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Exploring the Social Contexts of Learning to Teach in HE

Ali Cooper

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In 2001/2, four programme leaders and a research consultant(1) began a project to investigate the impact of Learning and Teaching in HE (LTHE) programmes on new teachers. There has been comparatively little written about the effects of LTHE programmes. This is perhaps unsurprising, since they are a relatively recent phenomenon. However, given the investment by all HE institutions in the UK, and the recent proposals for compulsory training for new teachers in the Government White Paper (2003), valid research and evaluation evidence is needed to challenge and inform our practices and deepen our understanding about how teachers learn to teach.

We did not wish to replicate the prevailing cognitive psychology perspective of existing studies, which focus largely on the individual subject as agent, looking at how teachers' conceptions determine their teaching approaches (e.g. Kugel 1993, Gow and Kember 1993, Trigwell and Prosser, 1996). We were more interested in illuminating the significance of the social context in learning to teach, looking at the ground rather than solely at the figure. Various studies had already drawn upon Social Practice Theory and Activity Theory to look at faculty development and departmental induction procedures (Knight, 2002, Trowler and Knight 2000). From our own experience, the social context appeared highly significant in how each participant receives and responds to the programme. To investigate this more systematically, we identified six potential social factors likely to condition an individual's approach and response:

Role:	the role and duties the participant had at the time
Presage:	the participants prior life experiences and identities
LTHE programme:	its explicit aims, tacit assumptions, its design and teaching and learning approaches
Disciplinary background:	the participants subject, and his/her learning approaches
Departmental culture:	approaches to teaching, beliefs, ways of working, approaches to participants etc.
Institutional ethos:	explicit and implicit aims, values and priorities.

We felt sure that these factors are also highly interdependent, dynamically interacting with one another differently with each participant. To try to identify their effect, we asked participants to write an open-ended account before the programme started of their current thinking about HE teaching, which might include discussion of feelings, beliefs, current knowledge and current approaches to their teaching.

(1) Holly Smith, UCL [Project Leader)]; Carol Maynard, Liverpool JMU; Ali Cooper, Lancaster; Sue Clayton, Sussex; Paul Trowler, Lancaster [Research Consultant]

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Information for Contributors

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

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We followed this up with semi-structured interviews after the taught element had ended, some five to eight months later, before they had completed their assignments. (It was not within the scope of this project to do a more longitudinal study; this would be an interesting follow-up, as the assessment is often a defining learning vehicle, and further teaching experience would invariably alter the responses.) The programme leaders conducted the interviews as awareness of the social context and the participants was important for this study. This may make the process vulnerable to criticism of subjectivity, but we were seeking to illuminate not to generalise. We read the transcripts and notes, and the carefully discussed and agreed the interview framework beforehand.

We asked the interviewees to think about what changes had occurred since the initial writing. We encouraged them to discuss teaching issues related to their role, department, subject, the wider institution, their prior experiences and their responses to the programme. Where the emphasis was placed on any of the factors and the connections between them depended on each participant - the interviewer encouraged the respondent to develop comments, but allowed him/her to lead the discussion. We then used the six factors as categories for organising the data.

We adapted a model of learning expectations and outcomes from Illeris (2002) see fig. 1 to identify the nature of the learning that seemed to have occurred - i.e. what does the respondent seem to expect learning to teach to be about, now and before s/he started the programme, and how far and in what ways can any of these kinds of learning be seen to have occurred during the programme? Within the data, it was possible to clearly identify evidence of the first three categories. It is arguably unlikely that the fourth category would be perceived in teachers with very limited experience. The model served as a useful heuristic device for scrutinising the kinds of identifiable change which might be affected by social factors

Figure 1

Illeris' categories of Learning	How these manifest themselves in processes of learning teaching
Cumulation	Tips and tricks of teaching. Copied, imitated, adapted and practised.
Assimilation	Internalising learning theories and improved understanding of learning and teaching processes. Extension of pre-existing cognitive and emotional schemata. Everyday learning but no fundamental change.
Accommodation	Restructuring of cognitive and emotional schemata due to dissonance. A gestalt 'aha' experience. New practices and attitudes adopted.
Transformation	Identity change, often after crisis. Completely new approach to teaching and learning which can be life -changing.

Findings and Conclusions

From our analysis of the data, we were able to find evidence that the social factors we had identified did indeed influence each person's approaches to the programme. In addition, these had impacted significantly upon the nature and extent of the outcomes of the programme for each participant.

A summary of our conclusions, taking each of the conditioning factors separately with illustrative examples from the data, can be seen below.

Figure 2

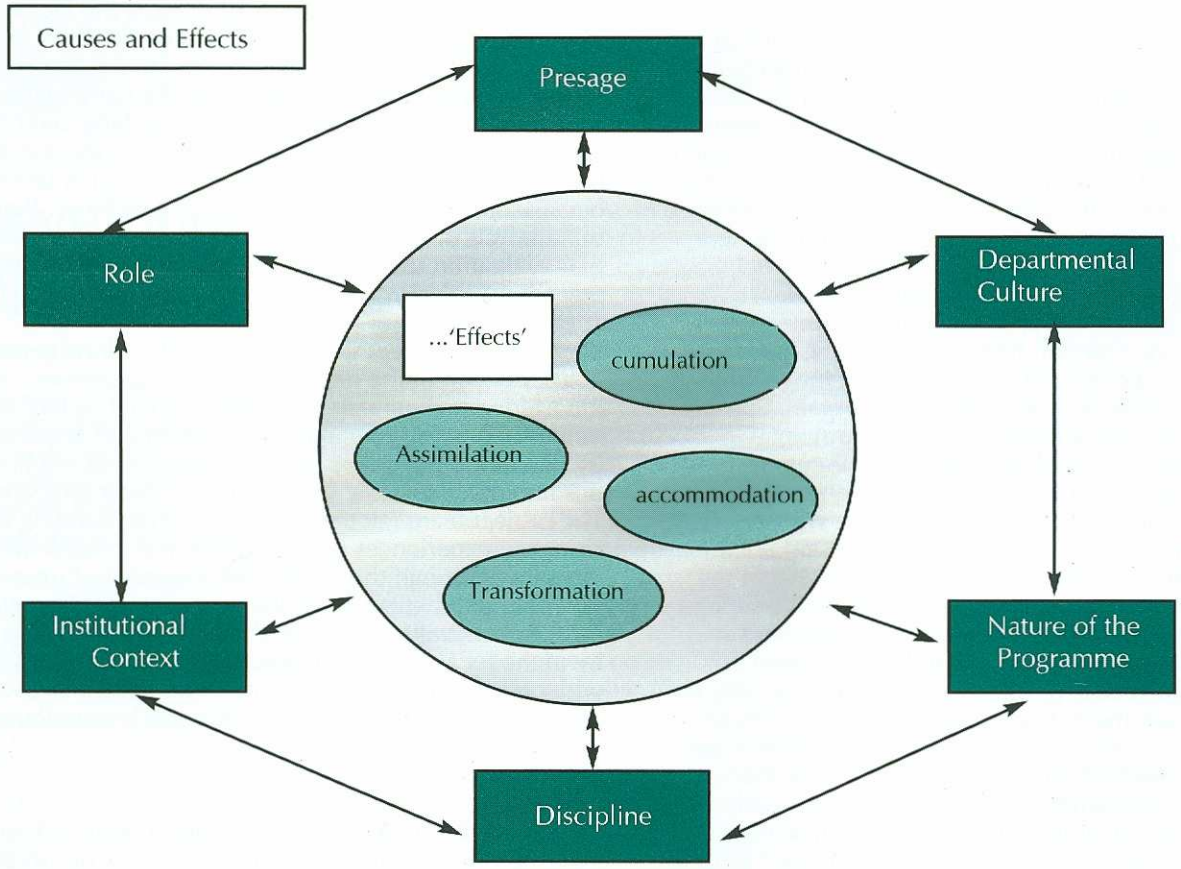
ROLE	If role is very limited (GTAs) - e.g. the amount of teaching experience available to draw upon, and iterative processes which can't happen for those with limited roles, or which take a lot longer - this will significantly restrict the effect of the programme." The relationship between Dept. culture and role - how they are treated in the Dept. - if they are perceived as fairly marginal with respect to contributions to the culture of teaching (e.g. non- participation in Dept. meetings and decisions, given instructions in how to teach etc) this might restrict the application of learning from the programme.	"The programme is covering things that I am not able to do in my present role...but I see it as for the future - if I had to restrict myself to what I am doing just now, then I am not using and applying everything I am learning on the programme. "The teaching committees and meetings about teaching deliberately exclude postgraduate tutors - I wish I was included. Listening to others' discussion, even if I'm not able to contribute, would be a very rewarding experience - I am not really benefiting from the department teaching, except the observations for the programme."
PRESAGE	If a person's presage factors have given them robust cognitive schemata related to learning and teaching then the participant might need to reconcile and renegotiate these views. Pre-existing conceptual schemata - frameworks, beliefs and approaches - what they thought they were trying to do, and students were supposed to be doing.....are very influential on the impact of the programme.	"I found the psychological approach of one of the tutors to be both wrong and unhelpful and I did not believe it would have anything to do with improving my own teaching - later it seemed more in tune with my way of thinking about teaching...I find it really useful now". "As an undergraduate I was so disappointed about how unfocused towards application of knowledge the degree was. Having worked in construction for 9 years before I came to teaching, I wanted students to know what it really felt like to do something for real. But the HE context and my role do not suit my preferred style and philosophy about HE teaching - there is no opportunity for interaction and development over time... I have thought about leaving.." "I found my prior experience and the programme were being drawn upon simultaneously, and that was useful - the questions CiLTHE was trying to answer for me were coming up at the same time in my teaching - that was convenient."

NATURE OF THE PROGRAMME	Programmes tend to adopt a constructivist approach - a particular TLR - (e.g. discussion-based, negotiated, drawing on experience, discursive texts etc). For programme members from some disciplines there may be some dissonance with the discipline or departmental TLR - more energy and commitment is then required to reconcile the differences and move into new learning.	"there is no bottom line, no single/easy answer that is applicable in all situations - as a scientist this is frustrating at times, but I accept it as right""...at first I thought I could be taught to teach...I initially wanted less talk-based work and more hints and tips...I now see that as naïve...the programme is about teaching people to think about teaching. Had I not done the programme, I would have thought less about teaching ..it made me think about how I am going to do it, and what I want out of it ..."
DISCIPLINARY BACKGROUND	This is difficult to generalise - some pedagogical and other disciplinary differences can be seen through a telescope (Neumann et al, 2002) but the microscope shows the importance of narratives and agency within disciplines. All participants refer to the value of working with those from other disciplines "because all disciplines have different ways of thinking about materials, new information, experiences and so on...law is always seeking to categorise everything, other disciplines might be more open. I think that's really valuable".	• F. - as a scientist...had no difficulty in the idea that there is new knowledge- constructed in a different way from people who see it more holistically. • A. wanted to hear from experts - disappointed that programme represented a limited 'knowledge-gathering opportunity' • G. - 'Storing up knowledge he couldn't use' -commodity view of knowledge • "The scientists seemed to see things more as common sense - looked at a problem, had an answer - we had a strategy and that was it. Social scientists had huge discussions about it - felt like they turned it into more of a problem than it needed to be."
DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE	If the departmental culture is such that teaching isn't often discussed or shared then:a) either the impact of the programme is limited because they can't dialogue or disseminate 'back' in the department (because of lack of structures or discourse or interest in teaching).....b) or they get more out of the programme because it has given them the opportunity to engage in dialogue about learning and teaching - talking in groups etc.	a) "people who do the programme do not cohere within the department any more than others... culture is not comfortable with exploring inadequacies or thinking of improvements" b) "I didn't feel so alone...chance for exploration of solutions and ideas - that kind of structured opportunity is not available in my department."
INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT	If the institutional context prioritises research which prevents dialogue and readiness to engage with teaching and learning issues, or if the context is highly competitive, or the conditions are not conducive to good teaching, then the impact of the programme is often reduced.	"I feel cynical about my earlier optimism about the place of teaching. The priority given to teaching in the department, the university and HE generally is l ow compared with research."

IINSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT	The programme offers an opportunity for confidential time-out to explore the wider issues	"The myth of collegiate management just seems to be a recipe for uncertainty and anxiety, because one never quite knows who you're speaking to and where they rank in the order of influence... it's very difficult for someone outside of the loop...so it's nice on the course to be taken outside that whole structure."

The relationships between the factors were often complex. In one example for instance, to discuss the impact of the programme, one interviewee draws upon his prior experiences as a learner and as a teacher. He also refers to colleagues in other institutions, to working with participants from other disciplines, to the conditions of his own teaching practice, and his conceptions about appropriate approaches for his teaching. The factors clearly dynamically interacted with each other as an interdependent whole (see fig 3 - described rather simplistically as 'causes' and 'effects').

Figure 3



Implications for programme practice - the so-what? question

The overall effect of the LTHE programme upon any individual can be said to depend upon how these socially contextual factors (and without doubt there are others) dynamically interact for each individual at any given time. How then does this study contribute to our thinking about LTHE programme design and/or practice? As one SEDA November 2002 conference delegate put it: "Can I ask you... so what?"

In this short article, we cannot explore all the potential implications. The following illustrative examples are highlighted as worthy of consideration at local programme and institutional level, and in discussion at the wider educational development community.

In this short article, we cannot explore all the potential implications. The following illustrative examples are highlighted as worthy of consideration at local programme and institutional level, and in discussion at the wider educational development community.

1 How the programme is situated within an institution, in terms of policy and implementation, can actively use the social context to support the individuals or can serve to undermine them. If the programme is suspected as a central management or government tool to get staff to conform to a particular model of teaching, to infiltrate time-honoured practices, there will be considerable distrust from experienced colleagues at departmental level. This will have a significant impact upon new members of staff and associate teachers, who will have to choose their own position on the programme in the light of this. It is more difficult for a new member of staff to resist the presiding culture with his/her local departmental culture. If the programme is explicitly described and promoted as professional development support, and structured to enable staff to take advantage of it, this will affect how these individuals and the departments perceive the value of the programme. If the programme draws upon contributions from experienced colleagues in a wide range of disciplines and departments, and is structured to invite a critical and possible radical analysis of existing and alternative teaching approaches and the contextual constraints that shape them, then the programme is likely to be more readily accepted. However, this critical standpoint needs to be set alongside new teachers' needs for greater certainty and security when learning to teach, compared with colleagues with greater experience to draw upon, otherwise confidence can be undermined.

2 If the programme's teaching and assessment approaches are seen to be structured largely upon a traditional social science model, this can create a resistance from those who espouse a firm model of teaching and learning derived from their own discipline. Again, this can operate at both the participant and the departmental level. For instance, teaching methods employing discursive models of learning, with open-ended debate, often raising more questions and ambiguities than firm answers, with personal reflective writings as the means of assessment are common in LTHE programmes. These can alarm and alienate those whose prior educational experiences and current practices have taught them that teaching and learning happens in very different ways from these. It is incumbent upon programme teams to seek a variety of ways of approaching the teaching and assessment, to try to model the diversity of prior experiences, and to give participants as much scope as possible for matching their own preferences to the demands of the programme. Where this is not possible, because the programme is intrinsically a social science activity, then the approaches and aims need to be carefully articulated and explored, as a kind of meta-commentary in open forum. It also offers a rich opportunity to explore different teaching approaches in a practical context, by using the programme as a starting point for discussion. This can be disconcerting for programme tutors, as it opens the programme to constant critical review, but it is vital.

3 Recognising the significance of participants' presage offers the opportunity to bring prior experience and pre-conceptions to the forefront of the course. Tasks such as learning autobiographies (e.g. Brookfield 1995) and narrative accounts of experience are illuminating tools, and also encourage teachers to consider the value of such tasks for their own students' learning. Mixed disciplinary groups within the LTHE programme also allow participants to examine explicitly their epistemological pre-conceptions about how their own discipline is and has been taught and learnt, and why.

4 Articulating how participants' own roles within their departments affects their teaching is important, as such discussion is unlikely to arise within the local context. Writing or talking confidentially about what they find difficult, how they fit in, how the attitudes and approaches of others affects their own thinking about teaching - all these issues are part of how a teacher develops and will help to strengthen their identity and beliefs. For example, the interview tapes from this project were seen by all the respondents as useful and illuminating, and some subsequently submitted the tape and reflections on the process as a part of their assessment. The interviewer served as an insightful critical prompt, allowing interviewees to reveal their own learning and practices, to discover ideas and beliefs they had not explicitly identified before. The introduction of a viva on one programme emerged from this research project.

5 Such interviews can also provide evaluation for the programme, which takes into account the factors that affect participants' progress and their perceptions of the value of the course. They offer programme tutors a better insight into the wider experiences of the participants, and how the programme articulates with teaching and colleagues at the local level. Traditional methods of evaluation often do not involve consideration of such factors, because it is complex and difficult to generalise. But given our analysis of the contextual influences, it seems vital that evaluation uses at least sometimes more sophisticated means of analysis.

The research project was not designed to draw generalisable evidence of the impact of LTHE programmes. What it has done is illuminate the kinds of social factors which influence how a programme is received and responded to by different participants, and to explore what implications this may have for how we design and teach programmes. The project team felt they their own understanding of participants' experiences and responses was considerably deepened through this work, and a number of interesting ideas about practices have started to emerge. Engaging in this kind of evaluative research is a very worthwhile activity at the local level. Discussion of the implications in the wider educational development community has also stimulated fruitful debate, to which this article contributes.

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Dialogue .....

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

David Baume

David Baume is an Independent Consultant for Higher Education

Disruptive behaviour

Experienced Staff member: You look concerned.
New Colleague: Yes, I am.

Why?
About this workshop I've agreed to run.

On?
Dealing with difficult situations, disruptive behaviour, in classes.

Ah. How did that come about?
The Department of ..... asked for it.

Good!
?

Look, they admit to having a problem and they want to tackle it.
OK

Why do you think it'll be difficult?
It's a touchy subject. It'll be so much better with real examples. But they may not want to 'fess up to teaching problems in front of their colleagues.

I understand. Real examples would be best. But there are other possibilities. You could make up examples. You could remember difficult incidents from your own teaching...
..or from staff development workshops I've run - no, OK, best not!

So what do you want the workshop to achieve?
Well - to help them deal with difficult situations in class

If all else fails, yes.
Ah. So I want to help them to anticipate, prevent and deal with difficult situations in class.

That should work. I'd add 'understanding'. The better they understand it...
...the more likely they are to be able to anticipate, prevent, and if all else fails deal with, difficult situations in class.

Yes!
So how could it run?

Ask them about their concerns. If that doesn't work, of if you fear it won't, tell them about a difficult situation you met. Then get them into pairs and try to understand what may have been going on, see how you could have anticipated and prevented and dealt with it. Let them interview you about it. To break the ice and advance the workshop at the same time.
I want them to work on their business, not on mine.

I understand. I agree. I predict that at some point - very early on in the workshop - one of them will start to talk, in pairs or in the large group, about a classroom problem. What you do then is crucial. Give a model good response - seek to understand, be supportive, be constructive. Most of them will open up and work on their stuff, as soon as they feel comfortable.
Maybe, ahead of time, I could call someone who I know will be there and ask them if they'd be willing to do offer an example, a story?

Great idea.
Key messages they should get from the workshop?

They will meet disruptive behaviour. But most students in the class will want the class to work, will be on the lecturer's side and against the disruptor. Usually the reasons for the behaviour will be something outside the class, or even outside the course - so don't take the behaviour personally. Stay calm. Be confident. Seek and take seriously student feedback on the class. Make sure the students know what the class is about, what it's for where it's going and where you want to take them. Get the students appropriately active in the class.
Teach well?

Good summary!
Guaranteed to work?

No. It'll work most of the time. But not all.
And disruptive behaviour by students is never your fault?

I didn't say that either. Teach badly enough, bore and confuse them, ignore their concerns, and they may well disrupt.
Final tips for me running the workshop?

Allow enough time in the workshop to address 'dealing with disruptive behaviour' as well as 'anticipating, understanding and preventing' it.
Or the workshop participants may get disruptive?

Certainly!
One method to offer for dealing with disruption in the class when it happens?

If you were talking, stop talking mid-sentence. Whatever was happening, just look calmly at the disruptor(s).
Thanks.

Can I come and heckle?
No!

Editorial: Higher Education - The Scholarship of Something or Nothing?

When I last sat down to write an editorial for Educational Developments I attempted to predict the likely contents of the White Paper[1] . This was subsequently released and has been the focus of consultation for the last six months. Once again I am in the position of attempting to predict outcomes. Certainly there is a lot to be commended in the tone of the White Paper with a clear focus upon quality enhancement - particularly in regard to learning and teaching. However, I always felt that the devil would be in the detail.

The White Paper jumped the gun in announcing support for the proposed Academy before the Cooke Report was released. Even so, most of the Cooke recommendations were already a matter of public knowledge. What seemed initially to be a positive move towards establishing an agency for quality enhancement has produced a certain amount of blight in the sector. The ILTHE and LTSN along with SEDA have made positive noises but the future impact upon these bodies is still unclear and somewhat confused with the potential departure of HESDA. I fear that this looks as though it might be an expensive endeavour with few additional benefits to the sector.

Rewards for teaching excellence are proposed in Chapter 4 and these include an increase in the number of National Teaching Fellowships - this should continue to enhance the profile of learning and teaching in HE institutions. The proposed Centres of Excellence are seemingly being transfigured, in the consultation phase[2] , into Centres for Excellence. This is a modest but important change in the title - an investment for future performance as well as a reward for past achievement. Even so many continue to have reservations about the use of resources in this fashion in a cash starved sector.

Many readers of Educational Developments will have noted the intent of paragraph 4.14 which discusses national professional standards for teachers in higher education and raises the expectation of new staff being qualified post 2006. It appears that current thinking is moving away from this being included in the enabling legislation - seemingly too problematic. This then may, in retrospect, be seen as a lost opportunity. Yet, while it is becoming increasingly difficult to define who would be affected by such legislation, as those supporting learning currently extend way beyond the traditional lecturer boundaries, this is an inadequate reason to duck some fundamental issues. What about the professional development of increasing numbers of part time and visiting lecturers; those whose traditional role has been more associated with further education; the growing number of IT specialists writing educational packages and software and those overseas delivering franchised degree awards - are they all to be left out of basic and essential training[3] ?

What has proved to be even more contentious was the unfolding debate about the University title (paragraphs 4.31 to 4.35). Margaret Hodge, attempting to dispel concerns, introduced the topic of scholarship into public awareness.

My entry into teaching in higher education occurred in the later part of the 1970s and as such was broadly informed by the workings of the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). Course validation was much driven by being able to demonstrate honours worthiness and associated issues of a research/scholarly base.

Apparently the hypothesis being propounded today appears to be that while higher education will be delivered across a wider range, of previously non-university institutions, we are to be content with an assurance of scholarly activities permeating the work of those delivering higher education awards. Do not read into what I have said so far as any form of attack upon institutions or upon delivery through a broader base. Rather I challenge a crude attempt to assuage genuine concerns about quality assurance and enhancement with a simplistic appeal to a somewhat undefined concept.

If we are to make some sense of this there exists a need to explore, in greater depth, the meaning of scholarship. Surely it has to be the scholarship of something rather than nothing. Almost inevitably then I start with Boyer's[4] contribution.

He defined the scholarship of:

- discovery
- integration
- application
- teaching

Though sometimes described in publications as the scholarship of teaching this framework essentially defines the concept of a university institution.

Subsequently some of these areas have been re-examined by the Boyer Commission[5] and by Jenkins and Zetter[6]. Along with these Ormond Simpson[7] has attributed the following modified scholarship framework to Graham Gibbs:

- research
- knowledge
- teaching

However, I would contend that we might usefully produce some form of hybrid framework using elements from Boyer and that attributed to Gibbs; and one in which there is explicit reference to and acknowledgement of learning. It might look something like this:

- research
- synthesis (integration/knowledge) and application
- teaching
- learning

Much of the material cited here has been derived from studies of research-led institutions. Post White Paper it becomes essential to re-examine the concept and meaning of scholarly activities in an environment where a wider range of institutions will be providing higher education. I hope that my initial offering here can form the basis for an informed debate rather than one resulting from inchoate sound bites broadcast in the media.

Tony Brand

(1) DfES (2003) The Future of Higher Education Cm 5735

(2) The recently published consultation document can be accessed at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2003/03_36.htm

(3) I guess I would, inevitably, suggest that the SEDA-Professional Development Framework address the types of development needs identified here.

(4) Boyer E L (1990) Scholarship reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of teaching. New Jersey.

(5) The Boyer Commission Report - Reinventing Undergraduate Education which can be accessed at http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/

(6) See, for example, Jenkins A and Zetter R (2003) Linking Research and Teaching Departments LTSN Generic Centre. Alternatively go to http://www.brookes.ac.uk/genericlink/project.htm and http://www.brookes.ac.uk/genericlink/evidence.htm

(7) ILTHE East Anglia Members' Forum - Research and Teaching: Is there any connection? 13 May 2003

The 8th Annual Conference

Values and Change in Higher Education

Tuesday 18th – Wednesday 19th November 2003
Novotel, Birmingham Centre

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STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

This conference will provide the opportunity for agents and managers of educational change in HE provision, in both further and higher education settings, to explore the importance of values in underpinning positive change. The conference will promote sharing of practice, networking and collaboration in a friendly, positive and supportive environment. The conference will be of interest to policy makers, educational developers of all sorts, staff trainers, student support staff and project workers, in fact anyone with an interest in changes affecting the student learning experience.

Conference Themes
The theme of the conference is how, in a period of accelerating change for Higher Education provision, we can ensure change is underpinned by good educational and professional values. With change coming so fast for HE providers, it is very easy to ignore important underlying values and to be swept along by events. So how can we ensure the centrality, and even further development and implementation, of our values as educators and facilitators of learning as we face increasing pressures to adapt?

Venue
The conference is to be held at a new venue, the Birmingham Centre Novotel. It is located on Broad Street in the heart of the City Centre, close to Symphony Hall and the canal-side restaurants and bars of Brindley Place. The canal side paths radiating from nearby Gas Street basin offer excellent views of the Birmingham's industrial heritage and a quite haven in the heart of the City. Fully residential delegates will be accommodated on-site and all bedrooms have en-suite facilities. The SEDA conference will have sole use of the hotel's conference facilities.

Pre-Conference Workshop Day
As in past years, the Monday before the main event will comprise an additional workshop day. This year our focus will be on Valuing diversity and promoting Inclusivity. Further details of this event will be posted on the SEDA website, details below.

For a Registration Form or more Information then please visit the SEDA Website at: www.seda.ac.uk or contact the SEDA office on: 0121 415 6801

The Future of Quality Enhancement

Richard Blackwell

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Introduction

The Government's paper 'The Future of Higher Education' (FOHE- DfES 2003) potentially marks a step change in the coherence of enhancement activity. The enhancement strategy within it is arguably the logical next step in the development of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), building on existing collaboration between the various TQEF strands and the work of other agencies, to create a new combined organisation - the 'Academy'. The major challenge will be how to capitalise on the potential for new synergies to arise from bringing together the 'bottom up' voice of staff, 'middle out' feedback of departments and subjects and 'top down' drive of policy agenda.

TQEF has three strands - the subject, institutional and individual strands. There are already encouraging signs of synergies between these different strands, which provide secure foundations for the proposed 'Academy'. I review each in turn.

The Subject Strand: The Learning and Teaching Support Network [LTSN]

The subject strand rests on the academic work of Tony Becher (1989) on academic 'tribes and territories' and Mary Henkel (2000) on academic identity, and practical, project experience, especially the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning [FDTL]. There is widespread recognition that one of the benefits of educational development projects arises from the professional development of those involved directly in the projects (Gibbs et al 2002 6-7). The LTSN was established partly to ensure impact beyond just those directly involved in project innovations, locating project work within a wider, well-networked, subject community served by a subject centre. Second, LTSN provides a context intended to ensure 'sustainability' of project outcomes, responding to a common perception that few innovations survive beyond their funding period

The benefits of project based innovation are being retained and expanded within the LTSN by its subject centres (SCs) often through rounds of annual bidding linked to active dissemination strategies. The LTSN Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) has taken deliberate steps to disseminate the outcomes of its projects and in January 2002 published an impressive report on the 45 mini projects it sponsored in 2001-2. Business Management and Accountancy SC (BEST) are utilising a different strategy based on a few major funded projects on topics identified through consultation, in order to generate publications and workshop materials for wider dissemination throughout the SC's communities.

There is evidence of networked communities emerging around enhancement issues in LTSN. Between January and July 2002, 490 departmental visits were undertaken and 300 plus mini projects were in progress and LTSN operated a mailing list of 36,712, recorded one million plus hits on web sites and had 10,881 participants in workshops and 2,676 in conferences. (Fulton et al 2002 pp22, 28, 30-1). In a little under three years the report argues that LTSN has moved from user awareness (roughly -'heard of LTSN') to a higher level of 'adaptation and adoption' of ideas that users derived from and linked back to LTSN (Fulton et al 2002). This suggests that the diffusion aim is on the way to being achieved and the proposal for an Academy provides a basis for sustainability beyond current LTSN funding (ceases December 2004).

The Institutional Strand: Organisational Strategies for Enhancement

The main features of the institutional strand of TQEF are the stimuli given to articulating formal learning and teaching strategies (LTS) and the allocation of dedicated funding to support their implementation. This official stimulus for LTS is now in its second iteration. A study of early LTS showed a wide range of approaches with a growth of devolution between 1998 and 2000 (Gibbs 2001). In addition to FDTL, innovation funds are now extensively used within HEIs to support LTS, partly as a result of this official nudging (Gibbs et al 2002).

Institutional approaches to recognition and reward of individuals are of growing interest (Gibbs and Habeshaw 2002). Gibbs and Habeshaw note changes to career tracks, growing numbers of new temporary or fixed term posts (such as readerships at the University of East London) and new awards and prizes. Although questions remain over whether a permanent and real change in the balance between research and teaching has been achieved, this is encouraging evidence of interaction between TQEF strands. One feature noted to be almost wholly lacking in 2000 LTS was a strategic focus on securing firm and positive links between research and teaching (Gibbs 2001: 17) an increasingly important issue, given the government's declared intention to encourage institutions to 'concentrate' on their strengths. Indeed the FOHE includes a number of measures apparently designed to support this emphasis, including the creation of up to 70 departmental centres of 'Teaching Excellence' (FOHE 2003, 54). Elsewhere, Alan Jenkins and his colleagues have shown how strategies may be developed at both departmental and institutional levels to achieve positive linkages between research and teaching (Jenkins and Zetter 2003; Jenkins et al 2003).

For staff and educational developers, the TQEF has provided the engine of recent growth. Gosling's studies of educational development units in 1995 and again in 2000 showed 'another phase of major expansion' (Gosling 2001:78) with TQEF an important source of funding (Gosling 2001:81). The proposed Academy provides an opportunity to defend and further develop these gains as funding becomes 'mainstreamed'.

The Individual Strand

The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) awards 20 fellowships nationally each year. It is encouraging to note the growing contribution that this group (of 80) are now making to the scholarship of teaching and learning in the UK. Links have been established with the Carnegie Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and there are signs that the Fellows can have a wider impact. The LTSN subject centre for English has brought togeth-

er seven fellows from its discipline with a view to making a wider discipline-based contribution. Other NTFS fellows have emerged from leading roles in FDTL projects (for example Paul Hyland and Alan Booth from 'History 2000', Mick Healey from a Geography FDTL project). The ILTHE will bring into the Academy the individual membership, 'standards' and professional accreditation dimensions. Given the Government's intention to have all new staff participating on accredited programmes, based on 'agreed national standards', by 2006 this will give the organisation important leverage with HEIs. However, the question of standards is a difficult one, as the original consultation on the ILTHE framework showed, especially if the use of the word 'competence' in the key paragraph of the white paper (FOHE, 50 para 4.14) signals an official intention to advocate competence-based frameworks. It appears that few of the numerous qualifications established in recent years have been based primarily on this model, at least in the pre1992 sector, and other approaches, including enquiry-based models, will need to be accommodated and recognised as legitimate if institutional and individual strands are to be aligned successfully.

Synergy and Serendipity

There are many overlapping and cross cutting interests, processes and projects in and between the subject, institutional and individual strands of TQEF. Achieving the best 'outputs' from the different interactions within and between the strands is not always easy or predictable. This does, however, provide an environment in which 'structured serendipity', sometimes advocated as the hallmark of the learning organisation (James 1997), can occur. It also creates conditions in which it may become possible to talk about a genuine enhancement community (or movement?) with both common and diverse goals.

The development of three active strands also makes planned cooperation more possible and purposeful. The recent development of a tripartite model of provision to support part time teachers, initially at Birmingham and Leeds Universities, demonstrates a new synergy between institutional Staff and Educational Development units, local academic departments and LTSN subject centres [see www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/ >projects > parttime teachers]. Central policy mandates, such as widening participation and employability also provide common foci, even if the impact of these varies by institution and subject. In this context there may well be some benefit to different types of institutions and particular disciplines collaborating, for example to tackle the declining national pool of students in engineering and the particular issues surrounding mathematics education. Three high quality booklets on the latter produced by the MathsTEAM (a consortium of four LTSN SCs) have just appeared (www.ltsn.ac.uk/mathsteam) and show what can be done. This group is also exploring potential for further collaborative work, including on employability.

The Academic Unit

What seems certain is that the potential for synergy will be greatest in academic units. It is at this level that the institutional LTS and the subject influence intersect with the daily teaching practice and interests of individual colleagues. The Heads of such units, the representatives of LTSN subject centres and individuals leading teaching and learning innovation, whether they have National Teaching Fellowships or internal awards, are set to be key players in bringing about change. Future synergies are likely to depend on the extent to which departments are able to make sense of the various potential resources open to them and engage positively with selected change initiatives (see Hopkins 2002). The Academy should simplify routes to external resources and, building on the work of LTSN, help departments to develop appropriate cultures able to process positively change initiatives (Trowler et al 2003).

Moving Forward Together

It would be disingenuous to claim that synergies will be easily achieved. There may be real differences between a subject area's favoured list of 'subject-specific' skills and particular institutions' approaches to skills, which are likely to be more influenced by national employability agendas. These differences will need to be worked through locally, via dialogue and discussion. But it is in and from these exchanges and sharing of perspectives that new ideas arise. Subject Centres and subject based projects need to be sensitive to the pressures on institutions, including financial ones, while institutions need to show respect for the ability of SCs to articulate 'bottom up' and 'middle out' views. Such views may be awkward but healthy, encouraging 'double loop' learning and so help to provide innovative solutions to institutional problems (see Allan et al 2003).

In so far as the Academy proposal provides a framework for greater structural togetherness, the opportunities for synergy and serendipity should be advanced provided that the 'bottom up' voice of subject-based practitioners is not lost. As Allan 2003, has argued this is a critical issue highlighted by the substantial individual membership base that one of the constituent organisations has achieved (ILTHE currently has about 15,500 members). Subject centres have arguably played a similar role within LTSN, articulating informally 'bottom up' and, especially departmental and subject based, 'middle out' sentiment within LTSN. Success in managing the tensions between these different impulses will have a significant bearing on development of the Academy particularly as governments may be tempted to view it as a convenient 'policy delivery' mechanism along the 'transmission belt' model. Failure to engender a sense of ownership amongst academic staff could condemn the Academy to superficial fiddling with quantitative indicators around the margins of academic cultures.

There are still many issues arising from the 'Future of Higher Education' to be worked through, such as the relationship between LTSN subject centres and the proposed centres of teaching excellence. It is unlikely that the structures of the constituent parts of the Academy will simply be carried into the new organisation, especially at the centre (Allan 2003). If the supposed gains of clarity are to be realised and new functions established, as envisaged in the official proposals (TQEC 2003 18-34), new structures will be needed. There are also less obvious implications, such as how do other national organisations in the field, notably SEDA and the Society for Research into Higher Education, position themselves in relation to the Academy. Given some goodwill, open-mindedness and a touch of luck, such questions could be resolved though discussion and collaboration, perhaps creating solutions not obvious at present.

Conclusion

These are exciting times for staff and educational developers. There is potential to build a really significant UK-wide enhancement community beyond anything achieved hitherto. It is an opportunity not to be missed and staff and educational developers need enthusiastically to 'seize the moment'.

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Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 - Realising the Rhetoric

Helen Gale

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The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a new statutory duty on public authorities to promote race equality. **(http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/index.html)**

Within this context and the role of a higher education institution, each university has to produce a race equality policy and action plan which takes account of the three main aims of the RRAA:

- to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- to promote equality of opportunity
- to promote good relations between people of different racial groups

HEFCE has produced a good practice checklist as a guide for race equality professionals and internal auditors within higher education institutions (**http://www.hefce.ac.uk/goodprac/audit/rrcheck/default.asp**). The checklist is designed to act as an indicator of how fully an institution is meeting the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and to suggest ways that the intentions of the Act could be supported by action within the institution.

So what has this got to do with educational development? If the checklist is your only reference point, then apparently very little. It is the new emphasis on the promotion of equality of opportunity which changes the direction from the previous anti discrimination race relations legislation. Like other pressures on us, such as the incorporation of a widening participation student base, or the drive for employability skills, most of these evolutions are best delivered when they are incorporated into our delivery style or curriculum methodology or subject content rather than being the subject of separate action plans divorced from our everyday learning and teaching. Educational development is often the point at which the rhetoric of policy is converted to the reality of practice.

At the level of the institution, the increasing use of institutional research to validate and drive university policy should be encouraging educational development to engage with the wealth of information available through current data, and to encourage and commission educational development projects which incorporate research statistics around ethnicity.

In recent years, university management - at all levels - has had to produce returns on student retention. This should give us the base data to look at ethnic profiles of student retention, progression and achievement in relation to profiles at entry. The general research on retention leads us to identify the student at risk as being the student who is least 'engaged' with university life in general, and with our learning and teaching processes and practices in particular. If black students are over represented in this category of 'disengagement' then we need to look more closely at the reasons behind this.

In the same way as our approach to staff and educational development in the field of information technology is for a broad-based integrated approach, for which there is no 'one

size fits all' approach, so must our approach be in utilising our skills for the promotion of equality of opportunity with our students. This involves the education and training of both staff and students.

Such an approach begins at induction - both in a general university staff induction, in a PG Certificate programme and in a school or departmental induction. Issues of race in terms of facts and figures are often most challenging. In some of my previous existences working as a white person in the field of race in schools, local education authorities and in further education, it is factual imbalances in the ethnicity of our intake, our retention and our achievement which are most difficult to argue away. On a very simple level, you either have to believe that a percentage of our population are somehow not 'bright' enough for higher education, or you have to believe that there are mechanisms of institutionalised racism at work.

A very positive discussion with some Level 1 mature students making tentative forays into the world of computers emerged from the moment they entered their names and the red underlining appeared. How would you explain why Mary or Paul is 'right', while Faisal or Harjinder is 'wrong'? You have to enter the difficult world of institutionalised racism. It is possible to change the language base of computer set ups, but this should be done as a matter of university policy, before some students see this as just another reinforcement, albeit unintentional, of their secondary status.

It is the difficult job of any manager - be they a Dean of School or a personal tutor - to work out how to celebrate ethnic diversity, while at the same time challenging our often limp approach to the promotion of our black students.

There are significant parallels with the gender debate / challenge / progression of 30 years ago. We would not accept today an explanation of achievement statistics where the majority of 1st and 2:1 degrees awarded went to males and the majority of the lower degrees went to females as being due to 'it's the kind of students we have these days'. We would expect to be aware of the pattern and to look for underlying causes. Yet, it is somehow easier to allow an explanation of similar underachievement to be given in terms which have implications for our perceptions of black students. There is an insidiousness to the way in which racism is institutionalised that we have to be constantly on our guard against.

This is not just a role for the Equal Opportunities Person, any more than our approach to students with disabilities is the single responsibility of the Special Needs Person.

In the same way as we would expect to be in the forefront of educational and curriculum developments in any sphere of learning and teaching, we should be expected to have views, policy and examples of good practice in constructing and delivering the multicultural curriculum in higher education.

At the point of validation of programmes and modules, we need to look at the way in which our multicultural society is being represented. It is not possible, or in some cases even reasonable, to expect that race would become an issue or an item of content in every module. However, it is reasonable to suggest that there are prompts in whatever proformas or guidelines we use for module specification and programme specification templates to at least ensure the team has considered equal opportunities.

It is an interesting exercise to take examples of 'British' calendars, such as are available in any stationers, into class and to ask groups of students to construct a paragraph or two about Britain based only on the evidence of the pictures in front of them. The results give some 'amusing' views of an agricultural society, living in thatched cottages, making their living by sheep farming, surrounded by lakes. It is not that the pictures are false, or that they have been constructed by technological wizardry. It is just that the picture of modern Britain in front of them is partial, chosen and exclusive. The 'lesson' can be used in all sorts of ways to challenge students' perceptions of what they think reality is, how they construct an argument and how an apparent 'real' picture can be contradicted by experience and additional conflicting evidence. Our universities have a responsibility to constantly reinforce inclusivity.

In terms of staff development, there are parallels with any innovation in learning and teaching. (Not that Race Equality should really be considered an innovation, but that the RRAA has brought it to the forefront.) The 'cascade' model has been shown to have fatal flaws. This is the model whereby an expert conducts a staff development session with a small group of senior staff or enthusiasts and on the basis of that session, the audience is required to go out and proselytise. If that model really worked, staff developers would have died out long ago. We know that a session on, say, peer assessment, be it ever so dynamic and resulting in a wonderful evaluation of the event, is no guarantee that there will be an explosion of academic development in that area.

In the same way, any staff and educational development with regard to race equality of opportunity has to be a mix of models and approaches, taking into account the receptiveness of staff, the culture of the department, the current skills of the participants, the short and long term aims of the development etc. etc. Development in the field of race awareness and integration into our curriculum planning and delivery is no different. We have to find our champions, encourage the development of exemplars and case studies, work with teams and individuals, and be extremely careful not to exploit our black colleagues by dumping responsibility to 'promote good relations between people of different racial groups' at their door.

And finally, to look at the makeup of our own professional organisations - how many black colleagues are involved in the ILTHE? In SEDA? Time for a members' Race Equality Action Plan?

A complete copy of the Act can be found at:
www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000.htm

The Commission for Racial Equality's web-site can be found at: **www.cre.gov.uk**

The Equality Challenge Unit's web-site can be found at **www.ecu.ac.uk**

A Virtual Visit to a Staff Development Centre

Anthony Brand Interviews Sukie Ekaratne, Director of the Staff Development Centre, University of Colombo

An overcast day in Birmingham at an editorial meeting and I'm starting to drift in and out of consciousness. Then someone raises the issue of which staff development activity I should next be sent out to review. A flurry of suggestions follows and I become more alert when I hear the University of Colombo mentioned. Now I had last met Professor S U K Ekaratne who is the Director of the Staff Development Centre when he attended SEDA's November Conference - but by now he was safely back at home in Sri Lanka. My mind started to race - had I seen Colombo in a pull down menu for Easy Jet? Sadly I metaphorically came down to earth with a bump since my colleagues were only proposing a virtual visit...

Suki tell us something about your academic background and research interests.

I graduated in Zoology and Biochemistry from the University of Colombo (1975), experiencing large as well as relatively small classes and even the complete lack of teaching in some taught courses! This was followed by a PhD as a British Commonwealth scholar in marine ecology from the School of Ocean Sciences, University College of North Wales, supervised by a brilliant British mind that was to influence my future thinking and behaviour. On return to Sri Lanka, I visited diverse coastal habitats for my academically-oriented research and became unable to mentally shut out the massive environmental degradation that occurs in the name of 'development'. My research interests gradually transformed into conserving and rehabilitating the dwindling resources of coastal ecosystems by demonstrating how impoverished coastal communities could be harnessed to conserve, as well as benefit from, their nearby ecosystems. Focussing research efforts on coral reef replanting, estuaries and lagoons, I was able to impart awareness on ecosystem function to resource-exploiting poor communities and to gradually move communities away from an exploitative to a conservation ethic.

During my research-related activities, I was pleasantly surprised to realise that knowledge could be imparted readily to simple 'uneducated' communities to make them action-oriented, that they were quick to learn what beneficial choices they had to make to maintain the integrity of the ecosystems that they impacted, and that it was the lack of choice and awareness that drove them inexorably to over-exploit the resources. Visiting poor households at my research sites, I saw how they eked out an extremely impoverished day-to-day existence, and though they were materially poor, their readiness to share their limited food, time and to adjust life styles for a common good embarrassed as well as shocked me, because I had experienced 'educated' and 'prosperous' communities often refusing to do so - being entrenched in the inability to accommodate their less endowed brethren. Reflecting on these experiences, I became aware of the social empowerment that was being held back in people when their lack of 'education' or 'awareness' prevented them from making informed choices and which led them to a single, often environmentally/socially unfriendly, livelihood option. I realised how 'education' could be mustered to enact change among the sector that constituted the majority of my Third World brethren, the less-endowed communities

Thus, to me, meaningful research came to mean not only finding out new information, but also its acceptable communication to the user-groups so as to make them apply the information to make the lives and environment sustainable and harmonious, bringing about their empowerment and environmentally sustainable social change.

So where and when did your interest in staff development activities come into this?

I now believe that the value I had come to attach to the empowerment of people as 'the sustainable way forward', that had been generated in my research experiences, underpinned my interest in staff development. This was strengthened by other student-related experiences, as briefly outlined below

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Some years back I became the Chief Student Counsellor of my university and was exposed to the many travails and sacrifices that so many young people were prepared to face in order to obtain an education in the hope that it would pave a pathway to emancipate them from the throttling grip of their poverty-stricken social class. I was also to witness repeatedly the euphoria and elation that young people experienced at getting their degrees and the heart-rending trauma and anguish that followed soon thereafter when all hope and aspirations were dashed with their rejection by employers because their undergraduate studies did not enable job skills in them. To bring about corrective measures, I set up a defunct Graduate Foundation for my university to address reskilling unemployed graduates, became engaged at establishing Career Guidance Units in universities and became critical at the role of lecturers at not skilling undergraduates. Through the Graduate Foundation I steered a pilot programme of reskilling a sample of unemployed graduates which had a resounding success, with employment appointment letters being awarded ceremoniously by the President of the country. A similar programme was thereafter replicated nationally on a much larger scale and continues, though with considerably reduced success.

Although this experience enabled me to witness how skills development transformed the employability factor in graduates, I realised that we could do the skills building to the required scale only if this was targetted at the undergraduate level, through the teaching of our discipline-based

courses. Such a strategy was implementable only by developing staff and changing their attitudes.

Take us through the history of setting up the Staff Development Centre and its range of activities.

The high graduate unemployment and discontent had resulted in immense social upheaval in Sri Lanka in the mid-1980's that was led by disillusioned unemployed graduates during which the country virtually came to a standstill and universities remained closed for about 2 years. A high-powered task force appointed by the President and in which I participated, recognised the grave social repercussions of graduate unemployment. Its recommendations included the setting up of Staff Development Centres in universities primarily to train university lecturers in student-centred teaching methods with skill development. The first such Centre in the country was set up in my university. My Vice-Chancellor at that time, a man of great vision, requested me to become its first Director, which I first resisted in the view that it was almost impossible to change university staff who enjoyed permanent status with almost no effective performance-based assessment. He, however, made me see that this was a rare opportunity for bringing about desirable change.

The single most important factor that really made me to decide to take up this post was my strong belief that a resurgence of graduate-led violence was simply a matter of time, unless this volatile situation was defused by enhancing graduate employability skills through skills-based university teaching. I believed strongly in the seriousness of the situation since during the earlier graduate-led violence, I was to be assassinated and the lives of my family were targeted by some sectors of this violent movement for my open stand against force and violence, while graduates involved in this movement from my own university, and who knew me, leaked these assassination plans to me on account of my open support of a social change process, albeit through non-violent means. These experiences made me realise also that there were a lot of well-meaning graduates whose university skills training gave them little option but to remain locked on to a pathway of violent demands rather than the exercise of a choice of employment opportunities and a peaceful life style. I also saw the tremendous power and opportunity that we teachers wielded to give our students choices in life, through employable skills development.

So, I took up the post of Director and the challenge, believing in the possibility of managing a change in the university setting to enable the empowerment of university students to occupy responsible jobs with self-esteem and to lead social change through learning and skills development, moving them towards forming communities of learning for positive and non-violent social change.

The Centre was set up and activities of the Centre were first prioritised to serve the academic staff of all Sri Lankan universities to change its ways of teaching and their attitudes to student learning. This was to be accomplished by having separate teacher training courses for junior and senior staff and through bespoke workshops, the latter being resourced by local and overseas consultants. The juniors course was given emphasis and served to train around 75 teachers every year in 2 cohorts that were run in parallel, with further numbers in the waiting list. Much later, after the above priority was adequately met, the Centre expanded its services to train administrative staff, clerical and other support staff as well as in the development of management skills of Heads of Departments and Deans. It also interacted with the corporate sector closely, since they are the major employers of graduates. We also support academics to proceed to overseas conferences that are related to teaching and learning.

One of the major activities for ensuring the quality of our teacher training courses was to have an able External Examiner having wide staff development experience. I was very fortunate when Professor Liz Beaty agreed to act in this role. She transformed the course to have an extremely robust and developmental focus. With Liz going into her new position at HEFCE, Ranald Macdonald has taken over this important role.

At what point did you come across SEDA and its Teacher Accreditation activities?

University staff development was a new concept in Sri Lanka and the then Vice-Chancellor Professor Lakshman, in his characteristically visionary way, had already written to and obtained the agreement of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation to fund a 1-year consultant appointment to the newly established Staff Development Centre to assist in its first year of activity. Out of the applicants for this consultancy, we selected Mr Stephen Cox who already had contact and experience with SEDA and its Teacher Accreditation Scheme. He worked with me closely and tirelessly, giving all his energies to the fledgling Centre and letting me on to all aspects of staff development, of which I knew nothing. The credit for all the setting up goes to Stephen, who is held in very high esteem in the Sri Lankan university system.

The course has been running for a number of years now and has been successfully reviewed. What plans do you have for future developments?
Plans for the future includes the building of a core group of staff to service the courses and training activities. We have been in existence for a period of about five years and have trained staff from all universities who band together to form a resource team for this purpose. Another development that has been set in motion is to assist the other universities to set up their own Staff Development Centres as well as their own training activities. I have conducted three residential workshops for potential staff developers of Sri Lankan universities, which were very effectively resourced by Professor Graham Gibbs, Ranald Macdonald, Carole Baume and David Baume. I would also like to form an association in Sri Lanka, similar to SEDA, so that our academics can have a discussion forum and a network to interact, particularly because subscription to similar overseas organisations are prohibitively costly relative to Sri Lankan salaries.

Other areas of developmental concern are in the funding and staffing base. While the Centre receives funding for day to day activities from the government, we receive considerable funding support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. This will not continue and the Centre needs to generate fresh funding. Staffing of the Centre has to be developed since it is inadequate to sustain our multiple functions.

So the SEDA-PDF awards are of some interest to you?

Yes, greatly so. I believe they will help us service the different sectorsof the university system, since we now train librarians also in the same course. The SEDA awards motivate our university staff to think and act reflectively, which is extremely necessary in these times of rapid change. Therefore, it would be very useful to have the PDF expand further to encompass administrative staff, a key category in the university framework. The SEDA awards moving on to the PDF structure shows that SEDA is very forward-looking and proactive in responding to change and I wish the PDF all success.

I gather that you will be leaving the University for a short while.

Yes, I am taking a sabbatical in the USA as a Fulbright Fellow, working part of the time as a marine biologist and the rest as a staff developer. Interestingly, we in the Developing Countries have our own advantages, for example I have just learnt that I have accumulated a sabbatical entitlement of 20 months and have to think of finding additional things to do if I am to take this entire entitlement! So, life has its advantages, other than the tropical warmth!

Thanks Suki and good fortune for your stay in the States and subsequent development activities in association with SEDA

Is There an Ideal Method for Evaluating New Lecturer Development?

Roni Bamber

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Abstract

Since Dearing (NCIHE, 1997), UK universities have invested significant resources, particularly staff time, in developing their new lecturers. How do we know, however, that these lecturer development programmes (LDPs) work? What is it that works? Does it work for everyone, in every university? Most institutions have not undertaken in-depth evaluation to answer these questions, so this paper asks whether there is an ideal method for evaluating development programmes and critically considers three approaches.

Introduction

Until now most universities have done little serious evaluation of their lecturer development programmes (Harvey & Knight, 1996: 167), evaluation being described as 'atheoretical' (Gilbert & Gibbs, 1998: 2), based on 'weak conceptual underpinning of the limited empirical evidence that exists' (Gibbs & Coffey, 2000: 32). Gibbs and Coffey's study (2000) of the effectiveness of university teacher development in 24 institutions internationally found some evidence of positive impact, but in a recent survey of 93 UK higher education institutions (Bamber, 2003), when asked if they had evidence of their LDP having an impact on the teaching and learning practice of participants, most educational developers provided, not evidence, but anecdotal answers, such as:

> 'Yes, though no formal systematic evidence has been collected'
>
> 'Yes, better QAA scores and generally a more positive attitude towards HE teaching as a profession'
>
> 'I have observed the 'ah-hah' experience in several of the participants, and many have striven to improve the manner in which they facilitate interaction between students'

The danger of this anecdotal approach to evaluation is that the provision cannot then be justified or defended, other than that it 'seems like a good thing'. If we don't undertake evaluation on the basis of more solid evidence than 'happy sheets', we may find that educational development is a 'precarious business', dependent on management whim:

It may take years to get approval to set up a development course, but a little adverse publicity or a change in the attitude of senior management can result in the closure of development programmes or even the entire unit that provides the development (Gibbs & Coffey, 2000: 39).

The objective of this paper is to identify an evaluation approach which depends less on anecdote, and which will be appropriate for our educational development culture. I will consider three approaches:

- Kirkpatrick's Four Levels (1994)
- Realistic Evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997),
- RUFDATA (Saunders, 2000).

The factors used to examine the fit of the Kirkpatrick approach to educational development will then be used as a critical framework for examining the other two approaches.

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels

In a survey of companies (Boyle & Crosby, 1997: 2), 94% of them were using some form of Kirkpatrick's (1994) systematic approach to evaluation. The Kirkpatrick model seems standard for business and industry, and is also recommended for academic programme evaluation (Boyle & Crosby, 1997), but is it adequate for educational development? The model evaluates at four levels:

1 Reaction:
This measures customer satisfaction. 'If participants do not

react favorably, they probably will not be motivated to learn' (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 22). While a positive reaction does not guarantee learning, a negative reaction will almost certainly reduce the likelihood of learning occurring. The best data for this level is student input, such as feedback forms or listening to informal feedback.

2 Learning:
To evaluate learning, specific objectives are determined, and evidence is sought of attitude change, knowledge improvement and increased skill levels (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 22), for example, in student assignments (Boyle & Crosby, 1997: 2).

3 Behaviour:
To measure behavioural change, evidence is sought in the workplace: how well have the knowledge and skills from the course been transferred into what the person does when back at work? (Boyle & Crosby, 1997: 3)
Four conditions are necessary. The person must

a have a desire to change
b know what to do and how to do it
c work in the right climate
d be rewarded for changing
(Kirkpatrick, 1994: 23).

4 Results:
The most important and difficult measure is impact of the development (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 63), and contribution to organizational objectives (Boyle & Crosby, 1997: 3). Kirkpatrick recognises the difficulty of demonstrating changes in conceptual or theoretical understanding, so he is willing to accept reasonable evidence, rather than proof: indicative, rather than definitive, evidence (Saunders, 2000: 20). Kirkpatrick does not acknowledge, however, that only around 10% of learning from off-the job programmes results in observable changes in work effectiveness (Bailey & Littlechild, 2001: 352). Impact in the workplace is, therefore, difficult to prove.

Kirkpatrick's framework is attractive, since it evaluates several aspects of a programme, and is rooted in the workplace. However, there are aspects of evaluating my LDP which are not adequately covered by Kirkpatrick, and I will cover this in the next section.

The Training Approach to Evaluation: A Critique

Experience tells me that the very political environment of educational development requires an evaluation approach which takes into account certain meta-factors

- Analysis of what does or does not work needs to examine the values and view of knowledge which underpin the course, and which are held by stakeholders, since these will define what is valued and what is seen to 'work'.
- If we are to gain credibility through theorizing, we need to acknowledge, in a theorized approach, firstly, the power and influence of these different stakeholders,
- Secondly, the context for evaluation and policy-making within which these stakeholders operate, and
- Thirdly, the best methods to use for our purposes.
- The approach must, however, be practical and offer a workable model.

These five key factors will now be used to examine the Kirkpatrick model.

Factor 1: Does Kirkpatrick acknowledge the importance of values and views of knowledge?

Kirkpatrick's values seem rooted in a functional, commercial relationship, on a straightforward input-output model: 'If my customers are unhappy, it is my fault, and my challenge is to please them' (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 72), while writers in the evaluation literature start evaluation with an investigation of the values and world view which underpin the programme and the evaluation. We need, for example, to decide if, philosophicallly, we support the quantitative paradigm or the qualitative paradigm, and we need to question the assumptions about truth and knowledge which underpin these different approaches. This is an especially thorny issue in my own university, where great value is placed on 'scientific knowledge' (usually associated with the quantitative paradigm), and an evaluation may not be valued unless it follows one of two strategies:

A) Work within the scientific paradigm, using a quantitative approach: a poor option, given the differences between scientific epistemologies and those which underlie educational development programmes. In my experience, quantitative measures of development on their own are insufficient.

B) Be explicit about the values which underpin the evaluation and the programme, and give these values academic respectability by taking a scholarly approach to the process. Question whose values and reality are in question, and determine what is understood by, for example, 'knowing' and 'evidence' (Viitanen, 2001: 83). The second of these strategies seems preferable, but Kirkpatrick's approach does not support this type of examination.

Factor 2: Does Kirkpatrick acknowledge the power and influence of stakeholders?

Stakeholders in universities include, inter alia, senior management, heads of department, new lecturers, their mentors and senior colleagues. From the educational development viewpoint, the importance of stakeholders has long been recognised:

> without the visible support of Councils (Courts) and Senates, of vice-chancellors and principals, of deans and heads of department, staff development will wither rather than flourish. Without the sup port of individual members of staff, the provision of staff development and development will have no effect. (CVCP, 1987: 7)

Stakeholder confidence is vital (Jacobs, 2000: 267), and the more sophisticated approaches obtain it by involving stakeholders in discussion and negotiation of the whole evaluation process and its outcomes, and explicating their diverse world views (Owen & Rogers, 1999: 15). For Kirkpatrick, stakeholders are involved only mechanistically: for example, bosses determine the needs of subordinates (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 25). Real stakeholder involvement takes the evaluator into much more difficult, contested territory, with stakeholders as active contributors. So, again, Kirkpatrick's four levels do not seem adequate.

Factor 3: Does Kirkpatrick acknowledge the institutional/organisational context?

For Kirkpatrick, the context does not go much further than the participants immediate supervisor. Five kinds of climate affect learning effectiveness, all referring to degrees of support from the supervisor: preventing, discouraging, neutral, encouraging and requiring (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 24). This categorisation of supervisors is helpful for educational developers, to appreciate the power and influence of, for example, a head of department, who plays a major role in whether new lecturers take their learning back into their discipline group (Bamber, 2003). However, Kirkpatrick does not acknowledge the fuller meaning of context, whereas writers in the evaluation literature recognise that the evaluation process should examine an interconnecting set of people and factors which impact on each other, and on the evaluation (Perrin, 2002: 17). Just as important as the course are the relationships, networks, policies and infrastructures which surround it. Ignoring contextual factors misses the opportunity to subject the context itself to critical scrutiny, an important step for the educational developer:

> Unless the academic contexts within which edu cational innovation occurs and the policy frame works which shape these contexts are seen to be part of the process of transformation and are challenged to change, there will be no significant reshaping of the existing educational system (Jacobs, 2000: 263).

In the educational developer's change agent role, introducing change inevitably means challenging the status quo and questioning the academic context. Introducing new lecturer development, for example, challenges many notions about academic work, roles and values, such as the notion that research is sufficient proof of expertise for academic posts. In evaluating new lecturer development, it is vital to include a critique of policies, norms and culture at the macro, meso and micro levels (Trowler & Knight, 2002), and to place the institutional context in 'the illuminative spotlight of evaluation' (Jacobs, 2000: 265). Otherwise, responsibility for the apparent success or failure of the programme falls exclusively on the course tutors, when many other factors have contributed. How do we contextualise the evaluation? Jacobs (2000: 263-265) lists a number of factors to consider, such as:

- curriculum
- teaching
- learning
- the institution's academic context
- national policies.

While academic evaluation usually includes the first three, the last two are often underplayed. Highlighting them in evaluating educational development programmes makes the process much more complex than allowed by Kirkpatrick's framework.

Factor 4: What about Kirkpatrick and methods?

One major methodological decision is whether to use quantitative or qualitative methods. While evaluators appreciate the apparent objectivity of quantitative measures, especially when stakeholders are from the scientific community, they also see the dangers of causative explanations. The complexity of social interactions cannot be examined within the constraints of quantitative models (Greene et al, 2001: 26), so educational evaluation is likely to go beyond these, to a 'fitness for purpose' orientation, tailoring methods to the hypotheses and situation being examined (Jacobs, 2000: 270). Data from a wide range of sources external to the LDP, such as policy documents, interviews and national statistics are woven together with evaluation data from the programme itself.

However, Kirkpatrick treats methods functionally and simplistically. His approach is semi-scientific, linking input directly to output, albeit with recognition that less tangible learning, such as attitude change, is not always measurable (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 26). He advocates before and after testing, observation by supervisors, and using control groups to explain the differences between the trained group and the untrained group. While these are valid methods, methods are not independent tools or techniques, working in a vacuum. The problem should define the methods used, not vice versa (Jacobs, 2000: 271), so that fitness for purpose prevails.

Factor 5: Does Kirkpatrick offer a practical model?

Kirkpatrick has an advantage here. His model is simple, straightforward and easily understood. It does not place unreasonable demands on the evaluator's time, and can be carried out on a reduced scale. In this sense, Kirkpatrick's framework is useful in practical terms. However, given the lack of attention to the factors listed above, and the need to include the complex political context of educational development in evaluation, Kirkpatrick does not, I feel, offer the 'ideal method'. The next section of this paper considers alternative models, and decides whether these are more helpful for educational development

The Alternatives

Two alternative approaches are Realistic Evaluation and RUFDATA. These frameworks have much in common, in that they stem from the evaluation literature, not the training literature, so they have more scholarly and sociological roots. They emphasize stakeholder involvement, and the importance of context and values. These approaches, therefore, offer educational developers the potential to understand the intricacies of which aspects of the development programme work for which participant, and, vitally, why.

Alternative 1: Realistic Evaluation

Realistic Evaluation (RE) is theory-driven, so evaluation starts by hypothesizing the links between three key elements: Context + Mechanisms = Outcomes, the 'CMO Configuration' (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 101). Evaluation is considered applied research into these elements. Context could include, for example, the university's policies, senior management support, disciplinary differences, national policy and the research / teaching orientation of the institution. The Mechanism is the LDP, and the Outcome is what happens as a result of the LDP being followed in that specific context.

Does RE present a 'realistic' evaluation method for educational development, judged against my five key factors?

Factor 1: The importance of values and views of knowledge

Evaluators using RE probe beneath observable inputs and outputs, examining rival views of the world which, if ignored, distort the evaluation. Evaluations will fail if they produce descriptions of outcomes, rather than explanations of why programmes work (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 30). Very often development programmes do not work as well as they might, or are not accepted, due to value conflicts, such as those which might exist between participants from a scientific discipline who do not appreciate the educational development approach used on the programme.

Factor 2: Stakeholder involvement.

It is not programmes which work, but people choosing to make them work:

Potential subjects will consider a programme (or not), volunteer for it (or not), cooperate closely (or not), stay the course (or not), learn lessons (or not), retain the lessons (or not), apply the lessons (or not). Each one of these decisions will be internally complex and take its meaning according to the chooser's circumstances. (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 38)

The evaluator is a facilitator, seeking 'mutual enlightenment between each set of stakeholders' (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 207). In LDP evaluation, this might mean engaging a range of colleagues in dialogue about the programme, its intentions and values, and their values. This is surely educational development at its most interesting: developers do not just deliver programmes, but help to shape the thinking and culture of their institution, for instance in addressing any imbalance between teaching and reasearch (Gibbs & Coffey, 2000: 37).

Factor 3: Context

Effective RE means obtaining a better understanding of the contextual factors which affect outcomes (Pawson and Tilley 1997: 114), and which explain the successes and failures of programmes (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 70). Stakeholders are key, but context goes beyond the physical, tangible factors of people and place, to the less easily identifiable factors of values, norms, social rules and interrelationships (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 70). In practical terms, to get a full picture of contextual factors, evaluators use not only data culled from the evaluation, but also ideas from the background literature, and from the 'folk wisdom' of practitioners (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 107). One powerful outcome is that the 'folk theories' are critically questioned and readjusted (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 114). Is it really the case, for example, that maths is best taught using 'talk and chalk' methodologies? Or that students entering education are less knowledgeable than their counterparts 20 years ago?

Factor 4: Method

Methods in RE start with theorizing, for example, about what it is about the LDP which works. Any evaluative tools can be used, so long as the evaluation is theory not data-driven (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 155), and so long as the methods reveal the programme CMO (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 114).

Factor 5: Practical model?

The purpose of RE is an eminently practical one. It is to answer the question 'For which participants does the course work best, and under which conditions?' In other words, the 'does it work?' question becomes 'what in the programme works for whom?' and 'why?'(Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 109 and 113). Detailed analysis of sub-groups identifies substantive differences in success levels, and makes hypotheses as to why these differences happen (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 113), focusing on internal variation. This is useful for evaluating educational development, where the sub-group phenomenon (eg subject groups), an important component of university cultures, is significant. A possible hypothesis is, for example, that high lecturer workload brings less positive outcomes (Boulton-Lewis et al, 1996: 100). RE breaks this hypothesis down into detailed examination of how each sub-group differs, so that the workload hypothesis would consider differential workloads between departments and the effect on programme outcomes.

Concluding our assessment of Realistic Evaluation as a tool for educational developers, this approach has many attractive aspects - it allows an eclectic range of methods; it recognises contextual factors; it aids policy-making; it encourages sub-group analysis; it involves stake-holders in hypothesis formulation; it embraces a semi-scientific approach; the 'Context + Mechanism leads to Outcome' principle is simple but sufficiently complex for most situations; it looks at the world through a social window, but does not sound too 'sociological'. However, the advantages of Realistic Evaluation are outweighed by the important disadvantage of time commitment, so as a practical model Realistic Evaluation may not be practical enough for educational development. As one educational developer told me 'I can carry out substantial evaluation, or I can deliver the programme - not both.'

Alternative 3: RUFDATA

Regarding Factors 1, 2 and 3, recognising the importance of values, stakeholder influence and context, the RUFDATA framework is underpinned by the principles of the evaluation theorists, so there is an emphasis on the importance of context, and the need to involve stakeholders. In contrast to RE, however, these principles form a simple, pragmatic model which can be used 'off the shelf' in any evaluation situation.

Regarding Factor 4, Method, RUFDATA (Saunders, 2000: 8) offers a practical model (Factor 5) for action for those with little evaluation experience. Saunders explicitly recognises what other theorists underplay, that evaluation is not normally done by professional evaluators, but by other professionals, for whom evaluation is only one small aspect of their work. They have the 'practicality ethic' of people working in organisations (Saunders, 2000: 15), who will not be motivated to take evaluation seriously if it is over-complicated and alien to the normal working processes and culture of their community of practice. Saunders (2000: 15) offers a practical framework for planning evaluations:

Reasons and purposes
Uses
Focus
Data and evidence
Audience
Timing
Agency

Like RE, the first stage involves the development of a policy statement. However, instead of a theoretical hypothesis about possible explanations for the programme's outcomes, RUFDATA's initial statement is about the overall evaluative approach to be taken. The emphasis is on reflexive questioning, to identify the procedural aspects of the evaluation design, making no assumptions about the content or methods of the evaluation, and directing the evaluator to action, not just analysis and reflection.

RUFDATA is, then, a practical, problem-solving tool, but 'practical' derived from the concept of 'practice': the evaluation should relate to practices which are familiar to the professional group in question, rather than imposing methods which do not fit (Saunders, 2000: 11). While Saunders (2000: 20) advocates the involvement of colleagues in 'horizontal activity', and states that the quality of the evaluation will depend on how well the evidence collected reflects the differing views of a number of stakeholders (Saunders, 2000: 20), this involvement need not be outside the norms of the professional situation. In the educational development context, the developer/evaluator need not elicit views in a way that does not feel culturally acceptable in normal educational development situations. In order to think like evaluators, we are required to produce the RUFDATA document before starting the evaluation; then the evidence is gathered and analysed in whatever approach feels comfortable and doable - an eminently practical model.

The RUFDATA framework seems a helpful starting point in evaluating my course for new lecturers. It gives me a practical guide for action, whilst appreciating the theoretical considerations of other evaluation theorists. The eclectic nature of RUFDATA means that in considering the focus of the evaluation, for example, I can take advice from the theoretical approaches, and find a clear focus by engaging stakeholders in a dialogue about which aspects of the course need to be examined.

Conclusions

The objective of this paper was to identify an approach to evaluating LDPs which would go beyond anecdotal evidence, and 'happy sheets'. Of the three approaches examined, I prefer RUFDATA, with elements of the more theoretical approaches. The lessons from the theoretical approaches are, for example:

- Gain academic credibility by theorizing and clarifying the ontological and epistemological basis of the process. Weave these values and views into a clear strategy and approach, preferably worked out in advance of launching the evaluation. Given the political sensitivity of educational development programmes, and the lecturer time they absorb, the evaluation strategy must be far more thoughtful than the evaluative processes which are used for other university programmes (Bailey & Littlechild, 2001: 366).

- Involve stakeholders: not just their reactions to the LDP, but in a non-defensive dialogue about the programme and the evaluation.

- Obtain shared responsibility by an illuminative purpose, focusing on the context of provision, not just the course itself. Policies, norms and culture at the macro, meso and micro level need to be included.

- Use both quantitative and qualitative methods, depending on the evaluation's purpose, and the 'fit' of each method for the programme, and for the group of professionals concerned.

- Use a practical framework, to define the parameters of the process.

Developing a sophisticated approach to evaluation requires substantial effort, but the engagement of colleagues with our educational development thinking, and our engagement with them, may lead us into deeper and more collaborative development activities - not only for our LDP, but in other, less structured work.

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Book Review

The Online Learning Handbook
Alan Joliffe, Jonathan Ritter and David Stevens

Kogan Page: London 2001
£24.99 pbk
ISBN 0 7494 3208 X

A book offering an eighteen-step process for building a web-based learning event offers reassurance, does it not? It reassures that there is a system; there is a process; there is a way which, when followed, will lead to good web-based learning.
The eighteen-step way is developed by the authors from a nine-step process developed by Dick and Carey in 1978 as a systematic approach to the design of instruction. I am probably not the only person who, in their early years of teaching, felt squeezed between the simplistic models of teaching offered by the courses we were given to teach (slabs of content to be delivered, and if the students didn't receive it that was pretty much the students' problem) and the obviously much more complex and messy reality of student learning evidenced by students' questions and confusions; and, if we were able to be so reflective, by our own memories of being a student. The seventies were a heady time when a systematic approach, a systems approach even, to education, with programmed learning and the like, would bring learner-centred order and would relieve us from the tedium of delivering content. You can't beat a flowchart and a checklist for offering a sense of order in an uncertain world

But that was before we learned to embrace uncertainty, and even chaos. 'The On-Line Learning Handbook', for all its talk of Web and internet and LANs, has for me an unexpectedly old-fashioned feel.

This is a handbook for those undertaking large projects. Further, I feel, it's a handbook for those developing large training, rather than education, projects. I bow to few in my enthusiasm for programmes and courses having clear aims and learning outcomes, whether specified by the course or (better) negotiated between student and course and kept under review - but I found the relentless attention to fixed outcomes here hard to take.
I sought some assurance that the handbook was rooted in, or at least took account of, theories of learning. I was partially reassured by the authors' awareness of the roots of a systems approach to education and training in a behaviourist approach. I was less assured by a very short reference to constructivist models of learning, and reassured still less by the generally slight use in theory to underpin recommendations.

The book contains some 300 pages of solid advice, models, flowcharts, checklists, screen-grabs, questions and other valuable devices and instruments. Chapters describe, among many other topics, the development of learner profiles, learning objectives, assessment, instructional strategies, learning resources, designing the user interface, flowcharting and storyboarding, inputting learning materials, evaluation, orienting people towards the web environment, technical infrastructure, with a valuable 'stay out of jail' chapter on copyright.

'Handbook' implies thoroughness - it used to imply completeness, but that is no longer attainable. This handbook will be very valuable to those developing web-based learning to work within the virtual and managed learning environments which are a fast-growing feature of higher education. But I still long for the book that balances considerations of learning with technical and organisational considerations, the book where the learning technologies are tested at every moment and on every page against how they actually support learning, the book that will enthuse and inform technologists about learning as much as many of them are currently enthused and informed about technology. That would be an on-line learning handbook. This, for all its strengths, is at heart an on-line teaching handbook.

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Call for Reviewers

Rachel would also like to hear from people willing to write book reviews for the magazine.
Details are available from Rachel herself or the SEDA Office

The Evolution of SEDA's Values

Shirley Earl, Head of Learning and Teaching Development at Napier University, Edinburgh talks with Tony Brand, Chair of SEDA-PDF about recent revisions to the SEDA values and how these are used to support development work with new staff.

SEDA's structures have been securely based upon an explicit statement of core values and principles. These have provided a sound basis for learning and teaching and educational development activities in the UK (and internationally) for over a decade. They have been recently revised

Legend: Tony
Shirley

Shirley - It seems to me that the values driven approach is one of SEDA's great achievements. Have you developed any hints and tips that you can share with colleagues to introduce the concept of values to those newly appointed to lecturing posts? After all, we can easily forget how challenging the concept of, or the identification of values can be for staff, especially when so few professions have explicit statements of the sort that SEDA has developed.

That's a powerful statement, Tony - and I agree.
It's a big question . . . I think the first thing to say is that I embrace the SEDA values through and through. I check them meticulously whenever I'm on a review team and I place the values at the heart of my own course at Napier. We use a profiling technique.
Our course is a flexible delivered one, built around self-study guides, work-based learning and one-to-one tutoring. The guides embed the values and the assignments frequently require evidence of the values being practised. Most particularly we ask the course participants to self assess where they are with each value at the end of each module.
Pretty obviously this needn't be a technique only used with flexible learning. The course members rate themselves on a scale of (1) 'currently inadequate, discussion [with tutor] needed' to (6) 'totally embedded' on each. What emerges is a snapshot of them vis-a vis the values at the end of each module - and a profile of their development in relation to the values over the whole course.

That's interesting

The course members and tutors find it fascinating.
In our naivety when we first designed this - well, we pinched it actually, from an Open University course that's no longer running. John Cowan and Judith George had dreamed it up. In typical John, Judith and value 4 fashion they said 'take it, develop it, use it as you like' - which we did. Anyway, when we first designed this, we thought there would be steady progression from 1 near the start of the course to 6-ish at the end. Fiddle-de-dee! In reality the numbers fall all over the place. There are peaks and troughs everywhere. The only consistency is a 4-ish score on value 1 at the end of module one and that's because we cover "an understanding of how people learn" in that module.
What we've realised is happening is that the more people learn about the principles embedded in the values, the more they embrace them - and the more they realise they have yet to learn about each.
As a course team we've long since ceased to worry about the actual quantitative figures. It's the assimilation, the dialogue with the tutor and the conversation in our final integrative oral that count, not the figures, because the dialogue and conversation are deeply revelatory - of the assimilation, of where the participant has been, what they're thinking and where they feel they have yet to go.

So in this profile of values you ignore the figures?

Basically 'yes'. Well, if we see something like a 6 - 6 - 6 - 6 on a value then we probe because we fear something's not being grasped Otherwise either a low score or a high score can indicate learning - a drop to a low, the chances are that a new dimension has been perceived; a rise to a high, that the course member has progressed and feels more confident in the area than before.

I'm sometimes asked by course participants whether SEDA reviews and refreshes the core values. Well the simple answer is yes and as reviewers you and I worked together with others in Teacher Accreditation to complete this recently.

Yes, in fact those who have looked at the new Professional Development Framework (SEDA-PDF) will see some significant changes. "A commitment to equal opportunities" has become "working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity", for example.

I recall that the discussion leading to the revised wording was challenging at times. I think that your contribution was somewhat influenced by the approaches being adopted in Australian universities?

Yes. SEDA moved more slowly on the adjustment than usual. I think that what we had was a framework of values that was truly a decade ahead of its time. By the way, I think I disagree with part of your opening comment, some professions really have values at their core - look at the Hippocratic Oath taken by all graduating medics. Anyway, SEDA had a futuristic belief in professional values for teachers in HE and those values (originally 7 which became 6 through the merger of two that were over similar) had stood the test of time.

On some SEDA committees there was a little of the 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' attitude but I had visited Monash University, Melbourne for its initial accreditation and their course team had collegially won a debate with the two recognisers on the old value 5 (equal opps)

They argued that 'equal opportunities' implied a deficit model and in the subtext relied overly on obligation and legislative awareness. I didn't believe that this had been SEDA's intent so took their point and was more than prepared to present the case for modification at SEDA committees. We ended up with a revised value 5 "working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity "
"Working effectively" implies assimilation of the value to the point of being able to act in accord with it and "promoting inclusivity" captures the idea of being forward thinking, anticipating - being proactive rather than simply reactive in case of difficulty

And other revisions?

But 'yes'. Value 2 now includes added emphasis on respect and ethical practice. Quite aside from the issue's fundamental importance, increased debate about ethics and the proliferation of Ethics Committees within HE establishments make this seem appropriate. Um, . . . within Napier I would expect our tutors to have had conversations with our participants about why we are at the stage we are with consideration of ethics . . . the Director of Research has recently proposed quite a sophisticated model of clearance that implies embedded levels of responsibility which will affect all course leaders. This responsibility comes about as a result of the discussions their delivery teams should be having.
There's also the amendment to old value 4 - the new value 3 says "learning communities" rather than "with colleagues".

Was this for any particular reason?

As I remember it, the final think tank did a pirouette - Schulman's claims about the loyalties of scholars and considered the complexity of some of the communities in which we now work. I was certainly aware of the multiple communities of clinical practice educators. At Napier we have course members who work across maybe three universities as well as within an NHS Trust team, professional development as well as specialist medical. The whole spectrum doesn't occur immediately to those course members if you use the word 'colleagues'. If you use 'community' they ask 'which one?' so the conversation is immediately pitched at a higher level.

Then there are the other expanding communities - universities have always had interface with research communities and a lot of the moderns are strong on business interface as well. Now, with access, there's interface with local community groups. Then FHE is being talked about rather than HE only. Some staff work within European communities. Others work the global dimension, I mean, now things partner institutions in Australia, China, India, Malaysia do affect us at Napier and vice versa. They and we really are learning together - and the SEDA PDF value phrased "working in and developing learning communities" includes all of these.

Thanks for that, do you have any final comments about the values approach?

Only that I did a recent SEDA PDF review at a large university and that throughout the review we used the six values to ground ourselves and the university team again and again. For me the values bridge the divides that the sector insists on encumbering itself with. If reviewers can use them with traditionals, sixties builds, moderns and colleges and across regions and countries then they are indeed core. They're definitely worth emphasis and helping new staff with. Can you let the new Academy know?

Development Officers Diary

Julie Hall

In January 2002 I was appointed as a full time Development Officer for SEDA. This post became 0.5 in September and the post will come to an end this Summer. It thus seems a useful time to review the work completed.

The initial action plan developed by the SEDA Executive contained the following projects:

- To improve communication with members and within SEDA
- To lead on a range of development projects such as conference sponsorship, specific one day events and website development
- To organise a national one day event for staff delivering HE in FE
- To organise a pre conference event
- To work on marketing publications
- To explore possibilities for funding
- To co-ordinate publicity
- To aid in PDF development and launch
- To develop a research project on membership needs
- To enhance SEDA's equal opportunities work

The three corners of the effective project management triangle are of course time, budget and quality objectives. Particular challenges in this post have been to work while keeping a careful eye on income and expenditure, and the evaluation of projects with an impact on the association much further down the line. Some of the projects, particularly those concerned with developments in SEDA's marketing strategy have been fairly costly in that they have entailed work with designers and a re-launch of some of the publicity material and products. Others have been much more straight-forward; the fact that I have been able to attend committee meetings, conferences and meet a range a members has led I think to greater synergy across SEDA activities and stronger links with some of the LTSN subject centres and other partners. In response there have been various initiatives. Current publications for example have been re-packaged specifically for HE in FE to support the SEDA event on the topic.

The events organised during this period have been successful both financially and in bringing SEDA to a wider audience. This growth in awareness has been enhanced by cementing links across the HE and FE sectors particularly through SEDA displays at a range of important conferences. The end of the year really began to provide evidence of SEDA's role in working with a wider audience when the association was asked to be involved in a number of national HE in FE and LTSN events. This has lead to a modest but growing number of HE in FE delegates at SEDA conferences, FE individual and institutional members and publications sales to FE colleges

As the post comes to an end it is important that the development work is cemented into the organisation. I am pleased to report that conference organisation for example now encompasses publicity to possible sponsors, to past non member delegates and to our large number of contacts across FE, and that a new membership role is to be considered to nurture new members and actively seek new ones. I have worked with all committee chairs, the SEDA office and SEDA Executive before the post comes to an end to further develop the SEDA marketing strategy and make best use of the contacts developed over the period.

I hope members can build on this to by considering their contribution to raising SEDA's profile across their institutions and amongst partner institutions. Perhaps you can increase the numbers of associate members or distribute SEDA publications more widely.

The development officer post has been a major financial cost to SEDA, however it will I hope in the end prove to have been a wise investment. The post will be formally evaluated over the next few months.

On a personal note my thanks are due to all of the committees, SEDA members and staff in the SEDA office who have made this such a wonderful opportunity and a thoroughly rewarding job.

Why SEDA-PDF?

Appreciating learning wherever it happens.

Jo Tait

Jo Tait, about to begin a new life as a freelance consultant in higher education, explains why the Open University benefited from being the first institution to put itself through SEDA's new Professional Development Framework (SEDA-PDF) process.
More information is available at http://www.seda.ac.uk/pdf/index.htm).

How does the framework support development for individuals, for educational developers and for whole institutions? How did it deal with the complicated staff and educational development provision across the Open University? What were the particular challenges in recognising a post-graduate certificate that is open to anyone who teaches at higher education level anywhere in Europe?

I'm sure I was one of many educational developers who, over the past year, wondered whether it would be worth paying to renew SEDA's recognition of our teaching and learning qualification, since ILTHE provides accreditation and the 'license to practice' that looks set to become the standard for individual teachers. Like many institutions, we found ourselves short of money and would have trouble justifying the time needed to put together a claim for recognition. Now, having been persuaded to go through the process (and even contributed to the framework's development by our feedback), I can see how the membership can share in the rewards of SEDA's continued development and growth and can be empowered to engage with (and resist) compliance-driven policies. Such a post hoc recognition of the value of a difficult and costly process might remind you of the sorts of comments many of us hear from our programme participants after they have struggled to produce their teaching portfolio:
It was hard to see the point of all that work at the beginning, but the process has helped me appreciate my own abilities and made new sense of what I do.

This short article is an appreciative testimonial to that same tricky, developmental portfolio process - meeting standards, showing development, critically reflecting on practice and developing scholarship - at an institutional level as well as for my own professional understanding.

Scholarship and theories

The emerging theories of professional development that seem to underpin the new PDF values have taken on board two of the most useful ideas that are currently influencing professional development in HE:

- Appreciative methodologies (Kerka 2003) for organisational development that build on the strengths of what is working well (quality enhance ment), rather than auditing gaps and inadequacies in administrative systems (quality assurance);
- Rich understandings of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) that appreciate (there's that word again) differences between institutions, departments and practices while still requiring that appropriate values and standards of practice are met and demonstrated.

A very different context

The Open University both celebrates and is limited by its many claims to being different from any other university. It is different because:

- students have always been free to choose what and how they study, and at what level - an extreme version of widening participation and access that does not readily fit current policies;
- we teach almost exclusively at a distance, using regionally managed part-time tutors for face-to-face, online or correspondence-based learning support and assessment;
- our full-time lecturers rarely work directly with students but spend their time researching and producing high quality materials and resources;
- educational development is distributed across different central and regional groups and activities, incorporating a range of support staff such as course managers, editors, librarians, web designers as well as full- and part-time teachers; partly because of this fragmented provision,
- the PGCert in Teaching and Learning in HE that was due for re-recognition by SEDA was not designed for the OU's own staff (although full-time and part-time OU teaching staff have studied with us); it targets HE teachers anywhere in UK and Central Western Europe whose local provision is, for whatever reason, inaccessible or inappropriate.

For these reasons, the OU presented a particular set of challenges to the SEDA-PDF team who were asked to confirm the coherence of the professional development provided right across the OU - not just to recognise the PGCert. By affirming that the framework is, indeed, flexible enough to take account of this level of complexity, SEDA has demonstrated that its recognition processes can respond to diverse organisational structures and systems,

The process - risks and benefits

Being the first to go through the recognition process had its disadvantages: the advisory paperwork was changing as we attempted to comply with it, which gave all our preparation a sense of provisionality. It also played to my strengths as a last-minute operator and earned us the right to have an opinion about the structure, participating in decisions about its final form.

The paperwork

There are two components to recognition - institutional and programme-specific, so we organised the two portfolios separately. Mapping documents for the recognition of awards will be familiar to anyone who has worked with SEDA under the 'old' system: although the values have been refined (and improved to take account of more sophisticated thinking), the arrangements have been well tested over time.

The institutional recognition documentation is, fundamentally, a pro forma inviting us to map the ways in which different areas of the OU work together to identify and meet the needs of staff: to show how its Human Resource policies, including appraisal and departmental / individual needs analyses, work alongside the Learning and Teaching strategy to support professional development across the whole institution. As with the portfolio process for individual teaching, this is an invitation to make good claims and to back them up with examples presented in organised ways.

Creating this document prompted many good conversations. Seeking SEDA recognition gave us permission and a reason to talk with other Open University SD providers in detail about the coherence between our programmes and philosophies. These conversations built on lots of informal and formal meetings undertaken in the 12 months since I accepted the role of Head of Academic and Professional Development. The final version of the document was pulled together at the last minute, drawing on e-mails from key players: a senior manager was briefed and seemed duly impressed by the coherent story she was being asked to present. We planned and sent a draft programme for the day to our two recognisers, along with as much of the paperwork and evidence as we could reasonably expect them to read.

The recognition event

The event took a whole day: our plan proposed that we address the PGCert during the morning, with an opportunity for recognisers to talk informally with participants and tutors over lunch. In the afternoon, we gathered together key institutional players for presentations and questions. For me, this was the culmination of the process - senior managers and those responsible for realising the ideas embedded in strategy were taking time to discuss and make positive claims about the systems and processes that maintain learning and teaching across the University.

Our recognisers were both monitors and consultants: their role was to help us recognise our achievements and our weaknesses and to support us in learning and planning for future developments. This process differed from some of the more individualist portfolios because it recognised that organisational structures are needed to support and inspire individuals. The recognisers posed some probing questions. For example, they asked the Director of our Institute about her philosophy of professional development; they challenged the representative of Human Resources about the effectiveness of needs analysis and appraisal in the faculties; in the morning and the afternoon sessions, they asked about staffing for our programmes - a delicate point in the current climate of many institutions, but vital to long term viability.

The report

The draft report produced by the recognisers was open to comment and we, the teams who had contributed to its findings, were invited to feed back before a final version was agreed. The final document was truly collegial: it highlighted potential weaknesses - a need for further integration and institutional support - while celebrating our strengths and judging us worthy.

The outcomes

That the Open University is now recognised as a provider of SEDA's professional development schemes has been celebrated at very senior level and noted by appropriate PVCs. Another award for our part-time tutors is well on the way to recognition: it is good that the development of our seven thousand part-time tutors looks set to be recognised by an award designed to reflect the particular demands of their OU work. Through SEDA-PDF, those responsible for delivering that award have the support of a community of colleagues outside the OU - helping them to see problems and issues that are shared across the sector, as well as the distinctiveness of correspondence tuition and distributed learning.

Colleagues across all levels of the university helped us put together the portfolio to claim, with justification, that the OU is able to provide coherent development opportunities for its staff: having told a good story, managers and practitioners need to continue the work and anticipate / provide appropriate resources and support. Other awards could follow: editors and librarians are keen to find a way to be recognised for their contribution to the design of courses; research supervisors, too, may soon have a programme suitable for recognition by SEDA. Having built the affirming portfolio, the OU must now continue to realise its potential and continue to enhance learning for Open University students. We look forward to SEDA's continued support for our developers..

References

Kerka, S. (2003) Appreciative Inquiry,[online] ERIC National Resources Information Centre. http://www.ericacve.org/docgen.asp?tbl=tia&id=164 [accessed 15 July 2003]

Lave, J. and E. Wenger (1991) Situated learning : legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press

Wenger, E. (1998) Communities of Practice: learning, meaning and identity. Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press

GEMS of the LTSN - Part 2

Stephen Bostock FSEDA, Keele University

This is the second half of a review of the LTSN web sites that idiosyncratically picks out a selection of resources of interest to an audience outside each discipline. It is based mostly on browsing each site so it is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it indicates that there is a lot of useful material tucked away where you won't find it when you need it.

Having searched these sites recently it may be worth passing on some of the experience. Suppose you were looking for a briefing document on a topic from any one of the LTSN web sites. There are several options:

(i) Take the student retention document in paragraph 13 below as our target. Go to google.com and do a literal search on student retention: either type the phrase "student retention" in double quotes or go to the advanced search page and type the phrase into the 'exact phrase' field. The target document is in the top 50, of over 59 000 hits - for the present purpose we will say that it was found but some further work will be necessary.

(ii) If we add 'ltsn' to the search field along with "student retention" in double quotes (or, on advanced search page, use the two fields 'all' and 'exact phrase') we get 440 hits and our target is top of the list. Bingo!

(iii) To find it yet more reliably, on the advanced search page use the 'exact phrase' field again and also add 'ltsn.ac.uk' to the field 'only return results from the domain', i.e. search only from sites with that address. Now we only get 84 hits and the target is again at the top.

(iv) Finally, if you know which web site contains the document, a search on the ics.ltsn.ac.uk web site also retrieves it at the top of the hit list.

However, method (iii) above will only work in the minority of LTSN webs that have a ltsn.ac.uk domain name. For an example of what happens with a Subject Centre using a different domain, the paper on VLEs in paragraph 15 below is on www.ukcle.ac.uk/ (the Law subject centre). A search on 'VLEs' produces 10 000 hits but our target is in the top 50 - not bad but leaving us some work to do. An advanced search on 'VLEs' using the domain field with 'ltsn.ac.uk' does not find it at all (although there are 216 other hits). More surprising, method (ii) - putting 'VLEs' and 'ltsn' in the search field (separately, without quotes) - produces 1340 hits and the target is not among them; there is no mention of ltsn on that document so the search excludes it. We would never find the target document

The moral of this? Because many Subject Centre web sites do not have an ltsn.ac.uk domain name, and some of their documents may not mention LTSN, using 'ltsn' in the search (either as a domain restriction or as page content) is unhelpful. That's a pity. The LTSN webs provide a degree of quality assurance and relevance to UK HE. A search of all their documents would be useful, and it could be done so easily with the google advanced search if only they all had a ltsn.ac.uk address, such as the admirable www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk and www.psychology.ltsn.ac.uk

No doubt greater minds are already addressing this problem. However, let's hope their solution is not one almighty web database accessed in real time. The LTSN web sites that retrieve documents from a database are noticeably slower, seem less reliable (sometimes crashing my browser), and provide unmemorable (even unwritable) URLs for their documents. Google is a fantastic search engine with all these documents already indexed. Let's make the best use of it, either with sensible domain names or with a standard kite-mark on every page, such as 'ltsn'.

On with the show: the numbering of the Subject Centres below follows on from part 1 of this review, in the previous issue Educational Developments 4.1. The web sites were accessed on 2/7/03.

13. At the Information and Computer Sciences site there is an online Journal ITALICS (I'll leave you to work out what it stands for). In the recent volume 2, issue 1, is An Action Research Model for the Management of Change in Continuing Professional Distance Education by Nunes and McPherson. The model emerged from the need to manage a conversion of a paper-based distance education course to e-learning. They propose the model as a basis for the management of change in continuing professional distance education generally. At the same site, in the Resources/Policy Priorities section is a useful brief review of resources on student retention, a known problem in computer science but an issue rising up agendas everywhere.

www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk/index.html

www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk/pub/italics/issue1/nunes/008.html

www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/student_retention/index.html

14. At the Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Centre there is a collection of briefings. One of them is Evaluating tandem interactions by Christine Penman. I had not come across the term 'tandem learning' before but "Over the past decade, tandem learning has become an integral part of second language acquisition in many institutions as a complement to more traditional learning practices." It is an interesting variation on student peer teaching that might be useful in other disciplines. There is a discussion of assessment of learning in tandem learning and other sources and references.

www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/index.aspx

www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=411

15. The Law Centre is The UK Centre for Legal Education (UKCLE). Its web has a small section on Using information and communications technology in legal education, including Frequently asked questions on virtual learning environments (VLEs) by David Grantham. Dated June 2003 this is a very useful overview and Frequently Asked Questions that benefits from a specific example of an undergraduate law module. A real bonus is a 25 minute multimedia guided tour (running in a JavaScript enabled browser) of a WebCT site used to teach a law module. Recommended.

www.ukcle.ac.uk/index.html

www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/vles/index.html

16. The UK Centre for Materials Education (a slow, database-driven site) has a resource database, like other Centre, and also a 'discussion forum' of shorter pieces.

Modularisation and Sliced Bread by Peter Goodhew (Director of the Centre) discusses this topical issue. He lists the arguments against modularization and semesterization and summarises the problems facing the teaching of materials science and engineering in 'slices of white bread'. The arguments would apply to most subjects.

www.materials.ac.uk/

www.materials.ac.uk/discuss/modularisation.asp

17. The LTSN Maths, Stats & Operational Research web site is pleasantly accessible. It has a quarterly newsletter with a section called "Something that worked for me" where one page account of teaching innovations are described. In volume 1 number 4 Using the student resource to write CAL material is a good example. (CAL = computer assisted learning, one of the many previous terms for what is now eLearning.) Martin Greenhow describes his Mathletics project where third year maths undergraduates write diagnostic objective tests (using QuestionMark) for first year students. Both sets of students benefit, and after editing the student questions and answers he is left with a large (4500 questions) bank of questions.

ltsn.mathstore.ac.uk/index.shtml

www.mathstore.ac.uk/newsletter/nov2001/pdf/worked4me_seenthis.pdf

18. Medicine, dentistry and vetinary medicine has a newsletter, "01". In the first issue is Better learning through discussion by Jean McKendree, This article reviews the advantages of discussion for deep learning and introduces some of the innovative forms in which discussion can be used in an educational context. These include Task-Directed Discussion Games which elicit discussions from students by providing them with a group task such as ranking a set of concepts in various ways.

www.ltsn-01.ac.uk/

www.ltsn-01.ac.uk/newsletter/01.1_html/discussion

19. The Performing Arts network web site (PALATINE) has a directory of resources with thousands of reviewed links, and a collection of Guides to Good Practice. One of these is Design for learning: a guide to the principles of good design by Paul Kleiman Associate Director of PALATINE. He takes Braun's 10 Principles of Good Design (the people who make shavers) - innovative, aesthetic, honest, minimal, enduring and so on - and applies them to curriculum design. Much food for thought here.

www.lancs.ac.uk/palatine/

www.lancs.ac.uk/palatine/design_for_learning.html

20. The Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre has an online journal, catchily called The PRS-LTSN Journal. The first issue of summer 2001 - vol 1(1) - includes "Double marking versus monitoring of exams" by Roger White (pp52-60 in the .pdf file). It caught my attention partly through being largely discipline-independent and partly from an existing interest in marking and adjustment (In praise of medians, Ed Devs 2.3). If you have a double marking system for quality assurance you might read this and think again!

www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/index.shtml
http://www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/journal/summer2001.pdf

21. The LTSN Physical Sciences has a good range of resources. The short Briefing Papers include recent ones on on Personal Development Planning, Employability, and Plagiarism. The longer Practice Guides are designed to provide practical advice and guidance on current issues. Evaluation of Teaching by Alex Johnstone (9 pages plus appendices) concerns student evaluation of teaching quality; a perennial issue that is being rattled by the HEFCE plans for student experience questionnaires. It includes a case study of student evaluation in science at Glasgow, with questionnaires included for evaluating teaching, laboratory work, and attitudes to learning, teaching and knowledge.

dbweb.liv.ac.uk/ltsnpsc/default.htm

dbweb.liv.ac.uk/ltsnpsc/guides/evaluation_teaching/guide2.pdf

22. The Psychology LTSN has a beautifully clear web site. It also has exactly what you would hope psychologists would give us - a report on Applying psychology disciplinary knowledge to psychology learning and teaching. Of course, it applies to much other learning and teaching, too. This 2003 report by Zinkiewicz, Hammond and Trapp is comprehensive at 97 pages, and a mine of useful information. The chapters consider human development, student diversity, learning and thinking, motivation, and the social context. After each section is an invaluable "Implications for teaching" paragraph. Put aside a whole morning for this one!

www.psychology.ltsn.ac.uk/index.html

ltsnpsy.york.ac.uk/LTSNPsych/Webdocs_not_nof/r2p.pdf

23. The Sociology, Anthropology and Politics centre web site (C-SAP) It is building a collection of Findings, short accounts or case studies based on practice. One is Assessing Sociological Knowledge by Computer by Victor Jupp, based on experience in a level 1 course where fifteen formative assessments were provided online, followed by a summative multiple choice test. The evaluation brings out the benefits and the limitations of objective testing. A second Finding is Peer and Self-Assessment: Some issues and problems by Jennifer A Platt. She tried several forms of peer and self-assessment, both formative and summative. Her evaluations suggested that, although the activity might be structured to have formative value, it could be difficult to justify as a contribution to summative evaluation where practice was not specially planned for the purpose.

www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/index.htm

www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/projects/findings/ShowFinding.asp?projectnumber=51

www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/projects/findings/ShowFinding.asp?projectnumber=48

24. Social Policy and Social Work web site has a section on learning approaches. The resource on Practice learning and placements will be relevant to profession-related studies. It includes Practice Learning for Professional Skills: A Review of Literature (2002) by Dick, Headrick and Scott (77 pages). It concerns practice learning within professional education, with particular attention to social work.

www.swap.ac.uk/default.asp

www.swap.ac.uk/learning/practice.asp

www.swap.ac.uk/docs/gov/PracticeLearningScotland.rtf

SEDA-PDF First Award for Post-Compulsory Sector through DPPA

John Doidge, Director, Staff Development Centre, University of Leicester

Developing Professional Practice Award

Of the many developments in SEDA's Professional Development Framework, one of the most significant is the development and launch of the Developing Professional Practice Award (DPPA) for the combined Post-16 sector.

Originating as the Professional Development in HE (PDHE), this Award has now been validated to run in a dozen institutions, but is the first to break through the Sector barrier by a unique alliance with a group of 14 Colleges in Leicestershire. The Colleges - University of Leicester Network (CULN) spotted this opportunity when meeting as a staff development group in order to explore ways in which the Colleges and the University could work with and support each other more closely. The Colleges have by agreement privileged access to the University's Staff Development programme and take part in both the PG Cert (Academic Practice) - for teachers of HE in FE - and in the general workshop provision of the University's CPD programme. So it came as a logical step to consider developing the existing DPPA programme (a joint initiative and provision with Nottingham Trent University) to meet the needs of the College community. In effect this meant developing more appropriate modules to replace four of the existing twelve (HE specific) modules, but retaining an effective, tested, learning programme.

The DPPA has been designed as a first professional qualification for people who work in the post-compulsory education sector, and is available to all staff at any level of seniority. It has been particularly targeted at support staff including clerical, administrative, technical and manual staff, and no prior qualifications are required for entry to the programme. Six modules are compulsory but candidates may gain their learning by a range of routes and develop a portfolio of evidence of understanding, application and practice. As a flexible programme, models differ across institutions and this enables providers to tailor and match their programmes to local needs and circumstances.

For SEDA, these are important developments as the national trend and government policy is to bring HE and FE closer together within a combined sector, as evidenced by the establishment of a Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council (LLSSC) embracing HE, FE, Adult learning and Libraries. This will replace the old national training organisations and be operational from 2004, with a remit for setting sector-wide occupational standards and qualifications, developing support strategies to meet specific skills needs and a strategic oversight of the development of the sector workforce.

Developing Leaders Award

SEDA is developing a new PDF named award for those who are in or aspire to be in Leadership positions in the post-compulsory sector. Many institutions have developed

Leadership programmes utilising a range of approaches from the formal taught programme to experiential, problem-based and action learning; many have also adopted external accreditation (notably by the Institute of Leadership and Management) for management development programmes at junior, middle and senior level, as well as internal postgraduate qualifications such as the MBA.

The Developing Leaders Award is designed to bridge the gap in this more formal provision by enabling institutions or clusters of providers to address local or discipline-specific needs and acquire recognition for innovative programmes that use flexible or blended learning approaches, but which would not, in themselves, lead to a traditional qualification. Using the strength of the SEDA framework, programmes would not be constrained by explicit curricula or approaches to learning. They would be expected to develop an appropriate mix of learning opportunities which can include formal skills or personal development activities or training via courses, conferences, workshops, distance or open learning, e-learning, problem-based and experiential learning, and action learning sets.

SEDA will be publishing the Developing Leaders Award in the Autumn but is already working with the University of Leicester on a pilot programme which would lead to recognition of the HEFCE funded 'Developing tomorrows leaders in Health and Social Care Education' (This FDTL4 project involves thirteen institutions).

John Doidge will be pleased to talk to anyone interested in the DPPA or wanting information on setting up a local programme
Email: jd66@le.ac.uk
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