisation as it leads academic development forward in the 21st century.

Ranald Macdonald FSEDA FHEA NTF is a freelance Higher Education consultant and Emeritus Professor of Academic Development at Sheffield Hallam University.

An interview with Professor A. R. Kidwai, Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh, India

In conversation with **Elizabeth Grant,** Editorial Committee, SEDA *Educational Developments*

Professor A. R. Kidwai is Director of the University Grants Commission, Academic Staff College at Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh, India. He is responsible for the teacher training of academic staff from a network of Indian universities. A visiting professor at the University of Leicester, a distinguished scholar and academic, he has written extensively on higher educational development in India. He is also a specialist in Orientalism in English literature.

1. What are the key national agenda influencing strategies for learning and teaching within India?

The first striking point about the Indian Higher Education (IHE) sector is that it stands out for its massiveness and its geo-cultural diversity. With its more than 400 universities, 20,000 colleges, half a million university/college teachers, 10 million university students, and scores of institutions of specialist learning, the IHE sector is now currently faced with the challenge of catering for 20 per cent of the 18-22 age group in the country. Apart from their staggering number, these students are also diverse; from the first generation learners to those from the underprivileged sections of society and including also the highly motivated, bright ones pursuing specialised courses of study in prestigious Indian institutions. As to the present challenges before educational developers, as articulated in the reports prepared by the National Knowledge Commission and the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), some of the important concerns are:

- How to ensure access, equity, relevance and quality of higher education
- How to imbue the minds of the learners with a democratic, tolerant, inquisitive spirit in order to develop a creative and innovative human resource base
- How to make institutions of higher learning more equitable and inclusive places which meet the aspirations and demands of the society exposed to the challenges of globalisation and economy
- How to cultivate such ambience in universities which leads to knowledge creation, engages and excites creative minds and generates academic innovations and quality
- How to bring about curricular reform which is based on the principles of mobility within the full range of curricular areas and integration of skills with academic depth
- How to restructure undergraduate programmes of study, making these socially relevant and skills-oriented
- How to overcome the unemployability of students, by equipping them with soft skills
- How to ensure in-service training of teachers with a view to making them more competent and alive to the vital linkages between the broader community and education.

2. What are the main challenges for university teachers?

University and college teachers face many problems and challenges, of which mention be made of the following:

- Heterogeneity of students in terms of their multiple intelligence levels which has its roots in their geo-cultural and economic diversity
- Developing critical faculty and independent thinking, as most of them lack these owing to the low, pedagogic quality of state schools, and the students' too great respect for authority
- Poor governance and interference in the functioning of educational institutions, at times, because of politicisation
- Mentoring a large and rather unmanageable number of students
- Mushrooming of commercial education providers which has affected the quality of education
- Centralisation of power in the hands of administrators/bureaucracy, with little room for initiative for teachers
- Whether to cater for quality or quantity in meeting social and market demands.

3. How does your academic staff college respond to teachers' needs?

In pursuance of the National Policy on Education, since 1987 more than 65 University Grants Commission (UGC) Academic Staff Colleges (ASC) all over India have been engaged in imparting in-service training to University and College teachers. So far around 400,000 newly appointed teachers have attended either one or both of the mandatory, almost one month long, residential ASC courses called i) Orientation Programme and ii) Subject Refresher Course, respectively.

The pedagogic premises on which these two courses rest are to enable teachers:

- To appreciate the role of higher education in both Indian and global contexts
- To understand the linkages between education and the ongoing socio-cultural and economic developments in Indian polity, in which egalitarianism and secularism are the basic tenets of society
- To acquire and improve specialised skills of teaching, especially its delivery system with the help of latest educational technology
- To gain familiarity with the organisation and functioning of educational institutions with a better understanding of their role in the overall system
- To learn the art and skills for the development of their personality, initiative, critical thinking and creativity.

4. Describe your student profile in terms of background and aspirations

Of the 20,000+ students enrolled at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), a historic, premier Central Indian University, with which I have been associated for the last 30 years, the following points about their profile are worth mentioning:

- Most of the students are from socially and financially underprivileged sections of society, many of them being first generation learners. Their pursuing of university education is reflective of the success of the state policy of ensuring inclusion and social mobility, especially of the backward minorities
- Job-oriented, professional courses are their top priority. Their success in education results in the social and economic uplifting of their families
- An excellent platform for graduates of Islamic *Madrasas* (traditional institutions of Islamic learning) to gain University education as their degrees enjoy equivalence for admission. This helps these graduates to be sensitised to the challenges of modernity
- Since the majority of AMU students live in the halls of residence, they have their distinctive ethos of fraternity, teacher-taught relationship, and culture and traditions. They maintain a strong bonding with their *alma mater,* even years after finishing their studies. Many of these students happen to be second or third generation members of the Old Boys/Girls of AMU
- Almost half the students are girls pursuing higher degrees in medicine, management, engineering, applied and basic sciences *etc.* It is another success story of the transformation of Indian Muslim woman, getting the opportunity to carve out a niche for herself as she gets equipped with modern education and skills at AMU.

5. Do you think that many of your students would consider postgraduate study in the UK?

Yes, many of them aspire to join British universities. However, the high overseas fees are the main deterrent. Some of them, nonetheless, manage to raise funds for studying in the UK.

6. What advice would you give to educational developers in the UK who would want to help their institutions to support Indian students?

In view of a very large, rather unmanageable number of aspirants, the best option would be to select the brightest ones for admission to the UK. The Indian community in the UK should be encouraged by UK institutions to sponsor the study of the most meritorious Indian students in the UK. I recall this initiative undertaken in 1990s at the University of Leicester. The local Indian community of Leicester had instituted a few scholarships and the University of Leicester representative conducted the selection procedure in India.

7. Do many of your staff take up positions in UK institutions?

Regrettably, almost none, again owing to the lack of opportunities. Up to the 1980s the British Council used to sponsor teachers from Indian universities to join Summer schools/courses in the UK, which went a long way in forging robust academic exchange between the two countries. This excellent scheme needs to be revived and revitalised. If a scheme of Indian faculty development is introduced in the UK institutions, many teachers should be able to meet, at least, half of the expenses out of their own pocket.

8. How could we support these staff if or when they come to the UK?

Apart from the above, the split-site PhD scheme could be of immense appeal and help for both PhD students and fresh lecturers of Indian universities. It will provide them with an invaluable opportunity to learn much at UK institutions.

9. What has been your most successful educational development initiative?

At the UGC Academic Staff College, AMU, of which I am Director, the following initiatives have been taken, which deserve mention:

- Since 2007, in collaboration with American Centre, US Embassy, New Delhi, an Access programme for 14-year-old AMU school children from the underprivileged sections of society. Practical training in learning the four basic skills of English language – listening, reading, speaking and writing – is imparted four days a week in the after-school hours so that they may have a better access to higher education and other opportunities in life. So far, 300 boys and girls have benefited from this programme
- Orientation programmes for Madrasa (traditional institutions of Islamic learning) teacher and students, with modules on English, IT, Teaching Methodology, Inter-faith Dialogue, Pluralism and Peaceful Co-existence. Three such ten-day-long programmes were held in 2009 and 2010, sponsored by the British High Commission, New Delhi
- Since India is a vast multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural land, innovative, interactive programmes are organised for the ASC course participants in order to imbue them with the ideals of national integration, tolerance, mutual understanding and social cohesion
- Academic English writing skills workshops for AMU research scholars and teachers.

10. Do you see any similarities between these challenges and those of educational developers in the UK?

There is much to learn from staff development schemes operating in the UK institutions. Responding to teachers' needs, quality education, and internationalisation of education could be the common grounds for the educational developers both in India and the UK. A collaborative project on the study of staff development schemes in force in the UK and India could be the starting point in terms of identifying the best practices and quality benchmarks.

11. How could we work together on some of these challenges?

'How to attain academic excellence' may serve as a broad area for working together by examining the strategies for learning and teaching, meeting the aspirations and needs of both teachers and students and setting the agenda for quality education.

12. I was struck by the comments from your undergraduate students at Aligarh on my recent visit, who told me about the relationship between Islam and learning. To what extent do you think that this relationship influences students' approaches to learning?

Islam lays great emphasis on acquiring knowledge and for using the same for the welfare of fellow human beings. The Islamic upbringing of the majority of the AMU students has been one of the sources of inspiration for them to pursue education and help fellow human beings. This component of their make-up may be exploited profitably as a teaching strategy.

13. The last word: Is there anything else that you would like to share with readers or ask them to reflect upon?

The need for a better understanding of those around us, irrespective of their creed or otherwise, ethnicity, colour and other labels, has become all the more pressing and urgent in today's globalised, pluralistic world. Education is the ideal channel for fostering well-informed communication and forging mutual cordial relations in the best tradition of peaceful co-existence. Let us promote and reinforce it by all means.

Elizabeth Grant is a member of the *Educational Developments* editorial committee.

To defer or not to defer…that is the (perennial) question

Jo Peat, Roehampton University

For me, a relative newcomer to educational development, running the PG Cert HE is the most challenging aspect of my job. Co-ordinating and designing a certificate to engage and enthuse often reluctant colleagues is daunting, partly because the PG Cert participants are often in roles which carry much greater prestige than mine and partly because teaching and learning, and educational development, are generally held in such poor esteem in higher education.

In my institution a decision was taken at senior level to make the PG Cert HE compulsory from 2009 for all new staff with less than 3 years' teaching experience in HE who did not hold either Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) or a comparable certificate from another university. Despite the welcome support for the PG Cert from the University, there is still a significant degree of resistance from some colleagues. Line managers are often reluctant to release members of their staff, largely because of the pressures of workload commitments, but also because of a belief that such a course is not of intrinsic benefit to participants, students and Programmes. Participants themselves often begin with a high degree of scepticism, as teaching and any endeavour connected with pedagogy are seen as poor relations to discipline-based, research-related activity. This is not difficult to understand: academics are tightly wedded to their discipline and see it as a privilege to be engaged with disciplinary research on a daily basis. Coupled with this, most promotions in higher education follow the well-trodden research route rather than that of learning and teaching. Even if individual universities do reward excellence in teaching with promotion, this does not permeate the whole sector; recognition for research does.

Another factor affecting our PG Cert is the decision that was made two years ago to remove it from the School of Education and site it in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (LTEU). The siting of the certificate outside an academic school meant that it no longer carries academic credits, thus rendering it a stand-alone certificate, accredited by the HEA and tied to the HEA professional standards and core values. This does have advantages, as the PG Cert is now managed by the educational development team, colleagues who are highly motivated by the quality of teaching in higher education, rather than being hide-bound by the rules, regulations and policy governing Masters courses; however, it also means that is has lost the kudos of being overseen by those considered by some to be more serious academics.

In order not to make the PG Cert too onerous for participants and to engender a more collegial approach, we decided to structure it around action learning sets. Although colleagues are involved in discipline-specific and managerial networks, they are less experienced at working in cross-disciplinary networks, particularly those which centre on learning and teaching. As Burton Clark points out (in Becher and Trowler, 2001):

> *'As the work and the points of view grow more specialised, men [sic] in different disciplines have fewer things in common, in their background and in their daily problems. They have less impulse to interact with one another and less ability to do so…Men of the sociological tribe rarely visit the land of the physicists and have little idea what they do over there. If the sociologists were to step into the building occupied by the English department, they would encounter the cold stare if not the slingshots of the hostile natives…the disciplines exist as separate estates, with distinctive subcultures.'*
> (Becher and Trowler, 2001: 45)

Instead of each weekly session being tutor-led or whole-group focused, the format alternates between this and participant-led, small action learning sets to explore issues that will feed into the reflective portfolios. We have not made these more informal sessions mandatory, as we hoped that there would be an intrinsic motivation of the participants to attend in order to support their peers. If we were successful, then we would have begun to establish a new community of practice, albeit at a rudimentary level.

Our PG Cert has now run for almost one year in its present incarnation. We have done well in retaining our initial cohort, with most people attending regularly for the whole of the taught course. This lulled us into a false sense of security: we felt that we had overcome not insubstantial teething problems at the beginning of the academic year and had noticed some real improvements in participants' teaching and their willingness to reflect on their practice as the year progressed. I was unaware of the sword of Damocles about to fall, when I reminded participants about deadlines for submitting coursework, which had been established from Week 1 of the PG Cert: out of a cohort of 13 on our taught programme (we also ran a problematic APEL version of the course this year) seven requested a deferral. They gave various reasons:

> *'I would need an extension until after Christmas at the very earliest. I have been told by my research mentor and programme convenor that I am to prioritise my research/writing until that date (for REF submission). '*
> (Participant 1)

> *'I had a tutorial today to discuss the possibility of deferral. I am very behind in the course work and will not have*

enough time to work towards the assessments. As you know, I chose to do this course for my own interest, and rather than finishing it just for the qualification, I wish to do it for learning. After all, that is what it is promoting, isn't it? At the moment, I don't seem to be able to give enough time and focus because of my work and other study commitments. I started studying on another course this January (related to my field); this has thrown my time priorities a little (and it will continue until the beginning of next year). However, this course is crucial for my professional development.' (Participant 2)

'I'm just emailing about the possibility of an extension for my RU Cert Portfolio and Research Project. I have a big bout of summer teaching coming up on the MA and International EdD, plus I have to manage a six-month-long research project, which finishes end of August, and the final report needs to be in then. So I'm panicking a bit! Would there be any possibility of an extension till Christmas?' (Participant 3)

'I know I will not be able to hand everything in by 24th July. This is for a number of reasons:

1. *I have just come back from a nine-week sabbatical which was about writing articles for journals unrelated to the PG Cert work, so I have not been doing this*
2. *I have accumulated a lot of my leave late in the year so I will be off one week in June and two in July and two in August*
3. *I have been awarded a £3500 (internal) research grant for work to be done this term. I feel I couldn't turn this down.'* (Participant 4)

All of this suggests that the PG Cert, the only evidence available to these new colleagues and their line managers of the quality of their teaching, is seen as a poor second to discipline-related priorities, despite its being made compulsory.

This raises a number of issues. At present, the PG Cert is not tied to probation or appraisal. New colleagues are informed that they are required to take the course, but there have been no firm decisions made on what should happen if they fail to complete or fail the actual course. In the LTEU, as with most educational development units, we have a culture of making activities intrinsically worthwhile, so that colleagues participate, we hope, out of interest and enthusiasm. We are, therefore, justifiably reluctant to build in concepts of failure. We have always been seen as colleagues who are there to facilitate and support, rather than to dictate and impose. This does, however, put us at risk, when participants come under greater external pressure and are unable to fulfil the requirements of the PG Cert.

Secondly, there is also an ethical issue: colleagues on the PG Cert have been given 200 hours on their workloads in which to complete the certificate. The taught course runs for 24 weeks, of which 12 are given over to action learning sets and the writing of the portfolio entries. The summer term is left free for tutorials and tutors have also been available for individual and group tutorials in each non-contact week. A significant amount of time has therefore been set aside for participants for their PG Cert work. To use this time for other purposes, such as discipline-related research, would seem rather unethical: this time was allocated for reflection on pedagogical practice.

In addition, each Programme Learning Outcome (PLO) is directly related to everyday teaching practice, so it is something lecturers should be considering on an onoing basis. The portfolio was planned as a formative exercise, with submission dates for draft entries clearly stated, although it is summatively assessed on a pass/fail basis. Participants were asked to submit their learning journey in Week 3, which was then commented on and returned by tutors and also to submit at least one draft PLO by Christmas to enable feedback early in the course. Only two participants did this, everyone else preferring to leave the writing of their entries until the end of the taught course.

The second assessment item is a 4000-5000 word investigation, carried out over the course of the year by the participants, the focus of which is an aspect of teaching and/or learning at Roehampton University. Again, this should be considered part of everyday good practice: reflecting on an issue of teaching and/or learning in an effort to improve one's practice. Despite exhortations to begin collecting data early, however, very few participants began this until the beginning of the summer term, when very few students are around to observe, talk to, question, *etc*.

How common is our experience? A SEDA JISCmail plea for information about colleagues' experiences elsewhere yielded 21 responses. Practical suggestions for how to manage requests for deferrals varied widely across institutions. These include the following:

- Deferrals are only granted for unforeseeable eventualities e.g. illness. A deferral is then granted in agreement with the participant's tutor and a negotiated deadline put in place for each phase of the assessment
- For some, completion of the PG Cert is contractually tied to probation. For the few who do not complete on time, probation is extended until the PG Cert is satisfactorily completed. This serves to demonstrate the seriousness of the PG Cert and the need for staff to critically engage with pedagogical literature as they begin working in the academic environment alongside their student groups
- For some, deferrals are rarely given and participants requesting a deferral are reminded about parity of treatment with their undergraduate students, for whom deferrals are very difficult to obtain
- A deferral can only be for one assessment period. If a participant defers, it is made absolutely clear that they will have to submit by the next submission date so that they should be working on their assessment from the moment of their deferral. The PG Cert tutor tries to set dates by which the participant will submit drafts so that she can be sure they are making suitable progress. This

has reduced requests for deferral dramatically

- At one university the PG Cert is mandatory in some departments but not others, so the picture is diverse. Here the 'enforcement' of completion is seen as an issue of policy between the individual and their department (and HR if it is a contractual issue), and the management if they create such a policy. So, a requested extension is negotiated that is mutually acceptable within the programme itself. The length of the extension depends on the circumstances – it can range from a few days to a few months. The final sanction is that participants have a maximum of 12 months after the original deadline, after which if they have not submitted they are withdrawn from the course. A future enrolment is possible, but the whole course has to be retaken
- At another university, the PG Cert team is working with HR to tie in progression to the annual Performance Development Review, to make participants and their line managers responsible for deciding where their priorities are and how this relates to their development in learning and teaching
- One university had built extra time into the programme – an assessment-only period – and this helped although the further away participants got from the taught element, the harder it was to encourage them to finish
- Some colleagues suggested a reduced assessment load and period, and sticking to precise deadlines for each module
- Clear deadlines and extension rules are helpful. One colleague explained that an extension for up to three months can be signed off by the course leader, but anything over three months (which in this case could affect probation) has to be signed off by the deputy PVC Quality and Students. This measure has been very effective. Extensions based on work-related issues are also required to be signed off by the Head of School
- A completion/hand-in date in early September, rather than earlier in the year, for coursework in one university has meant that completion rates have improved considerably
- Several colleagues suggested that staff on PG Certs should be treated in the same was as any other students regarding mitigating circumstances and deferrals, but they need to know this from the start. The PG Cert students are therefore bound by the same regulations as other students and in particular a deferral can only apply to a whole course – not just part of the assessment. For a delay to the assessment regime, participants have to make a case to a mitigation panel. This takes the burden of decision (and appeal) away from the PG Cert team
- One colleague explained that a claim for deferral purely on the grounds of having too much work to do would not be accepted and the participant would be sent a stern letter by the university informing them they have failed and capping their re-submission. For many the clarity of this, and the threat of such a blot on their record, is enough to ensure they submit their work on time
- A progress report was found to be helpful too with formal reporting dates, rather than informal emails.

Perhaps the most commonly held view, however, was that a hard line should be taken with those requesting to defer and that a university's normal assessment regulations should be applied. This clarifies the expectations and requirements to all. However, support is needed from Heads of Department and this is not always forthcoming. If a hard line is going to be taken, a robust procedure is needed to deal with extenuating/mitigating circumstances.

Although we are actively discussing allying our PG Cert to probation with HR and senior management, as yet we have not done so. We are also looking to build it into appraisal. However, the wheels grind slowly, so, as an interim measure, having taken all this very sound advice into account, this is the strategy we have decided upon:

- If a regular attendee and committed participant of the PG Cert fails to complete on time, s/he will have a meeting with his/her tutor and fill out a mitigating circumstances form and a date for deferral will be agreed. Tutorial support will be given on what is needed to complete the work successfully
- If a participant fails completely to submit work for the PG Cert, the participant will be given a fail and the PG Cert team will report to the line manager, who will then take the necessary action
- Participants are eligible for two deferrals, depending on the nature of the extenuating circumstances, after which they will be asked to retake the course.

References

Becher, T. and Trowler, P. (2001) *Academic Tribes and Territories,* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Jo Peat is the Course Leader for the Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education at Roehampton University.

Information for Contributors

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

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

For more information please contact the SEDA office via email: office@seda.ac.uk

A Canterbury Tale: Workload Planning, Staff Development and the 'Active CV'

Eric Parkinson, Sarah Green, Sam McFarlane, Gary Edwards and **Phil Poole,**
Canterbury Christ Church University

This is an account of a staff development initiative in the Faculty of Education. It is tale of two parts. Firstly, it is about the 'Active CV' (a mechanism to capture various articulations of academic staff activity) and the issues which have arisen in its establishment. Secondly, this is an account about people and their own development and is presented by a variety of 'voices', each contributing a perspective from their own particular interest, responsibility and contribution to this institutional development and its staff development issues.

Eric Parkinson – the Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator's Tale

The overall picture is that for five years the Faculty of Education has had a system which accounts for forms of work, that is, a 'workload planning' procedure. Information on staff workload is held on a database with the individual staff data capture sheet at its heart. This is essentially a declaration of intent to engage with various forms of work for the coming academic year, modified as the year progresses. Various cross-cuts of the data present heads of departments with information to assist in course planning.

Data capture has higher and lower forms of resolution. Low-level resolution simply identifies work undertaken for external agencies or for other faculties within the university. With increased resolution, the sheet will identify work conducted across departmental boundaries. With even greater resolution, detail is captured in relation to, for example, the hours devoted to teaching particular courses, engagement in forms of research or knowledge transfer activity.

The workload planning instrument can also provide an opportunity to gain additional information and if this concerns, say, attendance at conferences or publications, then it comes under the remit of staff development.

At Christ Church, there are multiple requests made of academic staff for duplicated sets of information. Various offices require information about staff publications, or qualifications and academic expertise. Or they may require a new CV for some particular purpose such as a forthcoming validation or audit. This has led to thoughts on ways of streamlining data capture.

Through an extended form of workload planning tool, other information can be gained as a 'one stop shop', represented to academic staff as a form of CV which is actively reviewed and updated through a web-based presentation. This dynamic capacity creates the idea of the 'Active CV'.

In broad terms, some of the categories of the Active CV would include the continual refreshment of areas such as:

- Publications
- Attendance at development events
- Research activity
- Consultancy/Knowledge transfer
- Mentoring of new staff.

Through just one web-driven portal, the Active CV, it may be possible for academic staff to maintain and refresh a comprehensive package of information. Through the agency of the Web, various categories of information can be auto-exported to various university destinations as required.

Sarah Green – the Workload Planning Administrator's Tale

Over the past two years, my task has been to establish a means of collating and reporting on academic work undertaken within a successful and ever expanding Faculty of Education. This work appears timely and reflects an emerging trend across the sector to define and manage academic workloads.

A recent report from the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and HEFCE suggested that both institutional and personal factors are of increasing significance in the management of academic workloads. Within the report, the authors acknowledge that:

> *'Balancing academic workloads more equitably and in such a way that it supports the alignment of individual aspirations and institutional imperatives is a fast developing field. It is being driven by ever increasing pressures on the sector, but efforts to address improvements in the approaches and systems used have to avoid simply compounding these pressures by imposing additional demands on managers and staff.'* (Barrett and Barrett, 2009, pp. 3-4)

As with many institutions, there is an extensive array of work being undertaken within the Faculty at any one time, from traditional scheduled teaching to *ad hoc* consultancy. As with any successful data collection process it has been necessary to identify what type of information is needed, and by whom. We have been developing a system which is not merely a passive repository for staffing hours but an active source of staffing data which is meaningful and relevant to all users. Meetings with Heads of Department, Programme Directors, Subject Co-ordinators and individual academics have informed how staffing data is utilised within the Faculty. Monitoring interdepartmental working and management hours and ensuring a fair and balanced workload for all staff have been the primary drivers for these groups.

Throughout the University, initial conversations with central Staff Development, Finance and the Research Office have provided us with ideas of how such a system could benefit the wider institutional community as well.

The notion of a 'one stop shop', whereby academics are able to keep track of all their teaching and associated activities within the framework of an 'Active CV', could be an attractive proposition and prevent multiple requests from such departments requesting duplicate information for their own auditing purposes. Whilst it is vital to take account of overarching institutional needs, it appears beneficial to retain operational control at a local level.

My mantra throughout the process thus far has remained, 'Keep it simple and keep it smart!'

Sam McFarlane – the Learning Technologist's Tale

My involvement in 'Active CV' for the University started in 2006 when I assisted with investigating possibilities for a system which would bring together all data related to academic projects, publications, staff development and research. We looked at interactive web resources, our Virtual Learning Environment and our e-portfolio systems; however, none of these would allow the collation of all data required.

More recently, through the Faculty staff development committee, I was asked where staff development data was stored and how was it collected. On investigation it appeared that the data that would form an 'Active CV' is contained in many different systems and in different departments. It was recommended that we would need a way of combining these together, which led to our focus on the Workload Planning Tool.

I believe that the Workload Planning tool, which has been very successful in the Faculty of Education, can be built upon to contain research information and also staff development records. The information contained within this tool would allow me to establish areas for enhancement and to target the support I can give to individuals or groups. If you couple this with academic staff updating only their Active CV profiles, and thus not duplicating the same information-gathering activities each year, time and resources will be saved.

Gary Edwards – the Information Officer's Tale

When I started at the University in 2006 I was tasked with maintaining and updating the University staff CV Access database. This was established in conjunction with the University applying for, and being granted, University title back in August 2005, and it allows access to a range of staff information which could be used for future projects, including a recent application for Research Degree Awarding Powers.

The main drawback of the existing CV database is the limited functionality it offers. Members of staff are unable to update their own CVs, having to email updates to a generic email account for manual processing. This has resulted in the CV information gradually becoming more and more out-of-date, due to the limited engagement of staff in the updating process. It has also led to inconsistencies in the interpretation of the information the support staff are looking at, and the location of where it should be entered.

I believe it is necessary to overcome these issues in order for the University to compile an accurate and up-to-date record of its academic staff and their achievements. I believe this notion of an 'Active CV' would accomplish this by allowing academic staff to manage their own information. The benefits of this would result in less duplication of effort, better quality of information and a quicker response rate to update requests.

Phil Poole – the Educational Developer's Tale

To be fully embraced by established staff, an institutional approach to raising the profile of Learning and Teaching needs to link to recognition and reward systems. Recognition inevitably requires academic review which, in whatever form it takes, requires staff to account for their engagement and progression within the different dimensions of academic practice and also to be accountable for their CPD. Traditionally, within the professions, attempts at accountability for CPD have been based on 'input' measurement, e.g. attendance at formal events such as conferences or courses. However, these measures are acknowledged to have failed to meet the expectations of professional regulation and are increasingly being replaced by 'output' measures which identify the impact of CPD engagements directly through a change in practice or performance.

Whilst an Active CV could provide an input-level record of CPD engagements, it would need to be linked to a richer professional developmental narrative to provide a mechanism for academic staff to make visible their outputs within the multiple dimensions of the academic role. The University is working towards a recognition strategy for established staff, working at or towards UK PSF Standard Descriptor 3, based on an e-portfolio. This approach would enable academics to capture the range of formal and non-formal engagements that characterise professional learning (Knight *et al.,* 2006). For the educational/academic developer, working to find ways of making visible the contribution colleagues make to enhancing learning and teaching an input/output account of CPD through a portfolio, of which an Active CV is a component, provides a possible strategy for aligning institutional priorities with the aspiration of the staff and assisting in planning targeted, relevant professional development opportunities.

Eric Parkinson

This is simply a snapshot of our current position and our desire for change. I am sure many institutions suffer the results of working with 'stale' data and the accompanying challenge of trying to get academic staff to submit fresh information. It is also probably the case in many universities that multiple offices endeavour to gain similar and often overlapping information to meet diverse needs. Academics become tired of this. Data may become fossilised. Our engagement with the development of the Active CV will continue.

Finally, my thanks to colleagues for sharing views on their roles and being able to reflect on the complex processes that thread their way through academic lives and institutional procedures.

References

Barrett, P. and Barrett, L. (2009) *The Management of Academic Workloads: improving practice in the sector,* final report, London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Knight, P., Tait, J. and Yorke, M. (2006) 'The professional learning of teachers in higher education', *Studies in Higher Education,* 31 (3), pp. 319-33.

Eric Parkinson is a Principal Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. (eric.parkinson@canterbury.ac.uk.)

Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development in Post-Compulsory Education: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

John Lea, Canterbury Christ Church University

Introduction

In the last ten years there have been a number of significant reforms in initial teacher education and/or training (ITE/ITT) and continuous professional development (CPD) aimed at those who either aspire to – or in most cases already – teach in post-compulsory education. This article addresses the question of whether, through these reforms, such teachers are now being offered ITE and CPD opportunities which are comprehensive, coherent, and consistent.

Post-compulsory?

What is post-compulsory education? Some say it is simply education for those who are beyond the compulsory school leaving age. This would include sixth form provision, but is that somehow different if it takes place in the school where one undertook the compulsory education? Some say that it includes higher education, others that it includes everything but HE. Is further education essentially the same as adult education? Many think not. Is 14-19 just an age phase or a distinct sector in its own right?

Might the term 'lifelong learning' be preferable, or perhaps even the more old-fashioned 'tertiary'? But does the use of any alternative term actually address the questions I have just posed? These demarcation disputes are useful in helping to explain how it has been possible to both celebrate and criticise many of the recent reforms, and, more specifically, ask whether some groups of teachers have been able to fall through some ITE/CPD cracks. This article will also explore these issues. In order to begin this exploration we need to look at some of the key strands in both the HE and FE reforms.

The reform context

Two important documents are helpful in providing the background: *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003), and *Equipping Our Teachers for the Future* (DfES, 2004)

'The Future' was aimed mainly at higher education, but also included important paragraphs on work at the HE/FE interface. Significantly, it contained the promise of a new `teaching quality academy', which would oversee the production of a professional standards framework for learning and teaching in HE, and the accreditation of standards-mapped programmes. This body became the Higher Education Academy (HEA) with the avowed aim of helping to raise the status and scholarly nature of learning and teaching in HE, in tandem with support for the more traditional emphasis on the development of an academic's subject knowledge through the HEA Subject Centres (24 at the moment).

The resulting UK professional standards framework (PSF) was divided into three parts (standards descriptors (SD) 1, 2 and 3) to reflect the different and changing roles of HE teachers – from the novice/part-time lecturer through to the experienced practitioner who may be taking a lead role on learning and teaching matters. A fellowship scheme was also produced, which could be accessed via individual application or by successful completion of an accredited programme of study or record of professional reflection. In all cases the prospective fellow would have to prove that their understanding and practice was sufficiently informed by the UK PSF, but this could have been embedded in a taught programme which had previously been accredited.

The *'Equipping'* document promised a 'step change' in FE teacher education, with a three-legged reform agenda – first, a new set of standards to replace the Ofsted-discredited FENTO standards; second, the establishment of Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs); and finally a separate professional standards framework for teacher educators.

'Equipping' also sought to address the growing concern that FE teachers did not share the same professional status as their school colleagues, which resulted in the new requirement that full time FE teachers be awarded QTLS (Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills), to be the FE equivalent of the school-based QTS (Qualified Teacher Status). Full-time teachers would be given five years to complete this process. The new process would begin by undertaking an accredited taught ITE programme – endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) – proceed through a period of professional formation and then be granted QTLS by a separate professional body – the Institute for Learning (IfL). SVUK is a subsidiary of the Sector Skills Council, LifeLong Learning UK. It is now compulsory for all FE teachers to register with the IfL, and commit to undertaking – by electronic document − thirty hours of annual compulsory CPD in order to be able to maintain their licence to practice (IfL: http://www.ifl.ac.uk/).

The new ITE qualifications were broken down into three separate awards – the Preparation for Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), the Certificate (CTLLS), and the full Diploma (DTLLS). The initial award ensured that everyone working in the sector had been through an introduction to learning and teaching (agreed by LLUK to be at least to the value of 6 NQF credits). For those who were not in a full teaching role the certificate should be at least 24 credits, and for full teachers the diploma award should be 120 credits. Those with considerable teaching experience in the sector (and gained before the reforms were implemented) could apply for professional recognition through a non-accredited route, known as the General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills scheme (GPRLS), and run by SVUK.

Some strengths and weaknesses

Although it was often said that this was an overarching set of standards for post-compulsory education, in reality it did not include HE. The LLUK document needs fifteen pages to outline its standards, whereas the HEA needs only two (LLUK: http://www.lluk.org/2986.htm; HEA: http://tinyurl.com/ProfRecog). Dig a little deeper and it is clear that the LLUK document is really a framework *of* standards, whereas the HEA document is a framework *for* standards, *i.e.* used by universities as a guide for designing what *they* consider to be an appropriate engagement with the areas of activity underpinning knowledge and values. Although LLUK said to the higher education institutions which were running ITE programmes that they might adopt a 'standards for' approach, it became obvious very early on that if fifteen pages of standards must be mapped and subsequently endorsed by SVUK, this clearly left little room for curriculum manoeuvre. The 'standards of' approach was compounded by the production of LLUK units of assessment which looked remarkably like module outlines. Knowing Ofsted's earlier criticisms of HEI-based ITT programmes, one can see why some HEIs toed the LLUK/SVUK line.

It is also important to point out that around half of the ITE provision – in which the LLUK standards were to be embedded − would be delivered by non-HEI-based National Awarding Bodies (NABs) (e.g. City and Guilds, Ascentis, Edexcel), and, judging from their presence at the various consultation events at the time of the reforms, they seemed much happier to view the standards, the units of assessment, and the NQF credit ratings as the firm basis for an off-the-shelf curriculum. They also exerted considerable pressure on LLUK to ensure that their awards could be validated at sub and low degree level (3-4), whereas most HEIs stuck with awards which were at least levels 4-5, and in some cases levels 6-7. Most HEIs also continued to validate modules with credit ratings of 15 or 20, and often offered the diploma as the only exit award, which had the effect of making it difficult for ITE trainees who had already taken some of the NAB awards to transfer across to HEI awards. Put in the broader context, these standards were not *overarching*.

Broader still, has it not just been much easier to *impose* standards on FE colleges than on HEIs? The HEA has had a role in ensuring that new university lecturers also met an agreed set of standards but it has never been a statutory requirement that they have to achieve professional status − FE lecturers have been mandated to achieve this since 2001. Everyone likes to pay lip-service to the cherished belief in the autonomy of the UK university, so the HEA can only effectively operate through forms of suasion. So, vice-chancellors have been encouraged to seek their own ways to invite their staff to raise the profile of learning and teaching. But lest there be any hint that even this might look like a disguised contrivance, it was also important that the HEA standards be conceived as *UK* standards (*i.e.* they belong to everyone), and that they are only a *framework* to help guide each university to produce its own standards.

Perhaps LLUK has been little more than a State quango charged with overseeing, at arm's length, important strands in the implementation of a wider and tightly managed New Labour political agenda. But we are left with the troubling question of the relationship of LLUK with the HEA itself. More specifically, if LLUK has had an overarching role in workforce development − which included those who work in universities – does that mean that the HEA has been commissioned in some way by LLUK? Or has it operated independently, and is thus better viewed as having been directly accountable to the State and the Universities who have been directly funding it?

Most troubling of all, though, seems to be the claim that LLUK and SVUK have always been much more focused on FE rather than post-compulsory education in general (regardless of whether it includes HE), and, despite the initials UK being in both acronyms, the focus has almost always been on England. Evidence for the first claim can be found in the several arguments over the last few years as to whether those who have no experience of FE work should be entitled to work towards QTLS, and – despite the spirit of sector-wide reform which was promised in the *'Equipping'* document − there have been numerous references (particularly by SVUK) of the need to serve the needs of the `regulated FE' sector, or the `FE system' as it is sometimes called. It is also worth noting that the original Ofsted criticisms of ITT, which triggered many of the reforms, only focused on FE, and then only in England (Ofsted, 2003).

Returning to the *'Equipping'* document, the second leg of the reforms was the CETTS, nine of which were created to promote excellence and disseminate good practice in teacher training. Their conception was therefore a little different from the 74 HE-based CETLs, which had a broader learning and teaching remit. It is clear that the CETTS have been very busy, but their funding was not generous, and their future is uncertain. This might be explained by the suggestion that both CETLs and CETTS were more about pump-priming in the hope that their activities would become naturally embedded. But CETTS might also have suffered from being a little ill-conceived. For example, the criteria established for them were heavily skewed towards rewarding those who were deemed excellent as teacher training providers, not necessarily as having a proven ability to disseminate good practice. The confusion was compounded in the *'Equipping'* document, which referred to them as centres of excellence on page 12, and then a few pages later as centres *for* excellence. A typo perhaps, but one which can be used to highlight a more conceptual confusion. A deeper problem, however, is that such a small number of centres should surely have been regionally based. To date, some people have been heavily involved with a CETT and others have had very little connection.

The final leg of the *'Equipping'* tripod was the promise of teacher educator standards. These were first presented as a long list of detailed specifications, and they had a particularly rocky ride. Indeed, it wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration to say that this leg of the reforms actually fell off, confirming perhaps that it would have been wiser to conceive of teacher education as a discipline and take the lead from the Education-based (Escalate) HEA subject centre. This would have allowed practitioners to articulate and meet their needs themselves. That said, there have been recent attempts to put the leg back in place, and to ask whether they are a unique group of teachers/academics with their own pedagogy and/or disciplinary base.

Although most of the focus for the reforms was ITE/ITT and aimed at inexperienced practitioners, it is also clear and very explicit in the UK PSF that the engagement with professional standards should be ongoing. Unlike in most schools-based provision, the ITE programmes will be (in most cases) in-service and therefore taken as a form of CPD. To my knowledge no post-compulsory educational provider (including FE, AE, and HE) has ever stipulated that a practitioner must be teacher trained before they can take up a teaching post.

Continuing in the spirit of suasion and voluntary engagement, the HEA is currently evaluating the ways in which experienced HE teachers might continue to engage with the UK PSF. Most of this attention is focused on SD3, but it is not clear whether there is any consensus about how to achieve this, and whether this would ever be more than a simple documentation of what each university does to encourage an ongoing engagement with learning and teaching matters. Although many institutions have moved to accredit some of the ITE work to enable associate fellow status to be achieved (aimed at SD1) and full fellow status (aimed at SD2), it is not clear whether there is any merit in accrediting activities aimed at SD3, and aligning that with senior fellowship.

Compare this with the IfL, which not only awards QTLS to those who have successfully navigated the (post-qualification) professional formation period, but also monitors ongoing CPD through the compulsory requirement to record evidence of 30 hours a year, with the power to rescind the QTLS licence to practise if this is not forthcoming. Furthermore, given that it is a statutory requirement for everyone working in the `FE system' to register with the IfL, there is now a very fast growing archive of documented CPD evidence. The IfL has over 200,000 registered members, including many who will have voluntarily registered, *i.e.* those who work in post-compulsory but not in a further education college. By stark contrast, the HEA currently has around 20,000 (voluntary) fellows (with a target of 40,000 by 2013), and no requirement to formally document the CPD activities which each university prescribes (if any). But there are at least half as many HE as FE teachers in the UK. It is too early to fully evaluate the effectiveness of these contrasting ways to promote ongoing CPD, although both bodies have published some of their own evaluative evidence on their websites.

Some opportunities and threats

Over the last ten years there have been suggestions that post-compulsory education is becoming more seamless – for example, students being able to access HE in an FE setting. But what opportunities are there for new teaching staff in post-compulsory education to feel that they are part of this process? Is ITE still rather stuck in a world where a schoolteacher trains to work in a school, an FE teacher in an FE college, and so on? One need only to consider for a moment those who are training to teach in 14-19 to realise that there may be significant lags in the system. Furthermore, although there is now a comprehensive ITE/CPD offer for new teaching staff, much of it still seems to rest on unclear advice for new recruits. For example, people who do not already hold QTS status must achieve QTLS to continue to work in an FE college. But someone who is new to teaching in a university only waits to hear what the Human Resources department is going to demand. And for someone working in any other context, e.g. Adult Education, the Public Services, or a private training provider, it could well be rather hit and miss as to whether anything would be demanded, in some cases leaving it up to each individual to decide their own ITT/CPD path. Thus what one actually gets might be comprehensive once it is being undertaken, but is it coherent in terms of preparing people to teach in an increasingly seamless sector? And, at a very practical level, doesn't this make it extremely difficult for educational developers to offer sound and consistent advice?

One group of teachers who might feel particularly uncomfortable in this new ITE/CPD context are those who work at the HE/FE interface, including those who work in `dual' institutions (i.e. HE and FE), or on foundation degree programmes, or who deliver other forms of HE in FE. Somewhat ironically, this list will include many of the teacher educators who teach on the DTLLS awards – which are HE awards, but are often taught by FE-housed teaching staff. Although one might expect such people to hold QTLS status, the IfL does not require those who teach exclusively on HE programmes to register. Indeed, if the teacher educator's teaching is all HE, perhaps their CPD would be better focused on an engagement with UK PSF, or at least the Education subject centre (Escalate)? But is this realistic, particularly if an FE college demands that its entire staff record their CPD through the IfL (using its Reflect tool)? It is a little too early to judge whether Reflect will actually be perceived by some IfL members as more of a threat than an opportunity. But perhaps the more important message to the educational developer is to consider whether there are significant opportunities here to promote meaningful forms of CPD aimed at people who are working at the HE/FE interface and, more broadly, those who want to promote a more seamless form of post-compulsory education.

One significant opportunity would be to promote more widely CPD focused on the notion of research-informed teaching. If it is true that HE academics owe more allegiance to research into their subject knowledge than to its pedagogy, or pedagogy in general, there is surely a case for bringing together HE and FE colleagues to explore the implications of this. FE teachers are traditionally much more versed in the teaching of their subjects, and offering more general learner support. Furthermore, if scholarship is a word `that dare not speak its name' (Young, 2002) in FE contexts, this might also be combined with targeted proposals on collaborative projects between HE and FE colleagues which are both action-research focused and centred on aspects of pedagogy. Because it would be focused on evaluation of practice, this type of research would be much more manageable for FE colleagues, and more acceptable to FE management, who might fear that any other type of research might take the FE teacher too far from what is considered core practice. It is also completely in keeping with the spirit of the kinds of CPD that the IfL would like to promote under the annual 30-hour rule.

There is also considerable scope for curriculum development within the taught component structure of the DTLLS awards and the various PGCert (HE) awards run by most HEIs. LLUK regulations relating to the structure of a DTLLS award allow for optional modules which may be designed to meet particular needs, and they do not necessarily have to be mapped against the LLUK standards if those standards can be demonstrated to have been met in other compulsory modules. In which case there is the possibility of offering, for example, an `HE in FE' module, which might also feature in the credit structure of a PGCert (HE) award. It might offer further possibilities to bring HE and FE colleagues together in any of the taught components, and also the possibility (particularly for FE colleagues) of achieving associate fellowship status with the HEA.

Conclusion

The reforms in ITE/CPD in post-compulsory education over the last ten years were promoted by LLUK and the HEA as contributing significantly to professionalising the workforce and raising the scholarly profile of learning and teaching. Particularly in the case of ITE the various programmes and awards offer comprehensive opportunities for these activities to be made manifest for practitioners, including nationally recognised professional status. However, the reforms have not produced any coherent or consistent framework of ITE and CPD, enabling practitioners to feel that they are working within a unified sector, let alone one which would be able to promote a greater sense of seamlessness to its students.

In particular, teacher educators, especially those based in FE colleges, and those working more generally at the HE/FE interface, might be forgiven for thinking that they have fallen between the cracks of the reforms. However, if one has a sufficient knowledge of the reforms, and is able to see some of the wider woods rather than focusing on some troubling trees, it is possible to see some significant opportunities here for educational developers to work with teaching colleagues to enact some of the original vision of both the *'Equipping'* and *'The Future'* documents in promoting a broad conception of post-compulsory education and a more seamless learning experience for students.

References

Department for Education and Skills (2003) *The Future of Higher Education*, CM 5735, London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Equipping Our Teachers for the Future,* London: HMSO.

Ofsted (2003) *The Initial Training of Further Education Teachers: a survey,* HMI 1762, London: Ofsted Publications Centre.

Young, P. (2002) '"Scholarship is the word that dare not speak its name": lecturers' experiences of teaching on a higher education programme in a further education college', *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 26 (3), 273-286.

John Lea is a principal lecturer in Education at Canterbury Christ Church University, and is currently chair of the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) Post-16 Committee.

National Enhancement Themes in Scotland – a 7 Year Report Card?

David Ross, University of the West of Scotland, and **Bob Matthew,** University of Stirling

A previous article in *Educational Developments* on the Scottish quality model for higher education institutions (Vol. 8.3, 2007) concentrated on an overview of the set-up for quality enhancement in the sector and how this was being perceived by practitioners and educational developers in Scottish institutions. The model had been introduced in 2003 as the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) and was predicated on a basic definition of quality enhancement as being about taking 'deliberate steps' to improving the quality of the student learning experience – such steps to be implemented strategically by institutions in an environment in which a managed risk-taking approach to innovation is encouraged (QAA, 2008).

In a significant review of the first five years of the QEF (SFC, 2007) there was a heated debate about the focus of Enhancement Led Institutional Review – a key part of the QEF. The issue was around a revised model taking more of a QA focus. It is testimony to the strength of the genuine partnership in Scotland between the QAA, Student PARticipation in Quality Scotland (SPARQS), the Funding Council and Universities Scotland that the existing Framework emerged relatively unscathed from the review. So the sector has been able to hold on to its autonomy, the students remain as fundamental partners in measuring quality and everybody gets to share good practice in a spirit of enhancement — or what?

This article looks more closely at the progress of one of the major strands of this model of quality enhancement, namely the Enhancement Themes, which in practice has in-built quality assurance – a 'prospective QA' model.

The QAA originally stated that:

> *'The overall aim of the Enhancement Themes is to provide a means of identifying and building on "good practice" to improve the student experience in Scottish HE.'* (QAA, 2008)

The Themes concept is: on a 1-2 year rolling basis, take an area of current pedagogical importance to the sector, form a 'steering committee' of key academic and support staff, chaired by a prominent academic (usually a Vice Principal from the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee), fund it (projects, reports, secondments, *etc.*), bring international experts in to debate issues with practitioners and give it impetus, and end with follow-up work. The overall monitoring and management of the Themes is undertaken by the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC – by acronym if not by nature!).

Firstly, let us start with one bit of good news – we reported last time that there was a tendency early on in the cycle of Themes for some Steering Group chairs to influence unduly the direction of the Theme due to their strong views – potentially a recipe for disaster at practitioner level. We are pleased that this is much less prevalent, probably due to the overall tightening up of the strategic approach to the Themes concept and the enhanced engagement of institutional contacts.

So we have an engaged sector, a collaborating partnership, a rolling programme — all looks rosy. Reality has, on the other hand, been somewhat different, and staff engagement levels with each Theme have varied across institutions and subject disciplines. Let us explore this issue in a little more detail.

We note that engagement seems to be getting better than in the early days. But 'engagement' means different things to different institutions. Some of the Themes don't necessarily map onto the priorities for some institutions at each particular time – the notion that institutions would just 'conform' to each Theme has taken time to be resolved and it still has repercussions in various ways.

Some institutions would claim that having lots of delegates at an enhancement event constitutes engagement while others would claim that one attendee who then has a strategic programme of dissemination back at their institution is efficient engagement. In some cases engagement has resulted in developing many examples of innovative practice or disseminating good practice in conjunction with educational developers. And therein is a possible problem. The terms 'Good Practice' and 'Innovative' are somewhat vague and can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on factors such as subject, type of institution, student demographics, *etc.* Therefore the terms sometimes sit uncomfortably. In practice, the approach adopted by the Enhancement Themes venture has been to support a concept of *any* approach that leads to demonstrable enhancement or improvement of the student learning experience (and even that is not always the case!) – but this approach does not need Enhancement Themes to be the catalyst.

Some institutions can track engagement from impacts on strategy to practitioner implementation and show that those who are actually teaching students are at least thinking about outputs from the Themes – for example, structuring a learning, teaching and assessment strategy around key Themes or specific strategies (perhaps Employability) or making actual changes in teaching practice based on a strategic intervention prompted by a Theme (e.g. Integrative Assessment). There are also more recent signs of strategic redevelopment based on an institution's own evaluation of the impact of Theme(s) leading to a revision of its generic approaches. In other places the impact has been more subtle but no less important, e.g. featuring in staff development programmes, inclusion in a PGCert in Learning and Teaching, reinforcing or challenging an institution's own approach to practice, or at the very least, raising and maintaining awareness in learning and teaching issues in the minds of staff.

Another facet of the whole 'engagement' issue was a feeling in the sector of practitioners being swamped with the introduction of two new Themes each year (especially in the first few years of the cycle). This did not give practitioners an opportunity to absorb or interact with the period of funded activity before they had to start thinking about the new Themes for the next year. It is good to note that this is a less prevalent feeling in the sector, as the Theme organisers have gradually reduced the pace of Themes and looked for integration. Although they are no longer funded after their initial 12-18-month period of activity, previous themes remain active, or at the very least are enshrined in the learning and teaching strategies of some institutions.

Another thorny issue has been measuring the impact of the Themes on institutional policies and practice. Many institutions now attempt this with, in some cases, a straightforward model of an institution's internal quality evaluation model (e.g. Annual Reporting Cycles and Internal Subject Reviews) having specific questions for evaluators in this area, where the answers need to be backed up with evidence. But this can be much more difficult where such 'structured' evaluation is not in place – in such cases it is often difficult to even identify good practice related to a Theme and even more difficult to directly attribute that practice to the impact of a Theme (*i.e.* the practice may have happened anyway through internal reflection and good practice development). Interestingly, institutions are expected to have a good handle on the impact of themes on their activities as part of the externally based audit model – Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR), now into its second cycle.

One of the most interesting features of the Themes as they have developed is the way the concept of rolling 'integrated' Themes has gathered pace. There is an obvious synergy between the Assessment and Integrated Assessment Themes and between Supporting Students Needs and the First Year Experience. This integration (or 'blurring' as some would have it!) has had some useful spin-off benefits. For example, curriculum design can be better facilitated through integrated projects between Assessment and First Year or between Employability and Flexible Learning. Incidentally, many in Scotland believe that the efforts of institutions to embrace the Themes have helped them to develop their practices in the face of the continual changes in demographics in the sector, particularly on issues such as the ever increasing diversity and heterogeneity of the student population. There are even some who believe that this integration of Themes leads to 'collective enhancement'.

The clearest integration that has emerged is in the development of the concept of 'graduate attributes' and the notion of 'the graduate' as the end-point of all of this activity! This first reared its head in the Employability Theme (fundamentally about skills development) which then was further developed in the Research-Teaching Linkages Theme (this really focused on research activities helping to shape graduate attributes). The latest theme, 'Graduates for the 21st Century – Integrating the Enhancement Themes' emerged in 2009. We like to think that this was in direct response to comments from the sector about 'theme overload' and a desire within institutions to have time to reflect on the outputs from previous Themes. Institutions wanted to take stock of where they currently were and what they wanted to focus enhancement activity on, and most importantly recognised that it takes time to review the work of any Theme, contextualise it to the needs of an institution and then implement some of the outcomes. Whatever its origin, 'G21' (as it is affectionately referred to by some) has been mostly welcomed and is actually moving on twin-tracks – integrating the outcomes of previous Themes and further developing the concept of graduate attributes focused on the 21st Century.

A key feature of the current Theme is that there is a small amount of money given to each institution (£8k this academic year) to support the work of local committees overseeing the Theme. This is an important shift. Whilst the monies are not large, they are an acknowledgement, in our eyes, that the previous practice of Themes simply developing and producing 'stuff' is not enough. If the principal key to enhancement is 'engagement' of staff, that means staff development is essential, and small amounts of money have gone some way to support this.

Another example of the integration of themes, and for us a big plus, is the emergence of institutional and national networks of interested practitioners, often led by educational developers, continuing to meet and discuss good practice after a funding period ends – for example, Scottish Higher Education Developers (SHED) and Scottish Higher Education Employability Enhancement Network (SHEEN).

The 2010 Enhancement Theme Conference (ETC, 2010) gives clear evidence of this integration in practice. Out of a total of 54 posters, 95% were linked with more than one theme and 70% claimed links with three or more (one poster claimed links with all the Themes!).

More about 'stuff'. As we have already said, what has tended to happen is that the Themes have resulted in lots of publications on 'good practice'. Helpful though these might be, they have tended to be used by many as door-stops. For us, these outputs to a large extent did not really encompass new research thinking or findings, but were simply a repackaging of what was already out there in the literature and practice. In other words – a proliferation of 'stuff'. However, without any real focus on staff development within the Theme (and therefore within the role and remit of educational developers), it would seem that what we have as outcomes, in the main, is just a flood of unsystematic outputs, mainly in the form of glossy publications. It seems to us that this has been a significant weakness of the approach so far.

Publications are unlikely to change the student learning experience unless academic staff are actively involved in changing their learning, teaching and assessment practice. This staff development focus has, on the whole, been left to institutions to take responsibility for, without any additional funding resource to support the work. This has been compared (maybe unfairly) to the situation of HEFCE-funded institutions with FTDL and CETL funding (to name but two) which have supported the enhancement agenda. However, the allocation of small sums of money to support the current theme is most welcome and a step in the right direction.

Another way in which the proliferation of stuff is being curtailed at present is that the present theme is going back over the plethora of outputs from the previous Themes, looking for areas of commonality and summarising key outputs in easily digested formats – some are still arguing that the format could be other than the printed word e.g. podcasts.

We might be labouring a point here, but it is an important one and indeed one that the QAA themselves have acknowledged in the Learning from ELIR report, where they stated:

> *'The ELIR reports show that an integrated approach to the management of enhancement includes greater alignment between enhancement strategies and staff development. This has been largely achieved through the refocusing of the role of centres for academic practice, to allow closer involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes, in the implementation of enhancement strategies, particularly in the area of learning and teaching and in the identification and dissemination of good practice.'* (QAA, 2009)

We note, however, that they make no direct mention of the Enhancement Themes having a role to play in the process of staff development!

We acknowledge the approach we have adopted in this article might be seen as facile. For example, we have already speculated that lack of integration could come from an overload of Themes, but we admit that is the easy answer and not the whole truth. The problem is deeper and relates to what is really valued by an institution (which is often articulated in its overall mission statement) and importantly how staff see themselves progressing within the institution. It is clear to us that what an institution puts in place to support what it espouses and how middle and senior managers use incentives to drive forward the agenda is a real indicator of commitment that will foster engagement. With the Themes concept it is really only very recently that real evidence of this support (and thus driver) for enhancement has been visible in many institutions.

By way of an example of this we offer the following. Between us we have direct experience of five Scottish HEIs during the period of the Enhancement Themes (both Research Intensives and post-92s). Thus what we have to say is based on our observations of institutions first hand as well as wider discussions with educational developer colleagues. On Assessment-based Themes (there have been two so far), in two institutions there was little apparent institution-wide interest in changing practice simply due to the 'Theme'. Other than attendance at Theme events there was no real tangible evidence of engagement. Recently however, for one of these institutions, what drove an interest in changing assessment practice and looking for significant improvements was the decision to take part in the National Student Survey (NSS). The poor results in the assessment and feedback sections provided an institutional driver for Deans and Heads of Department to address the issue. In other words it was a public demonstration of 'failing' that drove the change, not really an intrinsic desire to enhance the student learning experience. As a further example, interest in the First Year Experience Theme has been driven in some institutions by a Funding Council focus on student retention issues – again a matter of reporting externally something 'amiss'. Thus we would argue that in part we still have a compliance-driven (QA) culture rather than a QE-driven process of change.

On the subject of 'compliance', perhaps another piece in this jigsaw is a recent paper produced by SHEEC, entitled Indicators of Enhancement (SHEEC, 2009). Without looking at the detail of these indicators, that list could easily become a QA checklist to be used by institutions in internal processes and (perish the thought!) in ELIR visits. The second cycle of ELIR visits has just begun, so it is difficult to make a judgment as to whether this is yet happening. We have nothing against the list of indicators, they all seem reasonable and clearly will pose many questions to institutions about how they evidence enhancement in many of the areas. However, by doing so, it can be argued that we are QA'ing QE. The danger is that academics will get into compliance culture (again!) – *not* what the QE agenda set out to do. For us QE should be instinctive to academic practice, it is after all what the vast majority of academics have done every year as part of their own professional practice. They take stock of how things went, look at end-of-year evaluations, listen to external examiners and colleagues (and students) and make changes. We recognise that there is a need perhaps to do this in a more strategic manner and manage the process, but this needs to be light touch.

Put bluntly, we all must make sure that QE does not become an activity to be QA'd!!!

Final thoughts

We think ourselves in Scotland to be lucky in some regards. The key lessons thus far on the enhancement themes for us would seem to be:

- In order to ease the pressure on academic staff who are very busy and don't have time to keep up with all the enhancement developments, the outputs must be easy to pick up, so be publishable in digestible bits (e.g. podcasting, video-streaming, or one-page digests)
- For educational developers the outputs must be relevant and useable in staff development contexts
- We need to think of new ways to help academics work within ever tightening funding regimes which ask for maintenance of excellence for less investment.

Further reading

QAA Enhancement Themes at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/qualityframework/enhancementthemes.asp.

SHEEC at http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/SHEEC/default.asp.

Saunders *et al.* (2009) Evaluation of QEF (http://tinyurl.com/Saunders-et-al).

References

ETC (2010) (http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/Conference/Default.asp).

QAA (2008) 'Enhancement-led institutional review handbook', Scotland, 2nd edition (http://tinyurl.com/ELIRHandbook).

QAA (2009) 'Learning from ELIR – aligning enhancement strategies with staff development' (http://tinyurl.com/ELIR-Staff-Dev).

SFC (2007) 'Final report from Joint Quality Review Group to Council' (http://tinyurl.com/SFCAugust2007) (look for SFC_07_113_ANNEX).

SHEEC (2009) 'Indicators of enhancement' (http://tinyurl.com/Ind-of-Enh).

David Ross is the Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development, University of the West of Scotland, and **Bob Matthew** is the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning, University of Stirling.

Sowing the seeds of enhanced academic writing support in a research-intensive university

Trevor Day, University of Bath, **Jane Pritchard,** London School of Economics, and **Andrew Heath,** University of Bath

Introduction

The University of Bath is a research-intensive university with a strong tradition in science and engineering. Its pedagogical support for undergraduates has many strengths although its provision for advanced academic writing may not, until recently, have been one of them. In 2007, the Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement won support from the Royal Literary Fund (RLF) for an RLF Fellow to join the University for two days a week. He was to offer one-to-one coaching in non-remedial academic writing to undergraduate and postgraduate science and engineering students. The Fellow was a professional writer with a background as a scientific researcher and college lecturer, who was just about to complete a PhD in Education at Bath, so the match between Fellow and University was a strong one.

It quickly became apparent that there was an appetite among students and staff for enhanced academic writing support from a professional writer, which complemented the existing departmental provision and the strong support from the University's English Language Centre and Learning Support. At peak times of the year the RLF service was inundated, which against a tight financial backdrop nevertheless prompted an expansion of the scheme, with a second RLF Fellow joining in 2009.

The Undergraduate Director of Studies for Civil Engineering was quick to recognise the potential benefits of having an 'in-house' professional writer and invited the Fellow to talk to final-year Civil Engineering undergraduates about dissertation writing. They liaised closely so that the session was tightly focused on the practicalities of writing dissertations: the overlapping phases of literature searching, field or laboratory research, and dissertation planning, composing and reviewing of work-in-progress. Although well received, this session was based on untested assumptions about what students required. But what had students experienced in the way of academic writing support before embarking on their dissertations? And what were their perceived needs for writing support at this stage?

Soon after, an academic staff developer joined the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement team, who fortuitously had a background in engineering, but also a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and social justice. At a staff development 'away day' the staff developer and RLF Fellow found common ground in wishing to investigate final-year undergraduate civil engineers' experience of academic writing. So was born the small-scale project described in this article.

Seed funding

With research roles for two of the project team falling within job descriptions, funding was required for the RLF Fellow to collaborate on the research design, data analysis and to carry out the bulk of the draft-writing for the project. Funding was obtained through a SEDA Research and Development Small Grant, University of Bath Learning and Teaching Enhancement funding, and some Architecture and Civil Engineering departmental support. The total funding for staff buyout was about £2K. What would be the outcome from such a small amount of seed funding? This was particularly relevant given that, in response to the RLF initiative, the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office (LTEO) was showing interest in supporting enhanced academic writing development provision more widely.

The research and development project sought to answer two questions:

1. What were the students' perceptions of key writing influences during their undergraduate course generally, and their final-year dissertation writing specifically, on the way to becoming graduate civil engineers?
2. And drawing upon the findings in response to 1, how might the writing development of undergraduate civil engineering students be best supported?

The research context

Given the staff developer's interest in student voice and empowerment, it was decided to investigate civil engineering students' experiences of writing through two theoretical frameworks that have high popularity for undergraduate students' writing development but that are rarely applied in an engineering context. Ivanic (1995) and Lillis (2001) address issues of power, authority, and identity among students as authors. They consider students' 'voice' in writing in terms of the language students use and the ideas and beliefs students express. These researchers distinguish expression of authorship, authorial presence and authority in student writing (Table 1).

Authorship	What do you want to say?
Authorial presence	How do you want to say it?
Authority	Who do you want to be?

Table 1 Classification of students' meaning-making in HE based on Ivanic (1995) and Lillis (2001)

Drawing upon this notion of student writing as a more contested form of discourse than accepted traditionally, Lea and Street (1998) developed a framework for contextualising students' writing development. They suggested a classification that can be seen as a hierarchy, with higher levels building on lower and the potential for all three levels to apply in a given context (Table 2).

Academic Literacies	Writing as meaning-making and contested
Socialisation	Social encouragement into a culture, with writing as a more or less transparent medium of representation
Skills	Writing as a technical and instrumental skill

Table 2 Summary of Lea and Street's (1998) classification of models of students' writing development in HE

These two theoretical frameworks appear so far to have received little (Hyland, 2002; Ahearn, 2006) or no reported attention (e.g. Gruber *et al.*, 1999; Rhoulac and Crenshaw, 2006) applied to academic writing in engineering. It was therefore felt that the project's theoretical approach was likely to provide fresh insight into the learning and teaching of writing within the discipline. The project might also shed light as to how writing influences students' identities in terms of 'being' and 'becoming' a civil engineer. The team adopted a qualitative, interpretive approach (Jacob, 1987) that sought to be open to students' reported experience. Themes arising from the analysis of responses would inform future initiatives to enhance civil engineering students' writing development.

The team carried out data gathering before and after two forms of writing development intervention by the RLF Fellow: a 50-minute presentation on dissertation writing, and the provision of one-to-one writing tutorials as part of the RLF Fellowship's wider support for those students requesting it (of which 10 out of 50 students did so).

The chosen research instruments were two questionnaire surveys, completed anonymously, complemented by semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of students. Both questionnaire surveys employed questions that were moderately open, inviting a free and candid response. Students' responses offered their perceived experience of writing during the course, any key experiences that might have supported them in developing their writing, and their sense of the role of writing in being a civil engineer.

In early December of the students' final year, and before they did any major work on their project literature reviews, they completed Questionnaire 1. Of 49 students attending, 48 (98%) completed and returned the questionnaire. In late April, about one week after submitting their final-year dissertation, students completed Questionnaire 2 when attending the poster presentations of their work. One question 'What do you think is the role of writing in being a civil engineer?' was repeated from Questionnaire 1, so enabling comparison of responses over time. Other Questionnaire 2 questions focused on their recent experience of completing the dissertation. About 30 students attended the poster presentation, of which 26 completed and returned questionnaires and 13 were interviewed.

At the event the project's academic staff developer invited students to be interviewed singly, in pairs or in threes. The semi-structured interviews followed similar questions to those in Questionnaire 2, plus questions about the process of writing the dissertation and whether students felt the course had prepared them appropriately for the writing they would carry out as civil engineers. Subsequently, the academic staff developer and RLF Fellow separately coded students' responses in questionnaires and interviews and then met to agree the main themes arising.

Emerging themes

Several themes emerged from the data and their analysis. They included students' engagement with academic reading, their modelling of good practice, their personal management when writing, and tension between their emerging academic and professional identities. Nevertheless, given the project's small scope, the team focused on the three themes below.

Giving students formative feedback

The reported absence of staff developmental (formative) feedback on written work was a strong feature in students' responses. A large body of research in HE pedagogical theory and practice (for example, Black and Wiliam, 1998; Boud, 2000, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) suggests that timely, appropriate developmental feedback is one of the most powerful encouragements to learning. The reported perceptions and experiences of students, and their observed actions, suggested that at the time of the research there was not yet a departmental culture that actively encouraged and supported developmental feedback on assessed assignments generally and on students' writing specifically.

For example, by the final year, although students were offered the opportunity for developmental feedback on their dissertation literature review, fewer than 10% took this opportunity. Although this could be taken to suggest that students were already effective, independent learners, who did not require such support, the 'bigger picture' suggested otherwise. For instance, during an interview with three students, two commented strongly about feedback:

> *Student 3. That is one of the downsides. There is very little feedback that you get…In general…and with our writing.*
>
> *Student 2. Yes, both on the quality and quantity [of feedback].*
>
> *Student 3. We don't know where we're going wrong.*

Writing with confidence and authority

Evidence from students' questionnaire and interview responses, and the RLF Fellow's reported experience of tutoring ten students, suggested that final-year civil engineering undergraduates were finding their way, often uncertainly, in developing their 'voice' (the language they used and their expression of ideas and beliefs) within the discourse of a final-year dissertation. The following extract from an interview with three students sums up many students' views about the nature of the dissertation and the extent to which they felt they could express personal views in writing their dissertation:

> *Student 1. He told me I was being too personal…so I feel [being yourself] is not something for a dissertation… anyone could have written it sort of thing.*
>
> *Student 2. They're supposed to be quite neutral reports aren't they? Scientific.*
>
> *Student 3. More technical, less individualised. A third person view.*

Seeking to compare the provisional findings with Lea and Street's (1998) classification of student writing in HE (Table 2), the observed writing development culture in the University of Bath's undergraduate civil engineering courses appeared to be skills and socialisation orientated. Could it be more orientated to an academic literacies approach? Should it be? At the least, it seemed appropriate for students to be challenged and encouraged to 'find their voice' within an assignment, rather than perhaps have it constrained by skills (student deficit) and academic socialisation models that promote a right way to write a dissertation. By developing confidence in their 'voice', which carries conviction and authority nurtured by positive developmental feedback and deep thinking about their writing, students might develop a stronger self-identity as a civil engineer, and earlier on in the course.

Scaffolding writing development

Several students in interviews commented that the final-year dissertation was 'daunting'. This suggested that many students perceived the leap between previous assignments and the final dissertation to be large. It may have been the unexpressed intent of the department for students to 'sink or swim' in an academic culture that sought to reflect some of the more extreme commercial pressures experienced by practising civil engineers. However, such a culture ran the risk of some students underperforming because they had not yet developed sufficient confidence in their writing and other academic abilities. By reviewing students' writing challenges in assessed assignments from first through to final years, it should be possible to tailor a smoother progression in developing students' writing skills and associated values, attitudes and identities.

Recommendations and actions

Taking the three themes into account, the team concluded that Bath's undergraduate Civil Engineering courses were rich in learning and assessed assignments, including individual and group work, which encouraged several types of discourse for different purposes and audiences. However, there were missed opportunities for providing timely developmental feedback and to scaffold learning experiences to develop students' abilities and confidence in writing. Among the recommendations made in a report to the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering (ACE) were:

- To review existing assignments to clarify their writing requirements in terms of the purpose of the final document to be assessed, the intended *voice and viewpoint* of the student as author, the presumed *readership,* and the resultant *code* (format, structure and style) taking into account these factors
- To review existing assignments with the intention of *gradually developing students' writing skills, values, attitudes and identities* to encompass the range of discourses expected of a civil engineer and in good time to lay a firm foundation for the final-year dissertation

- To explore the use of *formative and summative feedback* on students' writing, drawing on best-practice principles, such as timeliness, being both group and individual focused, paced to the individual(s), and with a positive focus (Lea and Street, 2000; Catt and Gregory, 2006: Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Race, 2007)

- To continue to provide writing support to final-year undergraduates – both one-to-one and whole cohort – of a form currently provided by the RLF Fellow.

Spearheaded by the Undergraduate Director of Studies, ACE has chosen not to take a 'top-down' strategic approach in response to some of the recommendations. Instead, it has distilled some of the recommendations into one of ten discussion points in the department's five-yearly course review that involves staff and external reviewers. Its inclusion will inform dialogue between practising engineers, staff and students, aimed at ensuring that the needs of all parties are considered. In advance of this, however, ACE is already implementing some of the other recommendations. Personal tutors are academic tutors too, and the current first-year student cohort is experiencing planned formative feedback on their Semester 1 poster presentations. In Semester 2 staff plan to provide structured formative feedback in essays and small design reports. So far, staff have been pleasantly surprised that students take the work seriously even when it is at the stage of not being assessed formally for grades.

As for writing development progression, students in Year 1 are now filling in pro-forma document structures for their laboratory reports. Early in Year 2 they develop their own reports, with detailed guidance, but later are given more independence to research their investigations, carry out the laboratory work, and then consider how best to present their findings in a report. Staff are currently considering how to support and assess writing development in group projects, where students collaborate on a project and, in some cases, jointly write the final report.

Returning to the research and development project, it did not always run smoothly, and there were undoubted differences in perspectives among the team. For example, the team's academic staff developer held a stronger view on the appropriateness of writing as a contested discourse in an engineering-based undergraduate degree. The two other team members were more cautious about the cultural shift to a stronger academic literacies approach, given the other demands on civil engineering students and current staff working at undergraduate level. Nevertheless, there was sufficient common ground between all three for workable recommendations to emerge.

The project has shifted the writing development agenda within a department, acknowledging good practice while providing recommendations that have acted as a springboard for action. It has provided a model for writing development research and practice that has broader implications for the University, which is now funding wider-scale writing development projects through the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office. It reveals what a small group of individuals, working on a small budget and with openness, determination, flexibility and mutual respect, can achieve if they have a clear mission and the students' interests at heart.

Acknowledgements

Some of the findings in this article were presented at the European Association of Teachers of Academic Writing (EATAW) Conference at Coventry University, Coventry, 30 June to 2 July 2009. The researchers gratefully acknowledge the funding from a SEDA Research and Development Small Grant, the University of Bath Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office and the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the University of Bath.

References

Ahearn, A. (2006) 'Engineering writing: replacing "writing classes" with a "writing imperative"', in Ganobcsik-Williams, L. (ed.) *Teaching Academic Writing in UK Higher Education: theories, practices and models,* 110-123, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998) 'Assessment and classroom learning', *Assessment in Education: principles, policies and practice,* 5(1): 7-74.

Boud, D. (2000) 'Sustainable assessment: rethinking assessment for the learning society', *Studies in Continuing Education,* 22(2): 151-167.

Catt, R. and Gregory, G. (2006) 'The point of writing: is student writing in higher education developed or merely assessed?', in Ganobcsik-Williams, L. (ed.) *Teaching Academic Writing in UK Higher Education: theories, practices and models*, 16-29, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gruber, S., Larson, D., Scott, D. and Neville, M. (1999) 'Writing4Practice in engineering courses: implementation and assessment approaches', *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 8(4): 419-440.

Hyland, K. (2002) 'Authority and invisibility: authorial identity in academic writing', *Journal of Pragmatics,* 34: 1091-1112.

Ivanic, R. (1995) 'Writer identity', *Prospect: The Australian Journal of TESOL,* 10(1): 8-31.

Jacob, E. (1987) 'Qualitative research traditions: a review', *Review of Educational Research,* 57(1): 1-50.

Lea, M. R. and Street, B. V. (1998) 'Student writing in higher education: an academic literacies approach', *Studies in Higher Education,* 23(2): 157-172.

Lea, M. R. and Street, B. V. (2000) 'Student writing and staff feedback in higher education: an academic literacies approach', in Lea, M. R. and Stierer, B. (eds.) *Student Writing in Higher Education: new contexts,* 32-46, Buckingham: Open University.

Lillis, T. M. (2001) *Student Writing: access, regulation, desire,* London: Routledge.

Nicol, D. J. and Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006) 'Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice', *Studies in Higher Education,* 31(2): 199-218.

Race, P. (2007) *The Lecturer's Toolkit: a practical guide to assessment, learning and teaching,* 3rd ed., Abingdon: Routledge.

Rhoulac, T. D. and Crenshaw, P. (2006) 'Preparing civil engineering students to meet workplace writing expectations', paper presented at the 36th ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference, October 28-31, 2006, San Diego, USA.

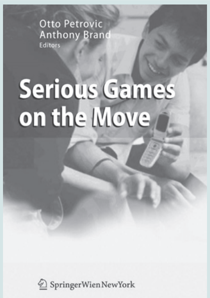
Trevor Day is a professional writer, a writing training facilitator and a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund at the University of Bath. During the project **Jane Pritchard** was an Academic Staff Developer at the University of Bath and is now an Educational Developer at the London School of Economics. **Andrew Heath** is Director of Studies of the Undergraduate Civil Engineering Programme at the University of Bath.

Book Review

Serious Games on the Move

Otto Petrovik and Anthony Brand (eds.)

SpringerWein New York 2009



ISBN: 978-3-211-09417-4

Amazon price: £61.74

This review probably hits the press around two years later that it should have done…but that's no reason to be dissuaded from taking a look at an interesting and forward-thinking piece of work. A serious game is one developed for purposes other than entertainment, often with the game being used as a vehicle for learning and skills development. Serious games and simulations have long been a feature of the schools curriculum, but much less prevalent in HE. Perhaps it's time for change?

Serious Games on the Move is a set of conference papers which plot the rationale, conduct and outcomes of a three-year European Community funded project, Entitled mGBL (mobile Games Based Learning); the project examined the technologies, applications and implications of mobile technologies and game applications for training and skills development. The mGBL Project Consortium members were drawn from institutions and organisations from across Europe and joined forces in 2005 to explore and develop 'emotionally engaging and playful' methods of learning for use on mobile phones. The work culminated in an event hosted by the INSPIRE Group at Anglia Ruskin University at Cambridge (UK) in Summer 2008.

The project recognised the coalescence of aspects of mobile technology, games applications and a body of increasing knowledgeable 18-24-year-olds; comfortable and skilful, they play games on a multitude of platforms including their mobiles. As Lilly and Warnes point out in the introductory remarks within their paper – 'Designing Mobile games for learning: the mGBL approach' (p. 4) – the project 'taps into the zeitgeist of the 21st century learning by engaging with the ubiquitous mobile technologies that students already possess'. The project provides a start point for reflection on how teaching and learning will be impacted by the emergence and use of serious games in the future.

The proceedings address three topics areas:

1) Designing serious games, including innovations in the design of serious games, in particular games for use in education and training environments

2) Embedding serious games and virtual worlds within learning programmes, with some original research papers and case studies that investigate the potential for integration of serious games and virtual worlds within programmes of education and training

3) Tools, technologies and platforms relating to serious games technologies.

The key findings include empirical evidence that games can support more efficient knowledge transfer, that using mobile games can lead to more positive emotions and especially high flow values and that the strong flow experience points to a high degree of intrinsic motivation in the learner, which may in turn indicate that the game is being played for itself rather than external incentives such as course grades.

A number of issues are raised, in particular preconceptions and prejudices within academia, where differing underlying attitudes to the role of games/fun in the curriculum may exist. There is no uniform acceptance of the role of fun in sound pedagogic practice within HE. There are issues around the suitability of subject matter for these types of treatment, and player characteristics may influence the learning value for some.

In terms of the advancement of mobile technologies and platforms, the emergence of the iPhone and open standards based operating systems such as Android mean that this work may no longer represent current 'state of play' in the development of mobile technologies, or the operating platforms and applications supported. Nevertheless, it raises a great many critical issues for educators interested in how technology will support teaching and learning in the future. This is an interesting (and free) resource from which reflections can continue.

Jane Burns-Nurse is a Senior Teaching Fellow at University College London.

A Framework of Support for Work Based Learning (WBL): the role of the Learner Guide/Mentor

Maxine Rawlings, University of Salford

The rationale

Learning 'for work, at work and through work' involves a variety of activities both formal, such as health and safety training, and informal. As acknowledged in Gray *et al.,* 2004 (p. 4): 'Most learning that takes place [in work] is informal, arising from the process of work itself, and from communication and interactions within the workplace.' In addition, that learning may occur in a planned and systematic way and be explicit, or more probably be unplanned, incidental and tacit, as explored by Raelin (2008). Thus the challenge for WBL is how to foster a climate in the context of work that enables that which is tacit to become explicit and which therefore shifts the emphasis from the 'process of work' with learning as the 'incidental', to the 'process of learning' and by inference the 'learner', as the core.

In addition, for further consideration for those engaged in WBL, is the supposition of Raelin (2008) who argues that the process of learning and construction of knowledge in the workplace is different from classroom-based learning, as it involves reflection on work practices, ongoing problem-solving through the tasks and activities of work, which are often shared and collaborative, and also requires the ability to learn how to learn. As Gray *et al.* summarise: 'Workplace learning, then, is far from merely the acquisition of formal knowledge or skills. It involves reflection on learning, learning through problem-solving and learning about learning itself' (Gray *et al.,* 2004, p.4). And whilst the workplace itself does provide many opportunities for learning and knowledge creation, further insight into how learning is facilitated is provided by Billett: 'However it is the type of activities individuals engage in and the *guidance they experience* which influences the robustness of that knowledge' (in Boud and Garrick,1999, p. 154, author's italics).

The importance of guidance in work-based learning is also emphasised by Waldman (1999): 'Individuals need to feel empowered within any learning process. This can be facilitated by access to appropriate information, guidance, support, resources and crucially, ensuring the learner owns the learning requirements and opportunities that present.' It is also endorsed by Raelin: 'One's learning at work can be facilitated through the advisement of one or more significant individuals with whom to engage in reflective process about one's thoughts and behaviours' (Raelin, 2008, p. 172). The role of the organisation is clearly therefore 'to provide a culture of support within which autonomous learning can take place' (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p. 86).

When the learner is a 'traditional' student in a University such empowerment through these means is usually a given, but how does a University that has entered into a learning partnership with an employer ensure the same opportunities are available to support the learner in the learning process in the work place?

This issue was highlighted in the development of the foundation degrees, where the concept of a 'workplace mentor' was outlined and viewed as a 'pivotal role' in the success of the delivery of the foundation degree and the process of mentoring was endorsed as 'the single most important contribution an employer makes to the delivery of the foundation degree' (SkillsActive, 2006).

In this programme of study the mentor had a variety of responsibilities to support the learning process, which included agreeing the workplace learning programme with the student, acting as a point of contact between the employer and the HE/FE institution, providing both academic and pastoral support in the workplace, and facilitating and monitoring the work-based projects. In addition, some mentors engage with the foundation degree programme expecting to also have a role in the assessment process – a traditional model of mentoring that has been found in the NHS but is not usually encouraged in partnerships with foundation degree providers who themselves ensure the quality of the assessment process.

Encouraging employers to develop guidance and support for learners was therefore an already established practice in many of the foundation degrees developed through the University of Salford and is thus an essential feature of the Work Based Learning Framework, too. In this Framework a partnership approach to support the process of learning is forged between the learner, the University and the employer with roles and responsibilities agreed by all partners.

The practice

Guidance in the learning process on the WBL Framework is provided by a nominated 'Learner Guide/Mentor' (LG/M) who is preferably not the student's line manager and who will:

- Provide professional and personal support to students
- Motivate and encourage them
- Contribute to the supportive culture underpinning the WBL Framework
- Help the student to develop and grow as a result of the learning outcomes of the modules on the WBL Framework.

It is also recognised that the LG/M will also benefit from this process in that he/she can:

- Refresh their own views of their work through new knowledge and practice
- Provide satisfaction and interest through helping a colleague to grow and develop
- Encourage self-reflection and shared learning
- Develop professional relationships
- Develop their skill set
- Enhance peer recognition.

Thus the outcomes of this partnership can in theory benefit the student (the 'formal learner'), the LG/M and the supporting organisation as its employees develop and apply new skills and insights into their work context and potentially become more engaged and effective in the organisation itself.

Furthermore, the WBL Framework recognises the important role of the line manager in the learning process for the student and also seeks to develop and enhance their skill set in supporting learning and development. The role of the line manager is especially important during the identification and completion of the work-based project.

Both the LG/M and line manager's prime role is to enable the process of reflective learning in the workplace. We have developed guidelines for those acting in this role which outline this process and how it links to both the Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984) and Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988). In developing the awareness of the 'guides' in this way it is intended that the student will not just focus on the product of work activity but the process too.

However, it is not just the role of the line manager that enables success in WBL. Moore and Bridger (2008) in their longitudinal study in the NHS state 'that *managers at all levels* in the organisations were pivotal to the enabling and disabling processes that underpinned WBL in the workplace'. To contribute to the enabling culture the WBL Framework therefore expects the employee's organisation to:

- Identify a suitable Learner Guide/Mentor
- Release them to attend a workshop session delivered by the University to clarify their role and responsibilities
- Allocate time in their work schedule for meetings
- Allocate time to enable a review of the process after the first year
- Acknowledge their contribution to the learning process.

In order for this relationship to succeed, therefore, there are clearly shared responsibilities between the student as the learner, the University and the employer – a tripartite agreement based on clarity of roles and expectations and appropriate boundaries. Initially, we have found that many people take on this role expecting to act as a 'tutor' having a formal input into assessment of the content and quality of the written work. This is not so: whilst it is expected that the student will discuss ideas and content for assignments with the LG/M acting as a sounding board and signposting to resources or people, the critique of the written work is the responsibility of the academic tutor based at the University. Once this is understood, it frees up the relationship and allows people to focus on a different skill set.

Whilst there is no expectation about assessment the focus for the LG/M is that he/she will assist students in the workplace to identify core activities and learning opportunities which will help to meet their own learning needs and the module outcomes.These include:

- Knowledge of the factors and ethical issues that influence personal and professional leaning and development
- Strategies that can be employed to determine their personal and professional learning needs
- Processes involved in reflection
- Negotiation and application of techniques and tools to meet specific personal and professional needs
- Evaluation of the extent to which the learning need has been met.

These skills are explored through the F2F LG/M development workshop which is offered to all those supporting learners on this programme. We suggest that the LG/Ms create their own community of practice to enable them to reflect on their own development and process issues without compromising confidentiality. Furthermore, LG/Ms are invited to attend a formal event at a suitable end point to reflect on and review their journey together.

In addition there is a focus on developing transferable key skills/attributes such as:

- Negotiation
- Clarity in written and verbal forms of learning needs
- Explicitly stating how learning needs will be met
- Working effectively with others
- Problem-solving
- Use of IT.

We also expect that the LG/M will verify the process engaged in and the evidence provided by the student in the demonstration of achieving these learning outcomes. Whilst this does require professional judgement it does not require assessment of quality.

A further benefit from engaging in this process is that it can help prepare both the student and the LG/M to participate in other allied processes within their organisation such as performance development reviews or appraisal schemes.

The outcomes

It is certainly challenging working outside of the 'four walls' of a university to negotiate with an additional but key provider of learning. Time and work load are constantly issues that are identified in the development workshop as potential barriers to fulfilling the expectations of this relationship. In addition, the LG/M has to be reminded that the learner is the owner and manager of the learning and the LG/M not necessarily the 'expert' or the 'fount of all knowledge'. Reinforcing that this is a partnership journey is a prerequisite for success of this process.

Also, how to ensure that all the students have access to guidance and support in this way is a concern for us for various reasons – such as the size and nature of the supporting organisation, it is often not possible to appoint non-line managers to the role of LG/M (or find one at all). Whilst we feel that this may compromise the focus of this activity, we acknowledge that the quality of the relationship is vital to the success of the process and therefore many line managers can fulfil the role of LG/M successfully as well.

In a past, evaluation of a similar process on the foundation degree identified the following benefits for the student:

- *Help and advice on the doorstep has been very beneficial*
- *Encouragement when facing tough assignments; help to find information to complete the assignments*
- *Networking – opening doors by making contact and introductions; making information easier to access*
- *Confidence and reassurance that I am achieving what I set out to do. The best way to support someone is to listen and guide and this has helped me through the assignments when sometimes I have felt at a loss to progress*
- *Friendship and assistance when facing difficulties with the course and being talked out of giving up at the first hurdle*
- *Sounding board for ideas*
- *She is teaching me new ways of researching and helping me to gain confidence in myself.*

In addition one mentee recognised the benefit for her mentor too:

> *'Within one particular aspect my mentor has gained new knowledge of an area she was unfamiliar with within the council which I picked out as a project for my first assignment.'*

And these were identified by the mentors:

- *I have developed some interpersonal skills but also looked at my understanding of my own work when giving advice to E*
- *My diplomacy has improved*
- *My ability to coach rather than 'take over'*
- *Reinforcing and expanding my own knowledge but particularly seeing the improvement in my mentee's skills as she has progressed through the programme has been particularly rewarding*
- *Being a part of someone's development.*

And for one student at least there was a very tangible outcome from this process:

> *'I have gained a greater respect for my mentee and have promoted her because I can see how hard she works.'*

If a successful outcome is also the completion of the programme, then we are delighted to report that all students on the first cohort of the WBL Framework, drawn from a variety of participating organisations, completed their level of studies. And whilst it cannot be suggested that this was due entirely to the support and guidance received from the LG/M, it certainly can be agreed that the role is a pivotal one in the success of the WBL Framework.

References

Boud, D. and Garrick, J. (eds.) (1999) *Understanding Learning at Work,* Routledge: London.

Boud, D. and Solomon, N. (eds.) (2001) *Work Based Learning: a new higher education,* SRHE and OU: Buckingham.

Gibbs, G., (1988) *Learning by Doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*, Oxford: Further Educational Unit, Oxford Polytechnic.

Gray, D., Cundell, S., Hay, D., and O'Neill, J. (2004) *Learning Through the Workplace,* Nelson Thornes Ltd.: Cheltenham.

Kolb, David A., (1984) Experimental Learning: *experience as the source of learning and development,* Prentice-Hall Inc.: Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Moore, L. and Bridger, J. (2008) *Report: a realistic, longitudinal evaluation of work-based learning of qualified nurses,* UWE: Bristol.

Raelin, J. A. (2008) *Work Based Learning: bridging knowledge and action in the workplace,* Jossey-Bass: CA.

SkillsActive (2006) 'Engaging employers in Foundation Degrees' (www.fdf.ac.uk).

Waldman, J. (1999) *Help Yourself to Learning at Work,* Russell House Publishing Limited: Dorset.

Maxine Rawlings is a learning and development practitioner in the Human Resources Division at the University of Salford.

The Supporting Academic Staff Reference Group: a project between SEDA and the Higher Education Academy

Liz Shrives, SEDA Vice-Chair

Introduction

SEDA and the Higher Education Academy have been committed to developing a positive and constructive working relationship over the last six years and have worked together to develop a range of ways in which the Academy recognises and promotes SEDA and its the work, where appropriate. In particular, this has focused on the relevance of the SEDA Professional Development Framework, the *Supporting and Leading Educational Change* courses and the SEDA Fellowship, in relation to supporting the embedding of the UKPSF through the various events and activities that SEDA offers throughout the year. The two organisations have actively explored how they can work together to utilise and promote expertise in the educational development community in the most effective way.

The Supporting Academic Development Reference Group

The collaboration has resulted in a number of positive outcomes, one of the most significant being a project in which SEDA has convened a new group. The overarching intention of this group is to enhance communications, relationships and collaborative working between the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres, the Academy York, and other organisations active in academic development in higher education. 'Academic development' is here taken to embrace both work intended to support staff to enhance their academic capabilities (this work often being called staff development and/or professional development) and work intended to support universities to enhance their academic practice (this work often being called educational development, also embracing some aspects of organisational development).

All parties agreed that the purposes of the Reference Group were to:

A) Focus on supporting staff to improve student learning, and thus support the Academy in its mission to help UK higher education to provide students with the highest quality learning experience in the world. It will do this by providing a broad academic development perspective on initial and continuing professional development, to inform the Academy's activity in this area

B) Support the work of, and coordination among, the organisations active in academic development, by providing a forum to bring together, at practitioner level, the discipline-specific and generic aspects of academic development and thus ensure that the Academy serves the combined needs of institutions and their academic development communities.

The principles upon which the Reference Group functioned were that it would support both the enhancement of academic practice around student learning and the development of the capability of individuals, systems and processes. It would aim to include, and fully respect, the autonomy of the various current and future organisations working to develop academic practice around student learning in higher education, and adopt and encourage a collaborative, developmental and scholarly approach to its work. The organisations invited to take part included SEDA, the Association for Learning Technologists, JISC, a representative from the PGCert Programme Leader Groups, the Heads of Educational Development Group, the Association for Learning Development in HE, the Staff Development Forum, the Leadership Foundation, the Centre for Recording Achievement, the Standing Conference for Academic Practice, Vitae, together with representatives of Subject Centres and Academy York.

The group was chaired by Dame Janet Ritterman, the former Vice President and Director of the Royal College of Music, London and Principal of Dartington College of Arts. Dame Janet has spent much of her career working in influential positions in higher education in the UK and abroad. Having been committed throughout her career to strengthening links between education in the creative arts and the creative industries, she was well placed to appreciate the purposes and intentions of the group and to manage the complex agenda.

The Group's activities

After the inaugural meeting in May 2009, the Reference Group has met on four occasions. Agenda for the meetings were agreed by the Higher Education Academy and a record of the meeting was made available for wider circulation through each respective member of the group. The early activities of the group were outlined through an interactive poll and discussion list on the priorities and needs of the representative organisations. The outcomes of this formed the key agenda item at the second meeting. Following extensive discussion and a number of proposals being made to the group, no agreement was established about how to proceed (this included the proposal to form a mail list and various funded projects). Subsequent meetings focused on two key areas of, firstly, updating on the activities and concerns of the representative groups and, secondly, how the Reference Group might support the activities and potential developments within the Academy, with particular focus on the work of the Subject Centres.

Key activities have included: consideration of the current political context and developments; a review of the use of the UKPSF and resources developed by the Subject Centres to support the embedding of the standards framework; consideration of the proposed review by the Academy of the UKPSF; providing advice and guidance to substantive relevant projects supported by the Academy; and consideration of a number of relevant developments and changes within the Higher Education Academy.

Beyond the project

Representatives from the participating organisations felt that such a group had been needed for some time and that every effort should be made to ensure that it could continue to meet beyond the scope of the project. The knowledge exchange element of the group had proved to be particularly helpful and members were keen for this to continue. This was especially the case in the light of the enormity of the challenges on the horizon for higher education. Amongst other things it was felt that this group had the potential to provide a forceful voice to the government on behalf of the development community.

At the final meeting of the group in March 2010 it was agreed that the Academy would be approached to establish if they were willing, or have the means, to fund future meetings of the Group. Irrespective of the ability of the Academy to provide such support, the group plans to meet again. This may be as a differently titled group, on a basis to be determined, but with similar principles and purposes. This will continue to bring the development community together in what is seen as an increasingly important forum for sharing and collaboration.

Liz Shrives is Vice Chair of SEDA.

Book Review

Internationalisation of European Higher Education: An EUA /ACA Handbook

Raabe, 2008

Following the success of its *Bologna Handbook,* the European University Association, in partnership with the Academic Cooperation Association, has brought out a similarly flexible information and reference tool for higher education professionals with an interest in or responsibility for internationalisation, which is designed to be supplemented and updated every four months for those who take out a subscription.

The Handbook is divided into seven sections: definitions and driving forces; institutional policies and strategies; innovation, research and researchers; learning and teaching; support and advisory services; information, promotion and marketing; and looking ahead.

Each section is further divided into various sub-sections, containing specially commissioned articles dealing with aspects of the topic, many of them written by acknowledged experts. Six of the articles, however, while listed in the table of contents, will be included in the first supplement, and no less than sixteen sub-sections indicate that their articles 'will be published in the regular supplements'. So the Handbook is by no means a complete reference tool to begin with.

Moreover, it is difficult to detect any clear rationale or pattern in the choice or arrangement of topics. Section A includes articles by Jane Knight on key concepts and elements, John Yapp on the convergence of European and US education systems, Ulrich Teichler on European debates, policies and trends, and Peter Scott on the drivers of internationalisation, together with a case study on the role of NUFFIC in the Netherlands. Section B offers the reader three approaches to developing institutional policies – an overview of the key issues by Robin Middlehurst and two articles by Robert Coelen and Maurits Van Rooijen on the processes involved, followed by a case study on the Central European University and an article on the risks and impact of different forms of internationalisation from an Australian perspective. Section C contains a chapter on the rationale and purposes of international collaboration and two articles on doctoral education and research training; further articles on research networks, on support and funding, and on challenges and risks are promised. Learning and teaching is the subject of section D, where a chapter on European student mobility by John Reilly is followed by a case study on the Bergen PhD, an article on the use of Bologna tools to support mobility and internationalisation and an account of the EU-ASEAN Credit Transfer System for engineering education. Section E currently contains only a single article by Maria Kelo on international student support services, based on the large-scale ACA study of 2005-06. The remaining two sections are for the moment blank.

There is much valuable information in this handbook – if you can find it. But, the format makes for duplication and there are some surprising gaps – nothing, for example, on staff development. It needs an introductory overview of the field to orientate users and direct them to where they will find the information they seek. In the end, however, this kind of loose-leaf reference tool is already out of date, rendered obsolete by the electronic InfoKit.

Graeme Roberts is Senior Associate at the Higher Education Academy, and UK Bologna Expert.

SEDA News

The lead article in this edition of *Educational Developments* outlines the new Fellowship Scheme ratified by the SEDA Executive in June. There will be a formal launch at the November Conference in Chester, which additionally includes a panel session, *SEDA Qualifications Question Time,* on Tuesday 16 November at 15:30. The current route to gaining Associate Fellowship (Fellowship in the new Scheme) is successful completion of either of the two professional award courses *Leading Educational Change* or *Supporting Educational Change*. When the new structure commences in the New Year, these will be replaced with a single blended and merged award course, *Supporting and Leading Educational Change*. This will be the primary route for gaining Fellowship status. This online award course will continue to use the successful format of a Tutor supported and guided journey to develop a professional portfolio which satisfies the Specialist Outcomes for Fellowship.

In June, the Executive Committee established the Services and Enterprise Committee (SEC), which will hold a broad remit in taking forward SEDA's activities such as the *Supporting and Leading Educational Change* award and the ever popular Summer School. We will continue our association with Oxford Brookes and the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD) in running an online version of the Summer School. This we anticipate will be of interest to overseas colleagues. Other professional award courses will be sequentially introduced helping to meet and support the needs of the HE/FE sector. The first will be one covering Employer Engagement and Work-based Learning soon to be followed by another for Internationalisation. The SEC will work closely with other committees nurturing and supporting fledgling enterprises; being responsible for marketing and fund raising; publicity and public relations and extending our links with a range of appropriate bodies. Tony Brand was appointed as the first Chair and a call for those wishing to indicate an interest in joining the Committee has brought forth a wealth of potential talent. The first full meeting of SEC will be in January 2011.

The Executive Residential in June also worked upon defining a revised set of Strategic Targets, which included increasing all levels of Membership and raising the national and international profile of SEDA. It became clear that with a future climate of increasing budgetary constraints SEDA's contribution to the sector will continue to be significant – supporting individuals and institutions.

September will see a *Committee Members Event* which will draw together all of those who are active on SEDA's committees. During the event those present will gain a wider appreciation of SEDA's work as well as providing an opportunity to share ideas. The day will conclude with a reception to be held at the Houses of Parliament.
At the last AGM Caroline Stainton, University of Northampton, became the incoming Vice Chair and Mike Laycock was confirmed as Co-Chair, replacing Lawrie Phipps who stood down earlier this year wishing to avoid potential conflicts of interest associated with his work at JISC. It is appropriate here to recognise and thank Lawrie for his input as Vice and Co-Chair in establishing a modern agenda for SEDA's work. He will no doubt continue to be a close friend and we look forward to seeing him at future SEDA Conferences.

At the Spring Conference in May, James Wisdom was added to our Roll of Honour in recognition of his extensive supportive and developmental work over the last twenty plus years. In addition to being Company Secretary and chairing various committees he has been Co-Chair and represented SEDA at the Select Committee hearing last year. He is also the President of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED).

Tony Brand

SEDA-PDF

Congratulations to York St John University, who have recently been recognised as a provider of SEDA-PDF.

SEDA Fellowships

Congratulations to Clare Taylor, who has been awarded Associate Fellowship of SEDA.

Forthcoming events

- **SEDA Workshop – Improving student learning and experience through changing assessment environments at programme level: a practical guide**
  27 October 2010, London

- **SEDA Workshop – Refreshing PGCerts for changing times**
  9 November 2010, London

- **15th Annual SEDA Conference 2010 Developing Ourselves: a conference for educational developers, by educational developers**
  16-17 November 2010, Chester

- **SEDA Spring Teaching Learning and Assessment Conference 2011 – Academics for the 21st Century**
  Thursday 5-Friday 6 May 2011, Edinburgh