Educational Developments

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Contents:

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Problem-Based Learning:
Implications for Educational Developers

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Introduction

Many educational developers, whether in central units, teaching departments or Learning and Teaching Support Network Subject Centres, are likely to encounter a request to "tell me more about PBL!"

Alternatively, they may receive a request to put on a workshop or recommend some readings for someone who wants to use it in their teaching or redesign their curriculum to emulate the success they have heard it has had elsewhere.

You may also be asked whether it is worth someone attending one of the increasing number of conferences or workshops dedicated to problem-based learning (for example http://www.edineb.net).

This article is not going to tell you "how to do it" but rather will outline some of the key parameters that need to be considered. It will make extensive reference to the ever-increasing range of resources available, particularly on the internet.

What is problem-based learning?

Problem-based learning - or PBL as it is more commonly known - has become popular, perhaps even fashionable, in many areas of professional education. With its modern day origins mainly in medical education at universities such as Cape Western Reserve (USA), McMaster (Canada), Maastricht (the Netherlands) and Newcastle (Australia), it has now spread to many other disciplines, countries and contexts.

However, PBL, despite its large number of sometimes overly-zealous and even evangelical converts, has almost as many forms as places where it is used. And it is this that has caused confusion amongst those interested in finding out more.

The situation has not been helped by those who contend that there is a 'pure' form of problem-based learning. An article by Camp (1996), from the University of Texas medical school, contains the following:

> "Several years ago I participated in an e-mail discussion for a time with Howard Burrows, LuAnn Wilkerson and Michael Ravitch during which we generated our version of the characteristics of 'pure' PBL. Other groups might develop a slightly different list, however, we agreed that, for the learner, problem-based learning is active, adult oriented, problem centred, student centred, collaborative, integrated, interdisciplinary, utilises small groups and operates in a clinical context. By our definition, then, any programme that does not place students in tutorial groups of, say 5-10 students, is not 'pure' PBL, nor are programmes which operate in a single discipline such as pathology, or pharmacology,

Continued overleaf ...

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> or physiology, or neurology. In addition, if the programme is 'teacher-centred' rather than 'student centred', the heart of pure PBL is being lost."

In a keynote at a PBL Conference organised by Manchester University and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) in January 2001, I read out that statement and concluded that, whilst I had little difficulty with the final sentence, the dogmatic middle part caused me real problems. I then countered this very rigid model by reading out a section from the excellent book by Maggie Savin-Baden (2000):

> "There are many different ways of implementing problem-based learning but the underlying philosophies associated with it as an approach are broadly more student-centred than those underpinning problem-solving learning... Problem-based learning is thus an approach to learning that is characterised by flexibility and diversity in the sense that it can be implemented in a variety of ways in and across different subjects and disciplines in diverse contexts. As such it can therefore look very different to different people at different times depending on the staff and the students involved in the programmes utilising it. However, what will be similar will be the focus of learning around problem scenarios rather than discrete subjects". (Savin-Baden, 2000, p.3)

This extract sums up the appeal of PBL to many - its flexibility and diversity and the fact that it can be implemented in different ways depending on the context.

To counter the 'pure' models of PBL, as well as to clarify its difference with problem-solving, I think the following quote by David Boud is probably the most useful starting point :

> "The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query, or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve." (Boud, 1985)

At the Manchester conference I then went on to say:

> "And my question is, "so what's the big deal in that?" That is what PBL is about. I would like you to think for a second about the last PBL activity you undertook. I will tell you mine; it was opening the door to come in here and then turning this noisy mike on. We sometimes forget that PBL is the natural way of learning and experiencing the world.
>
> I had to work out how to get here today. I normally come by train to Manchester; today I drove. That decision involved me in using my knowledge and application of geography, mathematics, logistics, information skills and many others, and driving the car to get here. I had to identify learning needs, find the information, make decisions and evaluate the various solutions.
>
> I think we sometimes forget that we use PBL in our everyday activities and then we mystify it in a particular way when it comes into higher education and make something big out of it. However, if you ask many of your students how they learn things outside the classroom they will give you a very clear description of PBL - starting with a puzzle or query, a 'need to know something'."

And that really is the whole point about problem-based learning: it's how we learn in everyday life. However, the distinction has to be made with problem-solving where after a series of lectures, seminars, laboratories, workshops, guided reading or whatever else we use to impart knowledge, we then set a problem for students to solve. The sort of problem you might find at the end of a chapter in any standard textbook is NOT problem-based learning. For David Boud, the problem, query, task, trigger, situation, or whatever you want to call it, comes first, and it's this that provides the motivation for learning.

So, for example, a patient appears with chest pains and shortness of breath; companies are dumping their waste water in a river upstream of a small town; a bridge needs to be built over a river in a National Park. In each of these students have to tackle the 'problem' by identifying the knowledge and skills they need to acquire to apply to that situation. The problems therefore have to be carefully chosen to ensure that students address the knowledge and skills areas necessary for competent professional practice.

In some contexts, different forms of problem-based learning have been called research-based or enquiry-based learning, perhaps reflecting a slightly different emphasis within the programme. In many situations it is a particular form of resource-based learning. You may encounter various other *something*-based learning models (for *something* add any currently-used term) but the litmus test of whether it is a form of problem-based learning is what provides the stimulus for student learning.

Monash University, in guidance notes to students, stresses that, to create a successful solution to a problem, you need to *understand* the problem.

> "Sometimes this is simple. Your client presents you with a clear statement: *Design a warehouse of 10,000 square meters to fit this site.*
>
> Sometimes the problem is stated but the preferred solution is not: *We are short of warehouse space. We need a solution in 6 months.*
>
> Different engineers will approach this latter problem in different ways. A structural engineer might propose a new warehouse. A software engineer might propose more efficient, robotised materials handling within the current warehouse. An industrial engineer might propose *just-in-time* ordering and delivery." (http://cleao.eng.monash.edu.au/teaching/learning/strategy/detail/html)

Various approaches to tackling the problems are used by different universities, though most stress - as highlighted in the extract from Camp (above) - that student interaction is essential, followed by individual learning activities, before returning to the group/team to synthesize and evaluate their learning.

The three key questions are therefore perhaps:

- What do I already know?
- What do I need to know?
- What resources can I use to bridge that gap?

So, a key area for consideration is how students develop their information literacy skills - what information is needed, how to access it effectively and efficiently, evaluating it, analysing and using it, communicating the outcomes, etc

Why use problem-based learning?

Many people are attracted to problem-based learning because it uses the real-world problems encountered in professional practice and adopts a student-centred approach to learning. However, there is also a whole area of research and writing on student learning that provides a strong rationale for adopting it. Of particular use are the writings of both Graham Gibbs (1992) and John Biggs (1999). Gibbs cites problem-based learning as a strategy for improving the quality of student learning by fostering a deep approach.

In his extremely useful 'Teaching for quality learning at university', Biggs develops a model of constructive alignment which encourages deep engagement with learning by aligning objectives, learning and teaching approaches and assessment. He uses problem-based learning as an example of aligned teaching and stresses that, while there are many varieties of PBL, the element common to all is that it is problems that define the curriculum. Students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to address the problems, as well as becoming able to evaluate both the quality of the knowledge they have acquired and the effectiveness of the solutions to the problem.

Other names you will encounter in the literature are David Boud, Howard Barrows, Wim Gijselaers, Don Margetson and Donald Woods. Using the references below, you will also find that this is a rapidly growing area of research and general writing and it is sometimes necessary to see beyond the "here's how we do it" approach to questions about 'why' and 'with what result'. Maggi Savin-Baden's recent book is an excellent, if challenging, starting point here (Macdonald, 2001a).

It should also have become clear by now that problem-based learning requires students to develop a whole range of skills to enable them to learn effectively - team working skills, information skills and, perhaps most importantly for professional development, higher order cognitive skills. Instead of meekly accepting the information transmitted to them in many traditional forms of teaching, students now have to engage critically with the knowledge that they are acquiring for themselves. It is also true that teamwork can make the learning more effective but problem-based learning can be done alone in, for example, an undergraduate dissertation or a postgraduate research degree.

To sum up from a short, but succinct, article by Linda Torp (1997):

> "Because PBL is organized around the investigation and resolution of messy, real-world problems, it creates a pressing need to know in students. They are attracted by the complexity and urgency of real-life situations. Problem situations demand action or resolution. Teachers say that students involved in PBL find learning more motivating, build critical and creative thinking skills, and are self-directed leaders. PBL is a strategy with the potential to transform teaching and learning for the benefit of learners of all ages."

Implementing problem-based learning - all or nothing?

There is also considerable controversy within problem-based learning as to the structure of the curriculum and whether there is a place for 'hybrid' models or approaches.

The 'pure' approaches adopted in many medical schools may well work with highly motivated, well-qualified students in well-resourced universities that can afford intensive small group learning. Here the curriculum is highly integrated with students adopting a much more holistic approach to learning. This can contrast with the disaggregated approach typical of most programmes where individual elements are broken down and, in the students' eyes, not always brought together again. So, in medicine the focus would be on the whole patient, in engineering on the bridge or the car, in business on the company or the country, and so on.

However, many of us developing an interest in problem-based learning have done so within various institutional and other constraints - highly modular programmes where it is difficult to make links across the curriculum, high student-staff ratios making tutored small group work difficult to resource, time constraints on staff for developing study materials, students finding it difficult to meet in groups outside timetable hours because of work or other commitments. And this is without the perceived pressures from professional accrediting bodies to cram the curriculum with content and work within prescribed curricula structures.

For these, and other reasons, many people have adopted 'hybrid' versions of problem-based learning or even just used smaller elements. So, in addition to full integration across a whole programme, other approaches to curriculum design might include:

- Cross disciplinary case studies or activities with students on different programmes looking at the 'problem' from different perspectives, eg. engineers, designers, business studies.
- Within a single subject (see Don Woods and his use within Chemical Engineering)
- For a single module/unit
- In individual class sessions or activities
- Mixed approaches

Despite the contention from some using the more structured, whole-programme approaches that these are not 'real' problem-based learning, my own belief is that if we go back to David Boud's statement that "the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve", then all of these can be described as problem-based learning. But only if it is the problem, query or puzzle that leads the learning. And there are many examples of so-called problem-based learning where it is the curriculum content, the threat of assessment or the direction of the tutor that drives the curriculum rather than the wish to learn.

The University of Hertfordshire's Integrated Skills Project (HILP) describes their hybrid model as retaining the main aspects of a PBL philosophy, but modifying it with the following key features:

- Problems drive the enquiry process
- The problem is focused on a transdisciplinary case study
- Graduate skills to be developed are identified, made explicit and skills workshops provided
- An assignment is designed to integrate graduate skills development with academic content
- Framework lectures are given at the beginning
- Tutors facilitate group workshops by rotating around the groups
- Paper-based, computer-based and audiovisual resources are developed and provided for students use.

Elements of the model have been used across a wide range of disciplines including law, tourism, computer sciences, environmental sciences and even music!

In a forthcoming chapter on the use of problem-based learning when teaching the Business Environment on Business Studies programmes (Macdonald 2001b), I refer to the way a form of PBL is used at the Auckland University of Technology. Here the Bachelor of Business degree has two main phases: the first comprising Integrated Studies and the second allowing for specialisation and a semester of 'co-operative education' (a work placement). The Integrated Studies phase comprises a semester each of The New Zealand Business Environment, Managing Information, and Managing the Organisation:

> "The business environment is complex and dynamic and no one discipline functions in isolation. For this reason we take an integrated approach to business for the first three semesters of the Bachelor of Business.

Commonly Used Acronyms

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

> This approach enables you to learn fundamental concepts and see the interrelationships between law, economics, accounting, marketing, information technology, communication and management in the business environment.
>
> At the same time you will become a confident learner, developing the professional capabilities business requires: communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, research and use of technology. This understanding of business, together with your ability to see the interconnectedness in business, will give you a sound base for your study in your chosen majors or minors." (http://www.aut.ac.nz/corp/courseinfo/business/bus_integrated.shtml)

And there are many more approaches being used around the world. The reality for many in mass higher education is that resources are being cut and, with widening participation for students who would not have traditionally entered HE, a much longer 'tail' of abilities and motivations is growing. To use problem-based learning in this context requires modification of the approach used elsewhere. In fact, it is probably true to say that a new model may need to be developed for each situation depending on the institutional and professional context, the nature of the student population, resources available and the motivation and interests of the tutors.

Sources of further information

There is a wealth of information on problem-based learning in books, journals and on the World Wide Web. The lists of references below are a good starting point, with Boud and Feletti (1997) a worthwhile introduction to the principles and examples within specific discipline and professional areas. Many journals are publishing PBL articles and recent examples in nursing, psychology and engineering appear in the list below. You will also find articles/chapters on many other professional areas such as architecture at the University of East London or social work at the University of Bristol, and increasingly in the arts and humanities such as English Literature at the University of Manchester (http://www.art.mac.ac.uk/english/PROJECTS/pbl.html).

A number of the LTSN Subject Centres are putting on PBL events and are working with the LTSN Generic Centre to network and share information - contact Jill Armstrong at the Generic Centre (jill.armstrong@ltsn.ac.uk). As an example of one centre's activities, the Economics Subject Centre has a PBL page (http://www.economics.ltsn.ac.uk/advice/pbl.html) and is running a workshop on 5 June. A new mail list has been recently established (http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/pbl.html) in addition to those you will find in the www references below.

A good way of finding out what is on the web is to use one of the search engines and type in "problem-based learning". You may have to search for a while but don't be put off by the fact that the results appear to be a medical school or an engineering department - those at Southern Illinois and Monash are particularly well worth looking at.

Some references

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Murray, I and Savin-Baden, M (2000) Staff Development in Problem-Based Learning. *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 5, No. 1

Perrenet, JC, Bouhuijs, PAJ and Smits, JGMM (2000) The Suitability of Problem-based Learning for Engineering Education: theory and practice. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 5, 3: 345-359

Reynolds, F (1997) Studying Psychology at Degree Level: would problem-based learning enhance students' experiences? *Studies in Higher Education*, 22, 3: 263-276

Savin-Baden, M (2000) **Problem-Based Learning in Higher Education: Untold Stories**. Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press

Williams, B (2001) The Theoretical Links Between Problem-based Learning and Self-directed Learning for Continuing Professional Nursing Education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 6, 1:85-98

Some articles on the WWW

Burch, K (1997) A Primer on Problem-Based Learning: Examples from International Relations Courses. http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/suppmat/82pblprimer.htm

Camp, G (1996) Problem-Based Learning: A Paradigm Shift or a Passing Fad? http://www.utmb.edu/meo/f0000003.htm

Duch, B (1996) Problems: A Key Factor in PBL. http://www.udel.edu/pbl/cte/spr96-phys.html

Greening, T (1998) Scaffolding for Success in Problem-Based Learning. http://www.utmb.edu/meo/f0000012.htm

Kenley, R (1995) Problem-Based Learning: within a traditional teaching environment. http://www.arbld.unimelb.edu.au/~kenley/conf/papers/rk_a_p1.htm

PBL Insight (a newsletter for undergraduate problem-based learning from Samford University). http://www.samford.edu/pbl/

Torp, L (1997) What is Problem-Based Learning? Learning Productivity, Wingspread Journal, Summer 1997, http://www.johnsonfdn.org/library/journal/v19n3/pbl.html

Woods, D (1996) Problem-Based Learning: helping your students gain the most from PBL. http://chemeng.mcmaster.ca/pbl/pbl.htm

Some good WWW sites

Many also have links to other sites:

1. Deliberations (electronic journal on teaching and learning - follow site to PBL - good links to other sites)
   http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations/home.html
2. Queen's University, Canada, Problem-Based Learning home page:
   http://meds.queensu.ca/medicine/pbl/pblhome.htm
3. PBL at the University of Delaware (lots of links to other sites and 'Dan tries problem-based learning: a case study')
   http://www.udel.edu/pbl/
4. University of Hawaii, John A Burns School of Medicine:
   http://medworld.biomed.hawaii.edu/
5. Distributed Course delivery for Problem Based Learning (San Diego State University):
   http://edweb.sdsu.edu/clrit/home.html
6. Problem-Based Learning Resources; Educational Development Unit, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
   http://158.132.100.221/INET_EDU.folder/InetResources.folder/PBLresources.html
7. Problem-Based Learning in Business Education: Curriculum Design and Implementation Issues:
   http://mbawb.cob.ohiou.edu/papers.html
8. South Illinois University School of Medicine - PBL Page - excellent
   http://edaff.siumed.edu/DEPT/Index.htm
9. University of Maastricht (Educational Innovations in Economic and Business, plus links to other sites)
   http://www.unimaas.nl/~edineb/
   http://www.unimaas.nl/um/onderwijs.index_uk.htm
10. Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy: Centre for Problem-Based Learning (including an interactive problem-based learning experience)
    http://www.imsa.edu/team/cpbl/cpbl.html
11. Problem Based Learning Assessment and Research Centre
    http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/iesd/learndevelop/problarc/index.html
12. McMaster University, Faculty of Health Sciences
    http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/mhsi/problem-.htm
13. PBL and Engineering Education (some excellent general PBL information)
    http://www.eng.monash.edu.au/civil/teaching/vision/

Editorial

Our main article this quarter is Ranald Macdonald's guide to the issues and sources for problem-based learning. We chose this as a topic because it has so many linkages with educational development practice, both in its pedagogic principles and in its implications for change. It is particularly interesting to relate this topic to the development of computing and information technology, because in that conjunction at last we might be seeing a pedagogy for our age.

When thinking of pedagogies for a previous age, we might consider the tenacity of what Michael Prosser and Keith Trigwell in *Understanding Learning and Teaching: The Experience in Higher Education* (1999, Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press) have defined as the teacher-focused, information transmission approach to teaching, and its associated assessment of the taught course rather than the learned subject. As an approach it was given a boost when student numbers grew, though it was more of a reaction than a thought-through response, and the roosting chickens are now completely domesticated. Then, when the open and distance learning initiatives appeared, a common first step was to print up the lecture notes of the existing course. (Perhaps you remember hearing colleagues say that, while the schemes might have failed, at least the staff had to polish up their materials for more public consumption.) As each new piece of technology arrived, this old pedagogy grabbed it like an oxygen cylinder - better delivery mechanisms have kept it going, but in the end there is often disappointment.

As the shift towards the communications potential of C&IT gathers strength, and as the interest in virtual learning environments pulls course design into the centre of discussions, so it is hardly surprising that problem-based learning is being seen as one of the pedagogies which can best exploit the new technology. We would be interested in further articles on this theme from colleagues with work in progress.

Two other articles in this issue are taking forward themes from previous issues. Following Lorraine Stefani's piece on the QAA Code of Practice on Disability in 1.4, and the article by Barbara Lloyd-Smith from the National Disability Team in 2.1, we have an example from Mike Blamires and Sarah Gee of a specific project on how to help colleagues support students with autism (or, more specifically, with a disorder on the autism spectrum).

As educational developers cannot avoid the discussions about quality, its assurance, its enhancement and its role as a totem of approval or threat, we welcome a contribution from Viv Martin, who crosses between education and the National Health Service and so can bring another perspective to what sometimes feels rather an inward-looking debate. Again, we would welcome further contributions in this area from our readers.

In the last issue we ran an article from Barry Jackson and Allan Davies on the experience of using the various Subject Centre web sites as a route into the educational developments within the disciplines. Please remember that Barry and Allan appealed to you, the readers, for further experiences, comments and discussion as this new development unfolds - to support a further article. They can be contacted at:

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

As an organisation SEDA has never been strident in advertising its wares (too many educational developers know that ownership is like muck - best spread) but the article by Chris Rust in 1.4 on new developments in SEDA's accreditation activities is becoming more significant as time passes. In it, he described the way that the Professional Development in Higher Education accreditation process will be developed to suit the varying needs of colleagues from all parts of the sector. The SEDA website will keep you informed of the latest developments. The initiatives from the HEFCE on Rewarding and Developing Staff and Developing Good Management Practice do offer opportunities to do valuable work here, and we would welcome discussion and articles from colleagues who are developing strategies and institutional responses in this area.

Educational Developments is still (in the language of HEFCE) "an emerging strategy" and we are grateful for the comments and feedback we have received. The greatest measure of success so far is the sentence "I photocopied the article for a workshop I had to run that afternoon" - though increasing your bulk order would be even more encouraging! The editorial group do genuinely welcome your contributions, and the technical details for this are printed on the back page. We are looking for "implications" pieces - around the question "What might the implications of this be for educational developers?" We also welcome guidelines pieces - an area for which you can set out guidelines for educational developers to bring them up to speed, often around the questions "What are the issues?" and "What are the sources?" And finally we enjoy publishing practice pieces - an account of something in practice from which other practitioners can directly learn. Please approach any of the editorial group with your ideas.

James Wisdom
SEDA Publications Co-ordinator

SEDA Advisory Group

Since 1992 the Accreditation Steering Committee has overseen the development of the three SEDA accreditation schemes and has given a helpful and useful input. However, the SEDA Executive Committee have recently felt that it may now be more appropriate to have a broad-ranging Advisory Group for the whole range of SEDA's activities. This change has been discussed and agreed by the Accreditation Steering Committee and the new Group will meet for the first time in November 2001.

Gill Tucker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of the University of East London, and former chair of the Accreditation Steering Committee, has agreed to act as Chair of the Advisory Group for the first year. Terms of Reference have been written and will be taken to be endorsed by the SEDA Executive Committee at their meeting taking place in May.

The Executive Committee are happy to receive suggestions for membership of the group and these should be sent via the SEDA Office (contact details on cover). It should be noted that membership of the Advisory Group is for people in a personal capacity rather than as representatives of organisations.

Joint SEDA / AISHE Conference

SUPPORTING AND EVALUATING CHANGE:

enhancing the practice and scholarship of learning, teaching and assessment

11-12th April, 2002
Dublin Castle Conference Centre

Confirmed keynote speaker:

Dr Robert E Stake
Director, Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Further details will follow as they become available

Owning the Agenda for Quality

Vivien Martin FSEDA
Senior Lecturer in Management, The Open University

Is your work of high quality? Who says so? How do you know? Most of us would support anything that improves the quality of our work, but we often feel that the resources to support improvements will not be provided. Quality has been a buzz word for more than a decade, but it is still an elusive concept. Even more elusive is the feeling that we have control over quality improvements. Most of the changes that have been made in education feel as though they have been 'top down' - imposed by 'them' above on 'us' below. But practitioners both in Higher Education and the Health Services are often very concerned about the quality of their work and want to shape improvements themselves, in areas where they can see what needs doing and see how it can be done. Developers are adept at spotting opportunities for improvement and development. So why don't developers set the agenda for quality improvement in their institutions?

What does 'quality' mean?

Quality is closely related to purpose - you might be familiar with the definition 'fit for purpose' coined by one of the early quality gurus, Juran (1986). Another definition, offered by Crosby (1984), was 'conformance to requirements'. These two concepts are still alive in quality debates and have shaped the ways in which institutions have attempted to put processes in place to demonstrate that they value quality. These definitions are not entirely helpful for us because the purposes and requirements of education are only specified in the loosest terms, even when governments have become explicit about setting standards. In addition, quality initiatives in education are often experienced by teaching and support staff as a way of measuring and, potentially, of criticising, performance. If you offer what you think are high quality services because they are provided by well qualified and caring teachers, will the learners and sponsors agree that they are receiving a high quality service? Not necessarily!

Quality standards

Quality is not achieved simply by trying a bit harder. You can only be confident that you are achieving - and continuing to achieve - high quality results by setting up a system that will enable you to monitor whether you are achieving the standards set. The process of setting standards, monitoring to measure results against them and taking action if they are not fully achieved is similar to setting personal objectives, monitoring whether they are being achieved and taking appropriate action if they are not. As with objectives, standards need to be clear and unambiguous if you are to monitor quality effectively.

Developing a standard

Standards do not replace professional judgement but set targets that can be understood by everyone who contributes to achieving the standards, and those who expect a service of the quality indicated by the standards. If there are no quality standards for your area of work, or if the standards that exist have been set by others and seem irrelevant to you and your colleagues, you might have to consider setting standards for yourselves. This will involve identifying what quality means for your area of work and then setting standards related to the outcomes required. Setting your own standards can help you to gain control over your own area of work and to demonstrate your achievements.

This is where we might find the QAA's benchmark standards documents causing confusion. The texts that surround them (the QAA's framework and the introductions to the documents themselves) show they have been designed as devices for promoting debate. From that debate the QAA is hoping that each Department (and each lecturer) would develop a more profound understanding of what is quality in Higher Education, and at the same time the standards would define a set of monitorable outcomes. This approach contrasts with the procedure which starts with the quality debate, from which are then derived standards and monitorable outcomes.

Basing standards on dimensions of quality

People developing standards in the Health Services have found it helpful to use the idea that there are different dimensions to consider when planning for quality in service provision. Maxwell's dimensions of quality in health care can be adapted so that we can apply them to quality in Higher Education.

Structure, process, outcome

Some standards are easy to measure - such as student to staff ratios or numbers of computers available in a library. It is relatively easy to identify such standards and to monitor whether they have been achieved. However, many areas of education require more sophisticated standards that reflect some of the complexities rather than simple counts of outcomes. Donabedian (1980) distinguished three critical components for written and measurable standards that we can apply to education:

- *Structure* - the physical and organizational framework within which education is provided. This includes the staff, facilities and equipment available, the environment within which education is delivered and the documentation of procedures and policies.

Table 1: Dimensions of quality in Higher Education (adapted from Maxwell, 1984)

Dimensions	For example ...
Access to services	Are services convenient geographically for students?
	Are timetabling, the physical design of the buildings, the availability of transport and car parking acceptable for all students and potential students?
Equity	Are services provided in an acceptable way to all potential students, whatever their cultural, racial or social backgrounds?
Relevance to need	Do services reflect the needs of the population served?
	Are there any gaps in meeting needs?
Social acceptability	Is the way services are provided acceptable to all of the people they are intended to serve?
Efficiency	Are services delivered as efficiently as possible within the resources available?
	Are services cost-effective and appropriately staffed?
Effectiveness	Do services achieve the intended benefits and outcomes in terms of education of the people served?
	Are the qualifications achieved appropriate for the life and work progression of students?

- *Process* - the actual procedures and practices implemented by staff in the design, delivery and evaluation of education.
- *Outcome* - the effect of education on the student plus the costs of providing that education.

Outcome is the most important of these to identify if we are aiming to be explicit about quality. However, educators are very interested in and committed to process improvement. This can lead to accepting the outcome that arises from a process rather than focusing on determining the outcome that would best represent high quality. Therefore, in drafting a standard it is helpful to think first about what outcome is to be achieved and then to consider what processes would achieve that outcome. The final step is to consider what structures are required to carry out the processes. Working towards achieving the outcomes in this way helps to focus on what aspects of processes and structure contribute directly towards each outcome.

For example, you might set a standard with an *outcome* of 'Every lecturer will be observed during a teaching session by their head of department at least once each year to ensure that they meet the institutional criteria'. The *process* to achieve this outcome might include securing agreement of staff, preparation and training of heads of department, planning logistics, ensuring that the feedback and record keeping supported the purpose and ensuring that this activity fitted in appropriately with any other supervision or appraisal systems. The *structure* necessary to enable the process to take place would include department structures, timetables and training facilities. Structure relates to the organisational framework of existing policies and procedures, so many of the structural elements would normally already be in place.

One way of starting to set standards in an area of work is to combine Maxwell's dimensions of service with Donabedian's framework of structure, process and outcome. This can be constructed as a table with structure, process, outcome across the top and the six dimensions (access, equity, relevance, social acceptability, efficiency, effectiveness) down the left hand side. Then for each dimension, consider the outcomes in your area of work and identify what these should be to represent high quality or an improvement in quality. It is often important to involve others, possibly students and staff, in developing statements of desirable outcomes. Once the outcomes are pinned down, it is relatively easy to work out the processes and the structures that are necessary to achieve the outcome.

The quality chain

You may have a number of customers with very different requirements. Your role may not involve delivering services directly to students, but may be in a service that supports a number of activities, for example, a training or information or personnel service. Quality is an issue in every aspect of a service so, when there are a number of different stages, and links between these stages there is often the potential for things to go wrong. The *quality chain* uses the idea that the quality of each element and each link is crucial in determining the quality of the whole chain.

The quality chain may be broken at any point by a person or a piece of equipment not meeting the requirements of the customer, internal or external. In HE settings a failure may eventually find its way to the student. In addition, failure often adds unnecessary costs to the whole activity and has a negative effect on staff morale. Have you experienced the frustration of not being able to do your job well because of a failure earlier in the quality chain?

Monitoring standards

It is time-consuming to develop service standards, but the process can focus attention on problem areas and suggest improvements that can be quickly implemented. The main benefits, however, come from sustained monitoring of performance against standards to establish the extent to which they are being met. You can then ensure that the service sustains quality or you can take steps to rectify problems.

Deciding what to monitor and how to do it is a key task. You need to be sensitive to avoid being intrusive to staff or students. Though many different factors might be measured and compared, there are essentially two main approaches:

1) Count the percentage of occasions when the standard is achieved.

2) For each monitoring period, record whether the standard has been achieved, partially achieved or not achieved. This is especially useful where standards are set using the structure-process-outcome model.

Monitoring is essentially about ensuring that information on whether standards are being achieved is collected regularly in sufficient detail and that the results of monitoring inform developments.

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Dr Viv Martin has worked in the health service and Health Service management for many years and is now primarily responsible for the OU Business School's course for health service managers.

Contents of Volume 2.1 (2001)

Articles which appeared in issue 2.1 (February 2001):

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

SEDA Summer School for Educational Developers

Lancaster House Hotel, Lancaster
18th - 20th July 2001

SEDA
STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

This three day course is designed for those who have a professional role as educational and academic developers in higher education. It is aimed at those with less than three years experience and will support those who are working towards SEDA Fellowship. Participants may include staff in educational development units, those who have a role in LTSN Centres or those responsible for co-ordinating teaching and learning developments in their department or faculty.

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

Sessions will be practice based and facilitated by experienced educational developers and grounded in research on learning and teaching. The workshop element will involve example case studies, role play and collaborative problem solving supported by a range of materials. All participants will be asked to complete a survey in advance to provide information about their experience and goals which will help in final planning. The course will include opportunity for small group work and tutorial time with an experienced developer to support action planning. An outline of the intended programme can be found below.

The fee for the three day event is £ 430 per delegate (to include two nights accommodation, all meals and refreshments). A cheque (made payable to "SEDA") or an official order should be included when returning your registration form, available from the SEDA Office (contact details on cover).

Draft Programme:

Day 1 — 11am – 9pm
- Registration and welcome
- Models of educational development
- Our role as educational developers
- Analysing client needs

Day 2 — 9am – 9pm
- Designing and running events
- Consultancy and mentoring
- Evaluation and feedback
- Scholarship and research in educational development

Day 3 — 9am – 4pm
- Managing projects and strategic change
- Planning our own development
- Building a professional development portfolio

Forthcoming SEDA Conferences and Events

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

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

SEDA / AISHE Joint Conference
Supporting and Evaluating Change
11 - 12 April 2002
Dublin Castle Conference Centre

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

Developing Research in Learning and Teaching within Business and Management: a case study

Dr Myra Hodgkinson
Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the importance of academic staff in institutions of higher education pursuing research into learning and teaching. A brief literature review considers why recent authors in this field consider it to be important. A case study is used to illustrate how research in learning and teaching has been encouraged and respected as a legitimate activity for academic members of staff. The context of the case study is a large Business School with 120 academic members of staff, organised in four academic departments within a matrix structure. The Heads of Department have responsibility for the quality of the curriculum, for modules and for staff, whilst Heads of Programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) are responsible for the quality of the student learning experience associated with approved routes and programmes. All are accountable to the Dean.

Why it is important: a literature review

The reasons why in the past there has been limited interest in encouraging research into learning and teaching are explained by Nicol (1997) and are summarised here. Traditionally, Institutions of Higher Education have always rewarded disciplinary research only. In addition, many teachers in UK institutions of higher education have not been trained teachers. Nicol says that the main approach to encouraging changes in teaching practice were provided by central units which did not always meet the needs of teachers and were criticised because they took a focus on teaching techniques and not on "implicit conceptions that determine how teachers teach" (p 4). He concludes that in the past individual teachers were the ones who attempted to innovate rather than there being co-ordinated activity.

As Nicol acknowledges, this is no longer an accurate picture of the sector. One of the main influences of change has been the Dearing Report (1997). The report offers a vision that teaching and the management of learning be world class but that to achieve this would require a change in the values of the sector. This is the basis of recommendation 14, the establishment of a professional Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education:

> "The Institute's functions would include accrediting professional achievement in the management of learning and teaching, commissioning research and development work into learning and teaching practices, and stimulating innovation and co-ordinating the development of innovative learning materials" (Rec.14)

The influence that this recommendation is likely to have on the sector complements a view held by Elton (1998), who, when discussing appropriate criteria for individual excellence in teaching, suggests that one criterion may be research and scholarly works published in refereed journals and books (p 10).

There is increased recognition of the importance of research in learning and teaching as illustrated by Baty (1999). He reports on an open letter from the Editorial Board of the teaching research journal *Teaching in Higher Education* to the Higher Education Funding Council's research assessment exercise manager. They (the editorial board) want: "to conduct educational research on teaching and learning issues in their own disciplines, and to be acknowledged and rewarded for it through the Research Assessment Exercise". (p 3). They argue that the worst teachers within the institutions of higher education will fail to improve unless there are "significant changes in the research culture" (p3). The debate continues. Rowlands (1999) argues that including research into learning and teaching in the next RAE would:

> "enhance the status of teaching more than all the efforts of the Institute for Learning and Teaching. It would help link teaching to disciplinary insight and view it as central to academia's intellectual life, rather than a second-order practical activity" (p 32-33)

After all the link between research into one's subject and teaching and learning are by no means world's apart. As Zuber-Skerrit (1992 (in Evans and Abbot 1999)) notes:

> "....academics should try to learn about teaching in the same way as they learn about their discipline, or particular subject areas, that is, as personal scientists and problem solvers, through active involvement, practical experience and critical reflection about the experience. An important condition is that these developmental activities must be personally initiated, self directed, and consciously controlled by the university teachers themselves" (p 33)

Reflection on practice was discussed by Kolb (1984), whose research showed that active participation was not enough, but that it must be followed by reflection upon the activity, if learning was to take place. This initial work by Kolb has been developed by Pedlar (1991), Race (1993) and Handy (1994), who have all recognised the need for reflection as essential for learning. Revans (1982) suggests that working within an organisational setting provides many opportunities for action learning but that organisational culture or "morale" is a determinant of success. Geherardi, Nicolini and Odella (1998) say: "learning is always associated with some ongoing practice" (p 274). The view taken in this paper is that action learning where the teacher is encouraged to question and evaluate his/her own practice is an appropriate methodology for research into learning and teaching, particularly when it is supported by learning sets. Learning sets enable individuals:

> "...who come to the set to learn from experience and to move on to more effective action. The set enables this process to take place through concentrated group effort focused on the issues of each individual". (McGill and Beaty 1995 p 21)

The view taken in this paper is, therefore, that research into learning and teaching is important for the following reasons:

- it encourages reflection of the actual teaching activity as well as the subject being taught; this reflection can enhance the pedagogic process
- in the future publications in learning and teaching which have a particular discipline context may become recognised as part of the Research Assessment Exercise
- application to the ILT by academic members of staff will be enhanced if they are able to demonstrate research and publications in learning and teaching
- for career and promotional aspects this would be one way of taking practice into the public domain for wider dissemination and evidence of excellence in teaching
- external quality review attaches importance to the evidence of reflection of the learning and teaching activity
- it supports the strategic plans of many Universities
- HEFCE in their Strategic Statement (1999) refer to funding opportunities for rewarding individuals who demonstrate excellence in teaching

A model of encouraging research and publication within learning and teaching in one institution is the focus of the next section of this pa-

per. The model takes forward the research methodology of action learning, briefly reviewed above, and the reasons that have been rehearsed here regarding the importance of this activity.

A model for encouraging a reflective practitioner approach

Within the Business School, that provides the context of the paper, there has been a faculty-wide Learning and Teaching Group since 1993. It is currently chaired by the author. The membership of the group has changed and evolved over time but consists of academic members of staff who are representative of the various aspects which make up the work of the School. In addition a Faculty-wide Internet and Learning Technologies Co-ordinator and the School's Principal Technician are also members. The work of this group is fully documented in Hodgkinson (1998). In terms of encouraging research in learning and teaching by academic and support members of staff, the following model has evolved.

A staff development forum

The first stage, once all the students have returned and new students are settled at the start of every academic year, is to offer a staff development event entitled "Getting Started: research and publications in learning and teaching". This event is open to all academic staff. The format of the session is an open forum and lasts about 1.5 hours. Both recent and established researchers reflect on the value and experience of developing this area. The event is supported by a variety of journals that are used to highlight different types of publications which contributors can target. The final element of this event is to explain that support is available in two ways for anyone wishing to "get started".

Seedcorn funding

To enable and to encourage colleagues (including support staff) with this venture it is possible for them to apply for seedcorn research funding. There are two opportunities for applications for this funding in any one academic year. Some appropriate areas we identified for guidance, included: issues on quality assurance, student feedback, modes of assessment, lifelong learning, teaching in Eastern Europe, innovative approaches to curriculum delivery, the use of technology and its impact on students and staff, and the application of different software in learning and teaching.

The aim of the funding is designed to enable assistance to be given for travel expenses associated with fieldwork, teaching relief and conference expenses to a maximum of £500. Requested proposals are short (two sides of A4) and must include a dissemination plan (conference papers and refereed journals to be targeted). The Learning and Teaching Group then consider the submitted bids. Initially there appeared a lack of interest by academic members of staff in taking up this initiative but for the current year six proposals have been received. It should be explained at this juncture that the Learning and Teaching Group receives an annual budget allocated from the faculty budget. This not a large sum and must meet various costs including those associated with the annual "Staff Development Programme of Activities" available across the School for all members of staff.

Peer support group

Support is also available to those academic members of staff who wish to commence research in learning and teaching through membership of a support group.

During the course of 1998/99 the group had a membership of twenty and met at monthly intervals. These meetings enable members to participate in learning sets and thus receive and provide critical support through peer review. The action sets aim to keep colleagues motivated as well as solve problems, to generate ideas and to help identify action plans for individual members. There is no pressure for group members to attend all the meetings: rather the purpose of the meetings is to provide support as and when it is needed.

Annual conference

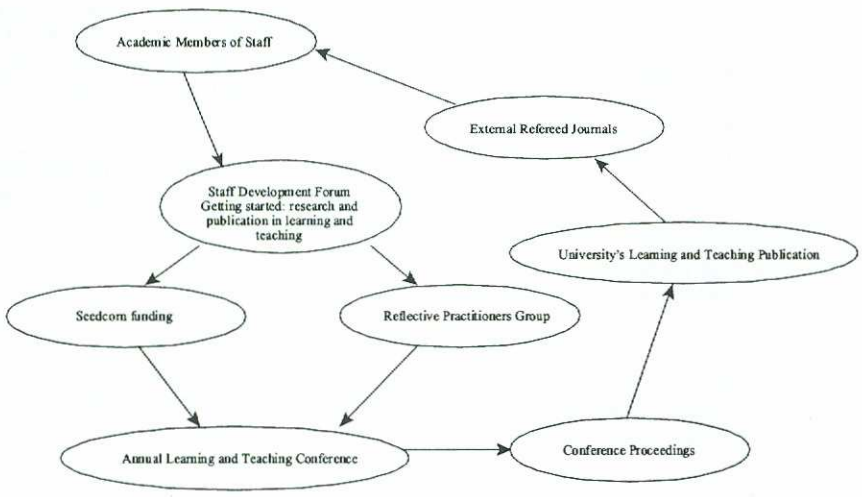
Since 1993, a one-day Learning and Teaching Conference has been held on an annual basis either in July or September. One of the conditions of the seedcorn funding opportunity is that successful applicants must present a conference paper at this conference. The conference is open to all faculty of the Business School. There is a call for papers usually in April of any year, with invitations to attend and booking forms circulated well in advance of the conference. The conference marks the end of one year of activities for the Learning and Teaching Group, but perhaps more importantly it provides a focus for colleagues who have received seedcorn funding. For some academic staff this may be the first time that they have presented a conference paper, therefore it is designed to be informal and non-threatening. The success of the conference is illustrated by comparing the one held in 1999 that had three streams, two for academic papers and one with a series of workshops and an attendance of fifty delegates. In 1993, the conference had one stream and eighteen delegates. Conference papers are circulated to all delegates with a copy going to the editor of the University's publication "Innovations in Learning and Teaching" (published annually) for review by members of the editorial board.

Measures of effectiveness

It is always difficult to be totally unbiased when discussing a model that has evolved over a period of seven years and view it objectively. A review of the annual conference indicates that more and more academic colleagues are participating as presenters at the conference. Not as many attend, however, as might be expected from the size of the School even allowing for those colleagues who are engaged in research within their discipline. Attendance at the peer support group decreased steadily over the last academic year. It was considered by the Chair of the Group that this level of support is no longer needed and instead an informal grouping has emerged that is less structured than the learning sets but adheres to similar principles. Since 1993, there have been twenty-four articles published in refereed journals concerned with aspects of learning and teaching, thirty papers presented at refereed conferences and innumerable non-refereed conference papers and presentations given. Requests for seedcorn funding are still low, but the numbers are increasing.

Qualitative measures tend to be anecdotal in terms of measuring the effectiveness of this initiative. However, those who successfully sought seedcorn funding have, to date, completed their projects. Colleagues have commented on their enjoyment and satisfaction in being involved. It would, therefore, appear that many staff are committed to learning more about their core activity of learning and teaching. Thus it can be assumed that they have en-

A model: developing research in learning and teaching within Business and Management



joyed the challenge of engaging in this type of research and for the first time producing a conference paper with the opportunity for wider dissemination of their work. By providing an opportunity to disseminate to colleagues it enables the promotion across the School of the importance attached to reflection in learning and teaching. In addition, implicitly through the reflective nature of the activity resultant improved practice which is shared with others.

Conclusion

The activity described here cannot succeed without the support of senior managers within the School's departments. They must be prepared to allocate resources to it in terms of funding and time. It is also important that they are visibly supporting it, for example in this model by attending the annual conference and even presenting a conference paper as the Dean of this particular School did at last year's conference.

It must also be acknowledged that within this Business School it was agreed in 1997 that this form of research fits within research of Human Resource Management and can therefore contribute to the Research Assessment Exercise. However, this factor alone cannot account for the success of the activity during the earlier years. In summary, this initiative has been successful in generating, across the School, interest in researching aspects of learning and teaching which is more significant than prior to 1993.

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News from the SEDA Annual General Meeting

The second annual general meeting of SEDA Ltd took place on 2nd April 2001 at the SEDA spring conference held in Glasgow.

The meeting marked the end of Liz Beaty and Ranald Macdonald's term of office as co-chairs, although both will remain on the Executive for a further 12 months as co-vice chairs. Liz will also continue her work within SEDA's accreditation cluster, specifically on the new PDHE framework, and Ranald will remain an active member of the Conference Committee and *Educational Developments* editorial team.

The new co-chairs, Hazel Fullerton and Barry Jackson, agreed that Liz and Ranald would be a hard act to follow and thanked them on behalf of SEDA for all the hard work they had done during the past two years. Liz and Ranald in turn welcomed the new co-chairs and wished them well in their new roles.

Elections were held for co-ordinators of accreditation, events and conferences and publications, plus four posts without portfolio. Su White (University of Southampton) and James Wisdom (independent consultant) were re-elected unopposed to the posts of events and conferences and publications co-ordinators (respectively) and Rhona Sharpe (The Open University) was elected unopposed to the post of accreditation co-ordinator. Six nominations had been received for the posts without portfolio and an election duly took place. The result was that Ray Land (University of Edinburgh) and Mike Laycock (University of East London) were re-elected to the committee and Liz Shrives (Roehampton Institute and former SEDA accreditation co-ordinator) and Shân Wareing (Royal Holloway) were elected as new members.

This sees the departure from the Executive Committee of three members. However, they all remain active members of SEDA with Graham Alsop continuing to be a member of the *Educational Developments* editorial team, Chris Rust taking over Rhona's position as Chair of the Fellowships Committee and Lorraine Stefani continuing her work with the SEDA Scotland group. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all three for the work they have done on behalf of the Executive Committee and wish them well for the future.

As well as the elections and the presentation of the accounts, the following main issues were discussed at the AGM:

- SEDA's new PDHE Scheme
- SEDA Advisory Group
- SEDA Development Officer
- SEDA's continuing collaboration with the Institute for Learning and Teaching
- Nominations for the SEDA Roll of Honour.

Further details of all the above will be published as and when they become available.

Review of SEDA Event

Management and Staff Development Within "Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education"

24th April 2001, NEC

Over the last few years SEDA have been a real lifeline for me. I arrived in staff development rather suddenly and SEDA really helped with my orientation into what is still a relatively new profession. It's easy for new arrivals to feel inferior or 'put down' by the experienced practitioners, but there is something about the ethos within this organisation which quickly made me feel secure enough to be myself.

Take this event, for example. There I was, sat in my office looking at a HEFCE document (00/56) and wondering how I was going to comply with my Human Resource Director's request to assist her with the documentation needed to access the additional funding on offer. The yellow sheet on the top of my in-tray provided the answer. SEDA had thoughtfully anticipated this scenario, and organised a one day event to equip me (and 68 others) for the task. Perfect timing!

The title of the workshop may have been unwieldy (inevitably perhaps), but the event itself was a lesson in how to do it right. Impeccably hosted by SEDA Co-Vice Chair Liz Beaty, I particularly liked the way the programme moved along at a rapid pace. The half-hour slots allowed for eight different inputs, and none of them were able to drag through being spun out for too long. Also, the range of speakers and variety in the types of session kept our interest going right to the end.

But what of the content? Gill Tucker from the University of East London opened the programme with her reflections on the current state of HE, with particular reference to Bett and to her recent years at the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development. She highlighted the increasing importance for the sector to care for its customers (students), and the relevance of staff development to this agenda, as summarised by Bett: 'good staff lead to satisfied students'.

Being a SEDA event, we were never allowed to sit in passive mode for too long, and both morning and afternoon sessions were broken up by small group discussions. James Wisdom sprang into action to facilitate these, dispersing our torpor with his enthusiasm and humour.

Tim Burton from 'across the fence' at Hull University gave us a view of what it was like to be a participant on a SEDA accredited management development programme. His input raised a key issue: how can busy University managers find the time necessary to take accredited (and assessed) courses of this kind? Tim is struggling manfully to keep his course up - I wonder how many other managers would be prepared to squeeze this type of activity into their already busy schedules?

Our pre-lunch fade was held at bay by another burst from James Wisdom, looking at how to support heads of schools and departments to develop good practice. Three items in particular struck me from James' talk:

1. The importance of reflective practice for these managers as a mechanism for development.

2. The contention that: 'the biggest single influence on the quality of student learning is the quality of course management'.

3. James' wholehearted recommendation of Paul Ramsden's book 'Learning to Lead in Higher Education' (1998, London: Routledge).

Over lunch I noticed the name badge of a fellow diner which identified him as a Professor working at the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership. "You should be giving a talk at this event." I opened, in conversational manner. "I am", he responded. Serves me right for not reading the programme carefully in advance! John Burgoyne's presentation was first class; knowledgeable and highly relevant, covering areas such as current best practice in corporate leadership development and stressing the time and effort put into staff development by the most senior staff in some of the world's most successful companies.

Steve Collins shared his experiences of running the SEDA accredited management development programmes at Southampton Institute. I really enjoyed his talk because he told it as it was, failures as well as successes, and brought us up to date with his plans within his new employer, the Open University.

And finally... who better to talk on 'Going Forward with the Project on Rewarding and Developing Staff in HE' than the project sponsor within HEFCE, Stephen Egan? Stephen is the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources with the Funding Council, and clearly feels passionately about the business of helping UK higher education to improve continuously. I found it really helpful and encouraging to hear him talk about the thinking behind this initiative, and to put a human face to the HEFCE documents.

In conclusion, this was the type of event that SEDA do well and it was a very practical support to those of us working away in small units within the various universities of England. And that's not all that SEDA do well... SEDA have pioneered the national accreditation of professional development courses, and now have a revised framework to encompass Professional Development in HE (PDHE). A number of named awards are to be offered by SEDA, and individual programmes are able to apply for recognition to the Programme Recognition Committee. The PDHE Embedding Learning Technologies is already in place, with further awards being developed in the following areas:

- Postgraduate Supervision
- Management
- Administration
- Student Support
- Generic.

See the SEDA Website for more details on the revised PDHE accreditation framework.

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An Educational Developer's Diary - Croatia

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Saturday

The airline bus takes me South from Ljubljana Brnik airport, through thorough but friendly border checks from Slovenia into Croatia, along narrow twisting roads, up through pine forests and low mountain passes and into the city of Rijeka on the Adriatic coast. I am met by Vesna Kovac, a leader of the new national Croatian educational development network UNIVERSITAS, for whom I am to run three workshops.

My hotel is the aptly named Grand Hotel Adriatic, along the coast in Opatija, a nineteenth century resort town previously a winter home for Gustav Mahler, Isadora Duncan, Anton Chekhov and other luminaries, now readying itself for the impending rush of Easter visitors.

Sunday

At leisure in Opatija, exploring the Emperor Franz Joseph Promenade in the rain, watching the cold springs, some running off the rocky coast and others bubbling up a few metres offshore into the clear, vivid blue sea. Re-checking the workshop plans in the evening, I am conscious, as when starting any overseas staff development programme, how strongly based in UK models of higher education are both my knowledge of teaching and learning and my abilities as a staff and educational developer. Try to calm nerves with further preparation. Partially successful.

Monday

A University car takes me to the Rectorate building of the University of Rijeka. The sun comes out. I shall remember Croatia as a kind of reverse Camelot, where it rains in leisure time and the sun shines during working hours. I am met by Vesna and her UNIVERSITAS colleague Dr Marina Vicelja. I am told to expect television and radio interviews during the day.

Inspect the workshop room. Ask for the table layout to be changed to something less long and narrow. There's reassurance in the familiar staff developer's routine of rearranging furniture.

Before the workshop, a half-hour with the University's newly elected Rector in his elegant office. Professor Rukavina speaks of his enthusiasm for teaching and learning, and asks to be sent information about UK Educational Development Units. He will try to come to some of the Tuesday workshop.

Re-entering the workshop room I am dazzled by television lights and immediately asked for my impressions, as a visiting expert, of Croatian higher education. Give an upbeat and hopefully coherent answer, acutely conscious of the recency of my arrival.

Turning to some 30 enthusiastic faces I have a sudden memory of one of my first workshops as a staff developer, to which absolutely no-one turned up. Decide that I prefer today. I introduce the aims of the workshop, the participants introduce themselves, and we start to consider the nature of student learning and explore its implications for teaching, only slightly distracted by television lights and a roving camera. Some sotto voce interpreting among the participants forms a background to three hours hard work. A second television crew arrives for the last half-hour. The camera operator is clearly an MTV aspirant, shooting from striking angles and going for big close-ups.

Lots of satisfied comments from participants at workshop's end, at once followed by another round to camera of "Tell me, what do you think of Croatian higher education?" Reply this time with much better informed account of the lecturers' enthusiasm to learn and to use new approaches to teaching and learning. No obvious cultural insensitivities from me, in the workshop or in the interviews. Phew.

At the start of the afternoon workshop, with most of the same participants, I ask them to describe their approaches to assessment. I discover that the main method of summative assessment here is oral, usually a 10 to 20 minute interview or discussion with one to three students. And they do very little if any formative assessment. I can see much of my carefully planned workshop evaporating into uselessness. I add another to my list of questions to ask when setting up a workshop for an unfamiliar context - "How do you do (insert topic of workshop) here?"

I talk a little about learning outcomes and assessment criteria. I am asking them to devise some of each for their course when the radio journalist arrives. Could he wait a little? "No, it's live, and in three minutes." Hurriedly complete the briefing for the workshop participants, and move to an adjacent office where Vesna, Marina and I are interviewed into a telephone. "Tell me, what do you think of Croatian higher education?" For a change, I explain (with Marina as interpreter) how the new national educational development network in Croatia, with its strong international connections, is a powerful force for improvement. Thumbs up from Vesna and Marina. We are told later by UNIVERSITAS President Professor Jasmika Ledic, who alas is in hospital, that a lively phone-in discussion followed.

Back in the workshop, a participant has spotted that I seem to have reservations about oral assessment. Is that true? Yes. How do you examine in UK? Often by written examinations, with a growing range of other methods such as projects and dissertations. Do these UK methods also have problems? Oh yes. Why are written examinations better than oral? I improvise something, not often these days being called on to defend written examinations. Why are you unhappy with oral examinations? Because they could be even more subjective than other types. Participants in the workshops have told me that different students may be asked different questions 'according to the students' ability', which also bothers me. The evidence of an oral is not available for re-examination. The unrecorded one-to-one process offers scope for bias and even corruption.

The lively discussion continues, during which I learn a lot about oral assessment. More important than the precise assessment method, I think we agree, is clarity about what is being assessed and what standards are being used. I leave the workshop feeling that, even more than usually, I have learned far more than I have taught.

In the evening, a city tour and dinner.

Tuesday

The final workshop is to be a clinic on identifying and solving teaching problems, intertwined with a seminar about educational change processes. The Rector, present true to his word, hears a range of participants from junior lecturers to a Dean describe, with candour and analytic clarity, some of their practical problems in teaching and assessment and some of the difficulties in changing educational practice and making changes stick. I form the impression of a University system where the individual lecturer has considerable autonomy over their own course and how they teach it, but where there is strong central control at the programme level. So, I persist, what are the main obstacles to change? Whose support does a lecturer need to make changes?

I learn a lot about culture, in particular about a fact-transmission-based educational system from school through University and about the difficulty of changing this. I learn about a society in transition and in tension, looking beyond its borders, seeking good ideas from the rest of the world but proud of its re-emergent national identity after very troubled times. And about a higher education system exploring its role in making the necessary changes to society. And of some (but not all) young academics keen to make changes and welcoming new ideas, and some (but not all) older academics comfortable in the status quo, tales true well beyond Croatia.

Acknowledgements

Travel costs for the visit were met by the International Consortium for Educational Development, as part of its support for emergent national educational development networks. Hospitality and accommodation in Rijeka were provided by UNIVERSITAS. I have rarely spent study leave more productively or enjoyably.

Online Resources to Help Students Evaluate Online Resources

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The volume of information on the Web is both its strength and its weakness. With any one of the popular search engines a student can probably find many web pages or sites relevant to any topic. The real problem then starts: sifting through these 'hits' to find those documents most useful to the work in hand. There are very many documents online describing how to select the best or most relevant search method - portals, directories, search engines, metasearch engines - and how to perform efficient searches with them (eg. *Help with Searching* at BUBL). There is less online advice for students about how to evaluate what they find! This is a list of sources of advice on evaluating, for academic purposes, information found on the web that it would be worth directing students towards or using to develop your own materials or teaching. Such advice should be provided alongside skills in the mechanics of finding online resources. Many of the documents are derived from good practice with paper-based resources. The importance of students critically evaluating what they find on the web hardly needs emphasizing. The most appropriate criteria to use will vary with context. Using one or two of the checklists below would be a good start, and re-cycling them to develop context-specific ones would be even better.

I have arranged the resources in three sections: documents providing advice, course materials on evaluating information, and lists of further resources one might want to browse.

Individual documents providing advice

The documents contain a variable mixture of discussion with lists of questions a student should ask themself, for example, 'what is the purpose of the document and why was it produced?' *OASIS: Student Evaluation Methods for World Wide Web Resources*, by TT Nguyen at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, has both. The result of a research project to develop an evaluation tool for high school pupils, it has considerable discussion but also provides a simple checklist of questions under five headings: Objectivity, Accuracy, Source, Information, Span (timeliness) - hence OASIS.

If the headings cannot form a word, then starting with the same letter is another tactic for making a checklist memorable. *The Ten Cs Guide for Evaluating Internet Sources* at McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin, uses this: content, credibility, critical thinking, copyright, citation, continuity, censorship, connectivity, comparability, and context. While none of these are wrong or useless, they might not be the most natural containers for this diverse collection of issues.

Less catchy but to the point is *Teaching undergrads WEB evaluation* by Jim Kapoun, a reference and instruction librarian at Southwest State University, USA. It organizes fifteen questions under five headings: accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency and coverage.

Library Selection Criteria for WWW Resources by Carolyn Caywood is a straightforward list of questions students should ask themselves about a web page, under three headings: access, design and content. *Thinking Critically about WWW Resources* is comparable and has also been around for a few years, but was updated last year. Also a list of questions, its headings are content, source and date, and structure. I have recommended both to my own students for some years.

Evaluating Quality on the Net by Hope N Tillman, Director of Libraries, Babson College, Massachusetts, is a wider discussion of reliable sources of online information, and it includes a short checklist of quality indicators and advice on evaluating sources.

Courses and teaching materials

Internet Detective is an interactive tutorial on evaluating the quality of Internet resources. It takes my students about two hours to complete. Produced by the DESIRE project with funding from the European Union, it is available in three languages, it provides advice and teaching materials for teachers and is available for use off-line if you don't want to risk a class being dependent on a live network connection. Apart from giving sound advice, Internet Detective makes a good attempt at being fun, and the project provided me with presentation slides, paper literature and detective 'business cards' to give to students. I thoroughly recommend it either as part of a course or for self study.

Netskills has a large range of teaching and learning materials related to the Internet available for license, and example materials can be viewed at the site. If your institution has a license you can register online as an individual and download what you want (you can check if you have a license at the site if you try to register). There is a self paced tutorial on Evaluating Information on the Internet that includes criteria to apply, and materials for a tutor-led workshop on the same subject are a PowerPoint presentation slides and a Word practical handout for students.

Evaluating Web Resources by Jan Alexander and Marsha Ann Tate is a course and collection of resources for teachers to help their students evaluate web resources, including presentation slides. Not content with developing a checklist of quality questions, it has five checklists for different types of web sites: advocacy, business, news, informational, and personal web pages. In each case, though, they are grouped under the headings of authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency and coverage. There is useful material here for the teacher, and a book *Web Wisdom How to Evaluate and Create Information Quality on the Web* by the web authors was published in 1999.

The Cyberlibrarians' Rest Stop 'contains helpful tools for the web searcher, research on virtual library collections, web searching methodologies and a collection of resources for keeping current with Web-Based resources'. Well worth a visit, and most relevant here are the six online tutorials 'Web Searching, Sleuthing and Sifting'. Lesson 2a is 'evaluating what you find' which provides a checklist and suggested exercise. It also includes another, comprehensive, checklist *Evaluating Web-based Resources: A Practical Perspective* by Angela Elkordy with sections: general criteria, suitability for audience, content, timeliness, ease of use, presentation, appropriateness for web format, and special characteristics for the web.

The *Internet Source Validation Project* was an interesting attempt in 1996 at a practical tutorial for students in evaluating web resources. It organized 13 questions into two sections, concrete and context validity, and suggested a range of ratings that could be applied in each case, for example 'well written but biased'. It provides example pages on which students can try out the system. The system is probably too idiosyncratic to be used as it stands but it has some good ideas.

Lists of other sources

Finally, there are many lists pointing to other useful resources, to each other, and to the resources described above.

Evaluating Internet Resources (also known as the Medical Radiology Home Page) is maintained by Richard Terrass, at Massachusetts General Hospital. It is a short but select list.

The *Evaluation of Information Sources* at the WWW Virtual Library 'contains pointers to criteria for evaluating information resources, particularly those on the Internet. It is intended to be particularly useful to librarians and others who are selecting sites to include in an information resource guide, or informing users as to the qualities they should use in evaluating Internet information.' This is more comprehensive, with over 50 links, briefly described.

The *Bibliography on Evaluating Internet Resources* at Virginia Tech University Libraries is longer still. It includes print sources and books. *Evaluating Internet Resources* by Rick Lezenby at University of Pennsylvania is on a site about the history of nursing, but is generic, and includes summaries of some other authors' criteria.

Finally, Yahoo! is always worth a look, and it provides a short list of *Web Evaluation* links. Their selection of just eight resources overlaps those described here.

An online version of this article, including links to the resources mentioned, can be found on the SEDA website at:

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

Reviews

Books

Thinking About Teaching and Learning: developing habits of learning with first year college and university students

Robert Leamnson
Trentham Books (1999) £16.95 pbk
ISBN 1 579220 13 4

This book is for teachers of first-year students. Although many of its themes are standard, it is well worth reading for its wisdom, unusual perspective, and refreshing style. These qualities reflect the author's personality and his background as a biologist and a very experienced teacher at both secondary and tertiary levels. Dr Leamnson is Professor of Biology and Director of Multidisciplinary Studies at UMass, Dartmouth, USA.

The book's central theme is that first-year students are unprepared and jaded, but that we can help them considerably by teaching them how to learn, and by correcting their crucial academic deficiencies.

Leamnson says that first-year students have been corrupted by modern culture and by school. They arrive with superficial, fragmentary knowledge, and the view that study is just a game. Their cohort has language deficits and expects everything to be easy and fun. This description sounds depressing but the book is ultimately quite positive. Leamnson believes that first-year students have considerable potential, which teachers can unleash. He gives the impression of enjoying his students, despite having no illusions about them.

The author's discussion of the biological basis of learning helps us appreciate why students often find it hard to grasp what we find obvious: they lack the necessary context, the neuronal hard-wiring which must be developed gradually through repeated experience. This perspective reminds us to focus on what happens in our students' heads. It also reminds us that real learning is strenuous. Some of the book's most interesting ideas are about the way students protect themselves from painful intellectual effort by mentally partitioning study from real life, and academic disciplines from one another.

The book includes many ideas on classroom teaching and assessment. There is a special emphasis on language. Leamnson recommends that the teacher work hard to help first-year students develop language skills, since these are crucial for thinking and learning, and - like other important academic skills - can best be taught in a specific academic context.

A strong appeal of the book is the author's delightful style, and his memorable imagery and anecdotes. For instance, he talks about students having an 'immunization mentality' (p.36) about disciplines they were exposed to at school. The book's informality belies its underlying academic soundness: it is scholarly in an unobtrusive way.

I recommend this thought-provoking and enjoyable book to anyone involved in teaching first-year students.

Helen Pennington
Massey University, New Zealand

Work Based Learning and the University: new perspectives and practices

Derek Portwood and Carol Costley (Eds)
SEDA Paper 109 (2000) £14
ISBN 1 902435 12 5

For myself at least, one of the most interesting and challenging educational developments of late is the concept and practice of work-based learning. As Portwood explains, more and more institutions are beginning to realise that work-based learning offers market opportunities that few can afford to overlook. However, in the eyes of some, this concept may have been tarnished somewhat by the vagaries of earlier vocational education initiatives. Nonetheless, with increasing focus and importance being directed toward providing skills for the current and future workforce, work-based learning deserves and requires a holistic treatment that brings a measured approach to concept and theory, whilst also addressing the realities of application. The collective efforts of the authors - based at Middlesex University - achieve this most effectively, offering valuable insights into how, within a university setting, work-based learning may be conceptualised, approached, developed and evaluated.

This work focuses upon the potential work-based learning has in becoming an integral part of academic programmes, and consists of fourteen articles, each articulate and informative. The structure usefully takes the reader through conceptual, theoretical, contextual, political and practical applications, whilst always maintaining a simplicity of style which belies a firm academic grounding. Here, one may 'dip' into pedagogical and theoretical issues, or alternatively, one may select articles to gain awareness of the practical issues that surround development, delivery and appraisal. The breadth of the work is impressive, with actual examples discussed and issues such as validation, accreditation and programme evaluation addressed. Indeed, this practical grounding is the work's primary strength and a good reason why it should be read.

It is pleasing to find here the complexities of work-based learning treated so systematically and comprehensively: there is valuable information and strategies for those working with NVQ programmes, local community initiatives and undergraduate students. In this work, educators, administrators, researchers, managers and marketers will find challenging discussions on rationales, models and procedures, each contributing to a persuasive case for work-based learning taking a central role within any university's academic programme.

In essence, significant issues any university should consider for successful work-based learning are offered and discussed with an authority one may expect from a co-ordinated project that has spanned more than seven years and encompassed some 1500 students and sixty organisations. The work concludes by addressing the question: 'Where to Next?' On this showing, one should expect the Middlesex University team to be the first to inform us.

Andy Roberts
The Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Changing University Teaching: reflections on creating educational technologies

Terry Evans and Daryl Nation
Kogan Page (2000) £19.99 pbk
ISBN 0 74943 06 4

Evans and Nation are making a reputation for themselves as leaders, organisers and critics of the move to introduce new technology into teaching and learning. In this book they have drawn together 16 other authors and produced a lively collection of 13 papers. While the majority draw on Australian experience, contributions from North America, the EU, Asia and Melanesia and Africa give the book a balance from which institutions at different stages in their use of new technologies can draw appropriate learning.

A few papers are written from the perspective of the lecturer practitioner, so colleagues seeking to build new technologies into their practice will find something here to guide them. However,

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the book will appeal principally to institutional and educational development strategists. The papers range from reasoned arguments why (and how) universities must change (Peters), change as an aspect of globalisation (Evans and Nation) to the way in which ICT can work as a driver of change (Garrison and Anderson) and understanding change as a staged process (Wills and Alexander, Fox and Herrman).

For those whose task is to develop ICT based learning, the book contains thought provoking material. I would also recommend the book to another audience - those colleagues following programmes for lecturer training. Most of the chapters will allow people to see their work and practice from a different and worthwhile perspective; the ideas and arguments will generate discussion and help people develop their views on what makes for effective learning.

While the picture painted by the papers acknowledges difficulties, there is (because they are written by enthusiasts) a sense that the 'positive is accentuated'. The examples reported and analysed are often small scale and at the periphery of institutional activity. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise because compared with conventional face to face learning there is, across the world, a lack of capacity in ICT mediated learning. Even in the one large scale example quoted, the largest email discussion generated by a cohort of 1200 was 53 messages. Hardly the sort of evidence that would encourage lecturers to change. Within and between the papers lurk other issues and questions which need to be confronted. For example, does it make sense to invest for large scale adoption at a time when the scale of technology development is so rapid? If, as is likely, the computer monitor will sit inside the TV set in the domestic environment and with WAP technology generating discussion of the 'wireless web', where does that leave our adoption of WebCT (or whatever?) Not only is the environment highly unstable, most of the evidence suggests that when students pay for their learning, they prefer the comfort factor of face to face contact.

Perhaps, then, we need to move beyond enthusiasts' rhetoric and begin seriously to examine whether institutional and public investment in electronic learning offers value for money and whether there are not greater returns to be had in investing in alternative learning futures. The editors note that change is 'fundamentally about people changing'. How difficult that is, is revealed in the case study of Swaziland. If people won't respond to memos and emails, then you know where power lies. As long as there are more people whose interest lies in not changing than there are interested in changing, then tradition will carry the day. As I look around, there is still a lot of tradition in British higher education. Welcome to the Long March!

Professor Peter Newby
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Large Student Groups: some simple techniques for monitoring marking

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In a previous issue of Educational Developments (1.3), Professor Jennifer Rowley outlined some of the issues facing teachers of large student groups. In this context large groups were defined as existing typically at level 1, usually as core units in a modular programme, and regularly comprising 100 or more students from several course routes. With groups of this size the use of teaching teams is almost guaranteed, and this group of personnel can be made up of full time experienced staff, part-time staff, and research students. Professor Rowley provided ten recommendations for coping with the general problems of such groups. This article is intended to home in on just one aspect; ensuring that there is consistency between markers, and hence all students are assessed equitably. It outlines some basic descriptive statistics, that can be useful in this context, even if the teaching team do not feel that they are 'comfortable' with statistics.

The proposals below are based on the assumption that there is a list of students available as one or more spreadsheet files, that markers can log their marks accurately, and that someone in the team can use spreadsheet functions to generate the statistics mentioned.

Variation in the marks data

The variation to be found in any set of marks comprises two components. On the one hand there is variation due to students' performance, while on the other hand there is error variation. The latter is due to the imprecise nature of the process of assessing the students' work. It is this variation that the approach outlined below attempts to reduce, although it can never be removed completely. The error variation probably falls into three categories. Firstly there is the problem of markers working to different means. This is where markers are differentiating consistently between students, but overall their average marks are different. For the purposes of this paper, this can be labelled Problem One. Secondly there is the problem of markers working to different distributions. This is where the markers are again consistent in their work, produce average marks that may be similar to other markers, but one may have a narrow range of marks, while another has a wide range. For the purposes of this paper, this can be labelled Problem Two. The third possibility is where markers simply make mistakes and come up with the wrong mark. That problem is more difficult to identify and solve.

Within a large student group, made up of several course routes, it is possible that there will be variations in students' performance that appear to be course related. If, for example, a large group was made up of (say) sports studies students, leisure studies students and business studies students, it is likely that the overall performance of the three cohorts will be different. This

Table 1: Frequency Table to Illustrate Markers Working to a Different Mean

	Marker 1		Marker 2	
Marks	Number of scripts	% in each class	Number of scripts	% in each class
0<10	0	0	0	0
10<20	1	3	0	0
20<30	1	3	1	3
30<40	4	11	1	3
40<50	11	30	4	11
50<60	11	30	11	30
60<70	5	13	11	30
70<80	2	5	5	13
80<90	2	5	2	5
90<100	0	0	2	5
Total	37	100	37	100
Mean mark	52.03		62.03	

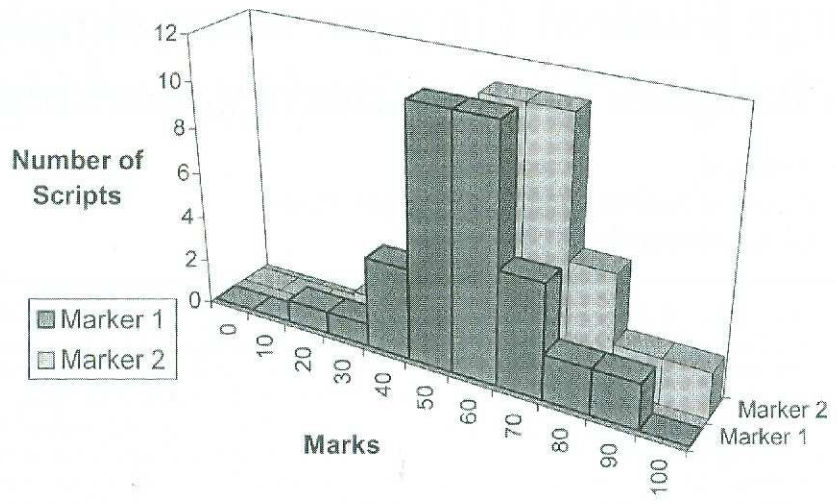

Figure 1: Bar Chart Showing Inconsistency of Mean Mark between Markers

is because students choosing the particular routes will have different interests and motivations. Thus, if the marking team each only mark students from a particular cohort, it will not be possible to distinguish variations in the data that arise from marking inconsistency as opposed to variations that arise from cohort effects. It is, therefore, recommended that all markers get to mark an equal proportion of each of the underlying cohorts in order to neutralise the cohort effect. Once it has been established that there is marking consistency, any cohort effects can be investigated later if required.

Organising the marking team

It is likely that the leader of a unit team will bring together the markers to discuss the requirements of an assessment, the assessment criteria, and what is expected in the answers before the task is attempted by the students. The team is also likely to gather again, once the scripts have been submitted, to test mark a few scripts and agree how to map the criteria against what students have actually written. The scripts will need to be distributed to take into account the different course routes as mentioned above, and the team will then disperse to mark their share. Once the first marking is completed, it is useful to log the marks in a spreadsheet, and also include an extra column that identifies which markers handled which student's work. This can simply be a number code, eg. 1, 2, 3, etc.

Is there a problem?

To identify if Problems 1 and/or 2 are present it is necessary to provide the team with a 'feel' for the pattern of variation in each marker's work. To do this we can use frequency tables and bar charts, the mean, the range and standard deviation, and coefficient of variation.

Frequency Tables, Bar Charts and Means

Probably the first place to start is with a frequency table of the markers' marks. This will immediately show the shape or pattern of each marker's work. In addition it is worth calculating the mean (average) marks for each of the markers. Even better is the addition of a column or bar chart, as this will be easier to interpret. Unfortunately, attempting to show more than two markers' data in one chart tends to confuse rather than illuminate. Perhaps it is better to prepare a number of charts comparing the chief marker with the rest of the team one by one.

Table 1 (previous page) is set up using a class interval of ten marks. This is useful because it provides class boundaries that coincide with degree classification boundaries. Using 10 mark intervals is probably better than using the exact degree classification intervals as it provides more information. It is also easy enough to convert the figures to degree classifications if that is required.

Frequency tables can show up both Problem 1 and Problem 2. However, the table below is designed to illustrate just Problem 1, the case of inconsistent marking where the markers are differentiating between the students to the same extent, but appear to be working to a different mean. Clearly they are working to different means (52 marks to 62 marks), although this is a 'contrived' example since the frequencies are the same, but offset by one class. Nevertheless, this simple approach has identified that a problem exists.

The bar chart that forms Figure 1 (left) was derived from the frequency table and clearly shows the extent to which the two patterns of marks are similar, but offset. It demonstrates how easy it is to see that a problem of different means is present in the data, but the pattern of the marks distributions is similar.

Table 2 (below) is set up to illustrate Problem 2, where the markers are working to a similar mean, but where their spread of marks is different. This is quite a common problem, as some teachers are very reluctant to give either very high or very low marks. In effect their marking range is reduced from 0 to 100 to (say) 20 to 75. Other markers may feel less constrained and may use the full range of marks, leading inevitably to inconsistency.

The different ranges of marks are visible on the table but, when plotted on the bar chart, the different shaped distributions become much clearer.

Range and Standard Deviation, and Coefficient of Variation

An alternative, or possibly additional approach to identifying if there is a problem of inconsis-

Table 2: Frequency Table to Illustrate Marking to a Common Mean but with Different Mark Ranges

	Marker 1		Marker 2	
Marks	Number of scripts	% in each class	Number of scripts	% in each class
0<10	1	3	0	0
10<20	2	5	0	0
20<30	3	8	0	0
30<40	5	14	9	24
40<50	9	24	15	41
50<60	10	27	8	22
60<70	3	8	5	13
70<80	2	5	0	0
80<90	1	3	0	0
90<100	1	3	0	0
Total	37	100	37	100
Mean mark	47.70		47.43	

tency is to consider the means in relation to the Range and Standard Deviation. These are better calculated from the raw data than the frequency data presented here.

Most people will be comfortable with the idea that the range measures the spread of values in the data set. However, it is easily forgotten that this statistic ignores all the data items except the two values at the top and bottom. So while it is a useful statistic, it does not tell the whole story. By comparison, standard deviation is probably the statistic that leaves many students looking blank, and the same is probably true for many of their tutors. However, it is based on a relatively simple idea. All it does is to show how different the data items are, on average, from the mean. So, it shows the average difference from the mean and hence, measures the spread of data values, but using all the items of data.

Standard deviation on its own is not of much use, but comes into its own where there is a need to compare the variability in two or more sets of data. This is what is required to investigate whether a set of marks suffers from Problem 1 and/or Problem 2. To use it for comparison purposes, it is possible to transform it into the grandly named Coefficient of Variation. This is simply the standard deviation divided by the mean, and then expressed as a percentage. The higher the figure produced, the greater is the variability in the data values.

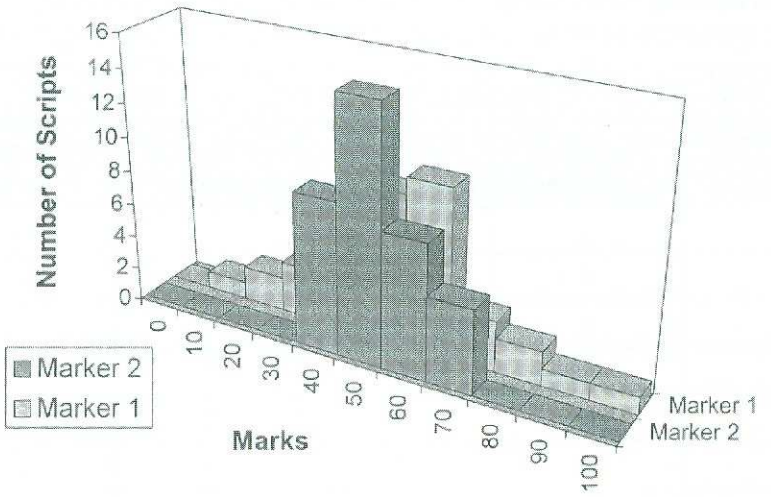

Figure 2: Bar Chart Showing Inconsistency of Range Between Markers

Table 3 (below) is a repeat of Table 1, but now includes the statistics mentioned above. The original data was intended to illustrate where two markers are marking consistently, but to different means.

The ranges, standard deviations and Vs, as measures of dispersion, all indicate that these two sets of data are very similar in the way the data values are distributed. Indeed the standard deviation values are identical but, because that statistic is measured in relation to a specific mean value, it is not possible to compare the standard deviations directly. That is why the coefficient of variation (V) is so useful.

In Table 4 (overleaf) the data to illustrate Problem 2, markers using different marking ranges, is expanded to include the ranges, standard deviations and V's.

The additional statistics clearly support the picture that was beginning to emerge earlier. Marker 1 is using the full range of marks, while Marker 2 is using a limited central range, and yet they have very similar mean values. Notice particularly that the range values differ significantly, as do the two values for V. This provides a clear indication that the two distributions have different 'shapes'.

Table 3: Frequency Table, Mean, Range, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Data to Illustrate Markers Working to a Different Mean

	Marker 1		Marker 2	
Marks	Number of scripts	% in each class	Number of scripts	% in each class
0<10	0	0	0	0
10<20	1	3	0	0
20<30	1	3	1	3
30<40	4	11	1	3
40<50	11	30	4	11
50<60	11	30	11	30
60<70	5	13	11	30
70<80	2	5	5	13
80<90	2	5	2	5
90<100	0	0	2	5
Total	37	100	37	100
Mean mark	52.03		62.03	
Range (est.)	80		80	
Standard Deviation	14.68		14.68	
Co-efficient of Variation (V)	28%		24%	

Is there a solution to inconsistency?

Providing a solution that does not involve re-marking the scripts, is probably easier for Problem 1 than for Problem 2. However, perhaps the very first step will be to establish whether the top marks for the different markers represent the same standard of work, although the scripts have actually been awarded different marks. The same is true for the mean marks and the lowest marks as well. Another question is how close do the values of the markers' statistics need to be? As a rule of thumb, means should be within 5 marks to be declared similar, and the value of V should be within 10% for an assumption of a similar pattern of marks distribution. If this examination of top, middle and bottom scripts suggests that a correspondence of standard appears to exist, then the marking is valid but if not then a simple re-working of the marks will produce equitable results, as follows.

For Problem 1, it will be necessary first to identify which marker appears to have pitched the marking level correctly. If the other markers have similarly shaped distributions, then the simplest solution is to add the difference be-

Table 4: Frequency Table, Ranges, Standard Deviations and Coefficients of Variation to Illustrate Marking to a Common Mean but with Different Mark Ranges

	Marker 1		Marker 2	
Marks	Number of scripts	% in each class	Number of scripts	% in each class
0<10	1	3	0	0
10<20	2	5	0	0
20<30	3	8	0	0
30<40	5	14	9	24
40<50	9	24	15	41
50<60	10	27	8	22
60<70	3	8	5	13
70<80	2	5	0	0
80<90	1	3	0	0
90<100	1	3	0	0
Total	37	100	37	100
Mean mark	47.70		47.43	
Range (Est.)	100		40	
Standard Deviation	18.69		9.70	
Co-efficient of Variation (V)	39%		20%	

tween the 'correct' mean and the other marker's mean to all the latter's scripts. When that is done the combined distribution of marks should produce the same mean as for the 'correct' marker, and a combined distribution of marks that has the same shape as that of the 'correct' marker.

The solution to Problem 2 is much more difficult. This is because it is necessary to either increase, or reduce, the range of marks awarded by one marker. Whilst it is possible to work out an algorithm to derive the variable amount that needs to be added to or taken away from each script, it might be simpler to re-mark those scripts that are under or over marked. This has the advantage for 'quality assurance' purposes of increasing the number of second marked scripts.

Norm referencing and criterion referencing

It might be worth ending with a small diversion into the issue of norm referenced marking compared to criterion referenced marking. Higher education is supposed to have embraced the idea of criterion referenced assessment, and much effort is put into developing assessment criteria. However, one of the issues that will quickly emerge when statistics like those above are prepared, is whether the data should have a particular mean value and a particular distribution. Given the pressure on departmental managers to maintain or increase 'bums on seats' and associated progression statistics, it is likely that marking teams could be pressurised into adjusting their marks to match some 'departmental norm'.

It would perhaps be fairer to students if marking teams, having adjusted their marking to ensure consistency between markers, were to use the techniques discussed above to compare their data with similar data for other units followed by the same students. It does not seem too unreasonable to argue that, at any particular CATs level, the assessment criteria for unit assessments should produce similar overall patterns for all subjects. If any one unit produces a strikingly different pattern, it could be argued that the particular unit is probably being assessed to a different standard, and needs to be investigated.

Conclusions

The use of statistics is by no means a universal panacea, but it can help to improve markers' feel for the work that they have assessed. By highlighting inconsistency, or better still consistency, markers can establish how close they are to achieve the goal of equitable treatment for all students.

New Website to Improve Access to Higher Education

HERO, **www.hero.ac.uk**, has been launched to improve access to Higher Education. It is the first time that all the major Higher Education funding and research bodies and other organisations have collaborated to promote UK Higher Education to domestic and international audiences.

HERO has over 840 links to Higher Education sector sites, including all the UK universities, making it the easiest and only way for prospective students, researchers and business to locate the information they need.

For those working in university and Higher Education institutions, the site includes information and links on careers, salary scales and research, as well as regularly updated articles on current issues.

Christopher Harris, executive director of HERO said, "We believe that this site will improve access for everyone to Higher Education. It is part of a wider drive by universities and colleges to give people from all backgrounds equal opportunity to learn about UK Higher Education, and what it has to offer."

The House of Commons' Education Select Committee recently published a report highlighting the need for Higher Education to widen access and improve equal opportunities.

Speaking at the launch of HERO, the Committee's chairman, Barry Sheerman MP, said, "HERO is a great effort by the Higher Education sector, working together to provide a modern, easy research tool for everyone seeking information on Higher Education courses, colleges, research and funding."

The HE sector is diverse, incorporating traditional universities and small, newly-established Higher Education colleges.

Timothy O'Shea, chairman of HERO, and master of Birkbeck said, "HERO is a unique project, bringing together the whole HE sector. We believe that this site will allow the HE sector to market itself to the world."

The site has been welcomed across the Higher Education sector, from the University College London (UCL) to University of Teesside in the north of England.

A spokesperson from University College London (UCL) said, "HERO will attract a national and international audience to the world-class education we provide and will help us make known the innovative research being carried out at UCL."

Andy Price, Head of Corporate Communications from University of Teesside said, "For business the portal will be an invaluable, time-saving tool allowing easy access to all HE research and business offerings."

ASPIHE Project

Mike Blamires, Project Manager / Principal Lecturer
Sarah Gee, Project Assistant / Research Associate
Centre for Educational Research, Faculty of Education
Canterbury Christ Church University College

A
Social Communication and Understanding
Project
In
Higher
Education

What are the issues?

An increasing number of students are entering higher education with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is often described as a 'hidden' disability. An Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. The term Autistic Spectrum is often used because the condition varies from person to person; some people with the condition may also have accompanying learning difficulties, while others are much more able with average or above average intelligence. Our research has indicated approximately two students are known to staff at each university. They may be well able to cope with the academic demands of their course but may face difficulties when encountering the social demands of their course and informal student life. Hans Asperger was one of the first clinicians to describe more able people with Autism Spectrum Disorder:

> *"Able autistic individuals can rise to eminent positions and perform with such outstanding success that one may even conclude that only such people are capable of certain achievements ... Their unswerving determination and penetrating intellectual powers, part of their spontaneous and original mental activity, their narrowness and single-mindedness, as manifested in their special interests, can be immensely valuable and can lead to outstanding achievements in their chosen areas."*
> Hans Asperger (1944).

Some people with social communication difficulties may not have had a diagnosis which has to be undertaken by clinical psychologist or psychiatrist with relevant experience and can be central to ensuring that the person obtains the support they require. Students with a diagnosis may be nervous about telling the university that they have such a disability in case they are discriminated against in some way. Some students with this disability may cope and not need to disclose their disability to their institution. However, many students may need orientation training as part of their induction, quiet spaces to gather themselves after the demands of lectures, academic and social mentoring and peer support to enable social inclusion.

Liane Holliday Willey, who is a person with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and who also has gained a PhD, writes about Asperger Syndrome, which is a condition that is part of the Autistic Spectrum:

> *"Within Asperger Syndrome(AS) there is a wide range of function. In truth, many AS people will never receive a diagnosis. They will continue to live with other labels or no label at all. At their best, they will be the eccentrics who wow us with their unusual habits and stream-of-conscious creativity, the inventors who give us wonderfully unique gadgets that whiz and whirl and make our life surprisingly more manageable, the geniuses who discover new mathematical equations, the great musicians and writers and artists who enliven our lives. At their most neutral, they will be the loners who never know quite how to greet us, the aloof who aren't sure they want to greet us, the collectors who know everyone in the flea market by name and birth date, the non conformists who cover their cars in bumper stickers, a few of the professors everyone has in college. At their most noticeable, they will be the lost souls who intrude our personal space, the regulars at every diner who carry on complete conversations with the group ten tables away, the people who sound suspiciously like robots, the characters who insist they wear the same socks and eat the same breakfast day in and day out, the people who never quite find their way but never quite lose it either."*
> Lianne Holliday Willey PhD (1999) Pretending to Be Normal p 14

What is the project?

This project aims to enhance effective practice and provision for students with social understanding and communication difficulties (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) across the Higher Education community.

Good practice has been examined and discussed with individuals and relevant academic and support staff. This has taken the form of a range of interviews, questionnaires and case studies which have involved university disability advisors, admissions staff, Deans of Students, study support, examinations staff, note takers, peers and the students themselves across a representative sample of universities. The project team quickly realised that much research that has been undertaken in this area has served the needs of a developmental psychology agenda rather than focusing upon the needs and views of the people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. When interviewed a number of students were wary of being guinea pigs for yet another piece of blue skies research. We had to reinforce the point that our project was a developmental project funded by the HEFC overseen by the National Disability Team and that its aim was to find out what was working to enable them within their higher education.

We have also attempted to apply a bio/psycho/social model (Norwich, 1990) to understand an institution's proactive activity in meeting the individual needs of their students. We have tried to emphasise issues for institutional versatility rather than ad hoc "grace and favour" arrangements.

The findings are being disseminated via workshops, links from Higher Education organisations and a range of print articles and publications on the web.

What are the resources an educational developer might need to assist a colleague faced with this need ?

We have developed a web site based upon the findings of the project. This includes briefings on how to proactively plan for the student's individual needs based upon the QAA Code of Practices on disability, other possible strategies, references, further links to web based resources, and whole institution development issues.

On our website is a staff development pack which can be used to inform colleagues in developing the skills, knowledge and understanding that may be required. This includes:

- What are social understanding and communication difficulties?
- Some of the challenges for students with social communication difficulties
- Perspectives from students with social understanding and communication difficulties
- The strengths of the students with social understanding and communication difficulties
- What strategies may be useful in Higher Education?
- Implications for lecturing and study.

These are being revised and augmented periodically in response to our developing role.

The project was funded for 18 months and is due to end in October. We have clearly indicated that there is a need for specialist advice and support for this group of students who are an increasing presence in higher education. There is now a need to support the dissemination of good practice based upon the QAA criteria we have encountered.

References

Asperger H (1944) Die Autistichen Pyschopathen im Kindesalter. Archive fur *Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 117, 76-136

Norwich, B (1990) **Reappraising Special Needs Education**. London: Cassell

Holliday Willey, L (1999) **Pretending to be Normal**. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

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The ASPIHE website is at:

http://www.cant.ac.uk/xplanatory/aspihe/intro.htm

The Aim Game

Here is the solution to the problem set in issue 2.1 which asked you to identify various associations and organisations concerned with learning and teaching in higher education by their aims and missions only.

How many did you match correctly?

Body:	Statement No:
ALT	5
AUA	6
HERDSA	8
HESDA	3
ILT	2
LTSN	9
POD	12
QAA	11
SCoP	1
SEDA	13
SRHE	4
STLHE	10
UniversitiesUK	7

New Name for SEDA's Journal

Beginning with the first issue of volume 38 (2001), SEDA's journal *Innovations in Education and Training International*, has a new title, ***Innovations in Education and Teaching International.***

To quote the journal's editors Philip Barker and Gina Wisker "...we decided to change the name to reflect the increased interest in and focus on learning and teaching, and on learning and teaching related research which the journal now showcases".

Articles in issue 38.1 include:

Alternatives to Laboratory Practicals: do they meet the needs?
Ian E Hughes, University of Leeds, UK

An Integrated Approach to the Teaching of Technical Communication Skills
Roland Yeo, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore

Online Professional Development for Academic Staff: putting the curriculum first
Niall MacKenzie and Alan Staley, University of Central England, UK

Achieving Reflective Learning Using Storytelling Pathways
Janice McDrury and Maxine Alterio, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand

Who Dares Develops
Amanda Pill, Sheila Ryan and Mary Fuller, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE, UK

The journal is published quarterly by Taylor & Francis Ltd and is included as part of institutional and individual SEDA membership.

Further details, including contents of previous volumes, can be found on the Taylor and Francis website at:

http://www.journals.tandf.co.uk/journals/routledge/14703297.html

Details of SEDA membership can be found on page 5 of this magazine.

Dialogues

Quality

I want to talk about quality and educational development.

Perhaps if you lie down for a couple of hours in a darkened room this feeling will wear off.

Don't be discouraging.

Don't you think we've heard and read and argued enough about quality for a while?

I don't. Humour me. What business are we in?

Staff development. Educational development.

Quality enhancement?

If you must drag the 'q' word in ...

Why the reservations about 'quality'?

Because it has become a cliché. The systems to 'assure' quality have become a very expensive game, in which few now believe. Quality scores are high and rising fast, which either means that things are getting better very quickly or we are all becoming rapidly more skilled at this QA game.

Could your attitude be influenced by the impending Subject Review, which will include our PGCertHE?

Very possibly!

Is there <u>any</u> good news for quality enhancement arising from quality assurance?

Other than fresh paint in the teaching rooms?

Please.

Well, yes, there is some good news. Informal systems for things like student contact and support are being formalised. And you and I keep being invited to departmental meetings to talk about - I was going to say to talk about teaching and learning. In fact, we're invited to talk about how to do well in Subject Review. But we normally manage to talk about ways to analyse and improve teaching and learning and assessment and course design and student support, don't we, as long as we do so under one of the six official headings ...

Good. So, we have some positive links between our quality enhancement work and quality assurance.

Sometimes. But it's still not strong. In fact ...

Yes?

I sometimes feel that 'quality' in higher education lives in two parallel worlds. In one of these worlds, quality is 'assured', at department, institution and national level, through a variety of familiar and more-or-less effective means.

Right.

In the second of these worlds, our world, staff and educational development units like us support and cajole and even try to lead institutions to improve the quality of educational provision.

The two worlds working closely and smoothly together?

Sometimes! Particularly around Subject Review time! Seriously - some staff and educational developers do feel that current institutional and national QA systems are the angels of quality enhancement, wafting their giant wings and stirring the flames of development.

That's uncharacteristically lyrical and uncynical of you.

Thank you.

But the flames of development can soon fade, can't they, however vigorously we continue to fan them. And anyway the flames feel like side effects - the gales themselves, it sometimes feels, are the primary purpose of the angels' visits, along of course with the scrolls that they write.

Indeed. And, more prosaically, sometimes I feel we're competing with the QA people, for resources and also for the time and attention of our teaching colleagues. And anyway the styles of QA world and QE world are very different.

How?

Well, as a crude sketch; quality assurance is often procedural and administrative, certainly it's experienced this way. Whereas quality enhancement, as we both know, is much more educational and developmental and experimental and even messy ...

And generally warm and dynamic and innovative and wonderful, yes, of course we are. But before we collapse any further into self-congratulation - what about a third world of quality?

The real world, where academics and managers and support staff go about their work to the best of their very considerable abilities, variously helped and impeded, and sometimes neither, by what's going on in QA and in QE. Let's see if we can combine QA and QE. Ready for a radical proposal?

I thought I could feel one coming.

The prime concern of higher education, should be, not quality assurance, politically and functionally necessary though QA is and will remain; nor with the similarly essential activities of quality enhancement; but rather with quality itself.

I assume there's more.

Yes. Here's how it goes. Definitions of quality, whether of the implied form or of the much rarer explicit type, are usually taken to imply stasis. Consider "fitness for purpose". The promise of this definition of quality is that, once we have defined purpose, we have defined quality. Implicitly, we search for a (fixed) thing, purpose; and thus for a (fixed) attribute, quality.

With you so far.

Good. The problem here is that purpose is, surely, in part at least, a movable goal. And hence the same for quality.

So?

My next step allows - indeed positively requires - QA and QE to fuse. Consider quality to be, not a fixed target, but rather a process of movement in a defined direction.

The direction defined by?

By the University and its stakeholders.

Interesting. Surely, direction isn't enough? Don't you also need some fixed quality thresholds?

Yes. But while we're finding out how to do <u>that</u> properly, if we ever do, let's enrich our account of quality with this idea of direction, of improvement.

How does this affect us as developers? And you still haven't brought QA and QE together.

Oh, it affects us profoundly. And here's the integration. We developers have to show - to assure - how our work contributes to improved quality across the University.

Gulp.

It imposes a corresponding requirement on the rest of the University.

What's that?

The rest of University needs to show - to assure - how they have made use of our development services to improve their provision. You might say "QA+QE=Q", where Q = continued improvement.

That would put us all - QA, QE and the rest of University - on the same side! Pulling in the same direction!

We can but dream. And plan.

David Baume FSEDA
Director of Teaching Development
Centre for Higher Education Practice
The Open University

The characters and the University in this Dialogue are fictitious.

Responses to this dialogue, and suggestions for future dialogues, welcome.

Please e-mail them to: a.d.baume@open.ac.uk

SEDA Spring Conference 2001 "Challenge to Change"

2 - 3 April 2001
University of Glasgow

The SEDA and SEDA Scotland Conference, '"Challenge to Change": Enhancing the Practice and Scholarship of Learning and Teaching', took place in Glasgow on 2nd and 3rd April 2001. The event attracted a record number of delegates for a SEDA spring conference and proved to be a stimulating two days, bubbling with ideas, and aided by a great sense of camaraderie.

The Conference was held at Glasgow University, who are celebrating their 550th anniversary this year and, apart from one obvious hitch, proved to be welcoming and accommodating hosts. The hitch, which resulted in delegates being bussed from overnight accommodation to the venue, proved to be one of the features of the event. Bus pick-up points and coach journeys provided great opportunity to network, share stories and discuss the sessions.

The first keynote, Dr Peter Wright's 'Giving voice to academic standards', was a highly focused piece which cut through the jargon of quality and standards. He discussed the tensions between a defensive model of standards based on implicit ideals of professionalism and the equally damaging possibility of an external inspectorate imposing explicit but simplistic measures. The challenge which HE faces, and which the new QAA methodology meets, he said, is to establish a shared language. This language - contained in codes of practice, benchmarking, qualification frameworks, programme specifications and progress file - should 'promote and make visible the hitherto largely covert and inaccessible standards embodied in academic practice'.

In contrast Professor Alistair MacFarlane, 'Knowledge learning and technology', ranged far and wide across technological development, educational philosophy and statistics. His conclusions, that computers could not offer a cheap alternative to the human teacher and the need for more funding of research into learning and the processes of education before technology can effectively support learning, were well received.

Many of the parallel sessions focused on the challenges of using technology in learning. Topics ranged from computer supported co-operative lecture notes and developing online tutors, through online student support and marrying teachers to C&IT, to computer assisted assessment and E-moderating. There was also a good spread of papers and workshops on low-tech student learning and staff development; including addressing student comments on their learning experience, peer observation, supporting graduate and new teachers, progress files and portfolios, access and opportunity, problem based learning, anonymous marking and employability.

If the measure of a good conference is to come away with more insights, ideas and friends - and with renewed enthusiasm - then this conference was a resounding success for me!

Dr John Peters
SEDA Conference Committee
University College Worcester

James Wisdom (standing) leads a plenary session at the SEDA Management and Staff Development Within "Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education" event held on 24th April 2001 at the NEC. More information on the day can be found on page 13.

Information for Contributors

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

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

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

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

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

Articles

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

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

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

Reviews

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

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

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