

# EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

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## Making Good Use of Excellent Teachers: the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme

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### Introduction

This year is an opportune time to review the impact of the National Teaching Fellowship Award scheme, not least because the number of awards has been increased from 20 to 50. The authors of this piece are three 'winners' from the 2001 cohort of National Teaching Fellows who have been conducting research with fellow award winners since early 2003. We aim to answer two questions: what use is being made of excellent teachers, and how can this use be enhanced? It is not our purpose, though, to report on the outcomes of any individual funded activity.

Firstly we will look at the scheme itself, then outline our evidence base for this article. We then go on to identify what impact the scheme has had from the perspective of the recipients. Current and future developments are then addressed, followed by some concluding remarks.

### The National Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funds the National Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme, which was introduced in 2000. Between then and 2004, one hundred and thirty awards have been made to individuals nominated by their institutions. The aim of the scheme is to raise the status of teaching and learning and it is one of three strategies that aim to do this. Teaching Fellowships reward individual excellence, Learning and Teaching Support Networks (LTSNs) provide discipline-based support, and the teaching and learning strategies that HE institutions are required to produce provide an organisational focus for such developments.

Until 2004, each institution was able to put forward one individual as an excellent teacher. Between 85-95 institutions have submitted a nomination each year and 20 awards have been made annually. This year, and reflecting the numerical increase in awards referred to above, there are now three categories of fellowship: rising stars, (those with less than six years service), experienced staff (those with more than six years service) and staff involved in learning support. There are 10 awards for rising stars, 30 for experienced staff and 10 for learning support staff. All nominations should be the results of a

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documented internal selection process, and ideally be associated with an institutional reward system.

Candidates are required to submit an account of their educational philosophy, and their impact on students, colleagues and the wider HE community. They are also required to outline how they propose to spend the award of £50,000 on a funded activity. The nominees' submissions are then scrutinised by an independent panel that works to criteria that are available to all.

Details of who has won the award, an outline of their funded activity and details of the National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) scheme can be found on <http://www.ntfs.ac.uk> until the official launch of the Higher Education Academy in autumn, 2004. Subsequently, this information will appear on the Academy's web site: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>.

### Our Evidence Base

As award holders, we have direct personal experience of how we have been utilised. Additionally, we have had access to informal comment from other teaching fellows about their experiences, which in many cases were dramatically different from each other. We decided to introduce a formal element to the generation of these 'stories': we wanted to obtain a clearer picture of what the positives and negatives were of being an award holder. Early in 2003 we developed a questionnaire to explore how 'winners' perceived the significance of the award for them personally, for their institution and for their work in national and international terms. We sent the questionnaire out to three cohorts of NTF winners: 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Our questionnaire used a mixture of open and closed questions to enable respondents to rate their satisfaction from high to low on different items and also to provide opportunities for personal comment and response. The overall response was 39 out of 60 or 65%. Out of the 36 male winners and 24 female winners we had a 64% male response and a

67% female response. Of the 39 respondents most came from the 2001 cohort – 17 respondents in all or 85% of the full cohort. Wherever possible, we have used quotations in order to provide a 'voice' for NTFs.

### Current Impact of the Scheme

We will now look at the impact of the scheme, firstly in respect of individual winners' institutions and then with regard to the wider academic community.

### Institutional Use

On the whole, NTFs were made best use of in smaller institutions and ones where teaching and learning was already valued. In such institutions, the NTF was better able to be an effective agent for change. In research intensive institutions where the RAE was the defining factor of excellence, an excellent teacher found it harder both to exert influence and to progress in career terms. However, the more senior a position the award holder had within the institution, the more influence they could exert.

Whilst 77% of NTFs felt that winning had affected their pride and self esteem positively, the response of their institutions in making use of this increased confidence of excellent teachers was somewhat variable. Overall only 50% of winners had been involved in staff development and dissemination within their institution. This is particularly disappointing, as one of the original aims of the scheme was to spread good practice within the field of learning and teaching. It is a waste of a valuable institutional resource.

This lack of involvement appeared to be associated with the institution's primary focus: research or teaching. Thus, in research-led institutions, winning the NTF resulted in relatively little recognition:

*"I would have liked more recognition from my institution that teaching is worthwhile and valuable instead I am still being told to prioritise research!!"*

*“I have been told that winning the NTF has no relevance to my career advancement in a 5\* research Department”*

In contrast, respondents from teaching-led institutions often received a more favourable response, as the following quotation illustrates:

*“My institution has also been supportive by writing the NTF project into my new job description and encouraging me to make time for it”*

Perhaps most tellingly, some institutions were just unsure:

*“My impression is that the organisation does not know quite what to do with me: it offered a celebratory ‘event’ (which never happened) and then turned me into a line manager so I did less teaching than ever before and curtailed my development role”*

In addition to the research/teaching dichotomy, there would seem to be two significant areas that determine the extent to which excellent teachers are utilised: work load and the existence of institutional support structures.

Only 15% of NTFs felt that their workload had not increased as a result of the award. The following are typical quotations:

*“The extra load from NTFS hasn’t been compensated in terms of adjusting personal workload”*

*“Increased massively i.e. the activities are on top of my usual workload of teaching”*

In fact, 92% of respondents found the competing time demands difficult to manage in conjunction with the varied range of tasks they were taking on. This strongly suggests that if best use is to be made of NTFs, there must be personal support in terms of departmental commitment to allow time for award holders to conduct their funded activity and other

associated activities.

Secondly, in order to use excellent teachers most effectively an institution needs to ask itself a central question: since the NTF scheme is a relatively new development, how do we support the NTFs and also how do we promote the excellence that has been identified? This is going to be particularly personal to individual NTF winners because that winner brings together a unique combination of talents. A “one-size fits all” approach would be less effective.

We suggest that the senior manager for Learning and Teaching (usually a Pro-Vice Chancellor) needs to ensure that the NTF receives effective guidance. One option might be to use (and the institution pay for) a consultancy firm to provide mutually agreed career progression advice, not least because the best consultancy firms help the client realise the options ahead and pinpoint the strengths that they want to take forward, rather than being directive. This enables the NTF to see himself or herself as a valued person and is a first step towards making a difference. From this, a plan can emerge which builds on strengths, and enables the NTF to take on duties they may not initially like, but which they may value after a period of time.

### **Community Use**

In addition to being used effectively within their own institutions, excellent teachers need to operate across much wider horizons: national and international. They need to be given the opportunity to work with colleagues from other institutions and countries to share best practice and perhaps develop a less ethnocentric view of the teaching and learning milieu. This would reflect our increasingly globalised world and student body.

In terms of this wider academic community, there is evidence that NTFs are being used more effectively, or rather making best use

of themselves. Thus some have become involved in their respective subject centre by hosting conferences, making presentations at regional events, helping produce the centre’s journal and, in some cases, becoming the Director of the relevant subject centre. Similarly, fellows have been involved in making presentations at regional ILTHE (as was, HE Academy as is) events and at their annual conferences, as well as other national and international conferences. For example, 18 fellows presented papers at this year’s Teaching and Learning Conference and 14 participated in the Fifth Colloquium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Building Knowledge, Improving Learning in San Diego. Additionally, eight fellows attended the inaugural meeting of the International Teaching Fellows Network, again in San Diego. They have also contributed to the work of the Generic Centre by, for example, providing inputs on employability. They have been appointed to a range of committees, including those responsible for selecting Centres for Excellence for Teaching and Learning (CETL) bids, and new NTFs. They have also taken on a support role for new NTFs, in collaboration with the HE Academy. Their experience and expertise has been thus tapped and made available to a wider audience.

One interesting development has been the development of communities of practice amongst sub-groups of NTFs. Thus one group are working towards producing a book of readings to which they each make a contribution. A number of fellows have worked jointly on conference papers. The authors of this paper are working on a longitudinal study on the impacts of the awards. This research brings together a professor of sociology, a member of the student services team and a lecturer in organisational development. The evidence we have collected has been presented at four conferences and in an article that has been accepted for publication (Frame, Johnson and

Rosie: 2003, 2004a, b, c and d). In summary, the NTF has provided the opportunity to establish fruitful contacts beyond the institutional base, both nationally and internationally, and to broaden the knowledge base through cross-disciplinary work.

### Future Impact of the Scheme

One of the unexpected outcomes of the scheme, which may in part reflect the variability of institutional support referred to above, is the move by fellows to form a college within the HE Academy. This is at an advanced stage of development. A draft constitution will be circulated to fellows with the aim of reaching agreement by early summer, 2004. The proposed purposes of the college include supporting, promoting and developing NTFs to enable them to contribute effectively to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education, individually and collectively. To date, the community of fellows has provided a collective response to HEFCE on the consultation proposals for CETLs and on a framework for professional teaching standards. Best use can be made of fellows by involving them in future reviews of the NTF scheme, and in more general teaching and learning developments, including policy formation.

Support in the past for fellows by the relevant HEFCE funded bodies, such as the ILTHE and National Co-ordination Team, has been seen to be of varying quality. With the emergence of the HE Academy, the support provided has been much more positively viewed. However, the identification of three categories of NTFs necessitates the consideration of appropriate support that each will require. This is likely to apply both to the support provided by the HE Academy and the support that HEIs provide internally.

### Conclusion

The awards have been operating for only five years. The individual winners, their institutions and the

wider HE community, including the HE Academy and the funding council, need to be alive to what is possible, what is probable and what needs to be done in order to ensure that best use is made of those who are deemed to be excellent teachers. If the NTF scheme and indeed, institutional reward schemes, are genuinely to raise the standard, profile and status of teaching and learning, then the "excellent" teachers that they reward need to be used in a way that significantly enhances the learning process for their students and the practice of their professional community.

It is clear that most use is made of NTFs in those institutions that are committed to the on-going enhancement of teaching and learning and least use is made of them in institutions that are not. In order to encourage the former response by all institutions who submit candidates for the award, the scheme could well be amended to ensure that all universities commit themselves to supporting and utilising their "winners", and that this commitment is formalised as part of the nomination process.

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## Information for Contributors

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

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

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# Learning from Learners

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## Introduction

While many of our students may not be able to articulate the finer points of learning theory, they do know what helps them learn, what hinders their learning and how their learning could be improved. Our task as educators is to ask them these questions, listen carefully to their responses and integrate these findings into our planning for staff development.

At the recent SEDA Conference in Cardiff I facilitated a workshop on a deceptively simple process for evaluating student learning which we have used for at least ten years in our institution. The focus in the workshop was on the linking of this student feedback with the development planning of an individual lecturer and beyond this with the strategic learning and teaching planning of the institution.

Students know what enhances and impedes their learning and yet sometimes our evaluation methods do not enable them to express this understanding clearly. They may struggle to find the words to adequately capture their experience or find that a mark on a continuum does not truly reflect the reality of their experience.

We use a simple process of asking a class to provide answers in groups to three questions. This has proven very effective in gaining an overview of the issues which generally affect student learning and the particular concerns of a specific class.

Over the years lecturers can test the usefulness of their teaching methods and build a profile of student responses which tell a useful and evolving professional story. We have found there are many advantages and benefits to be gained from using this process.

## The Process

The process known as the SGID (Small Group Instructional Diagnosis) was originally developed by Dr J Clarke, University of Washington, Seattle during the 1980s.

### What is it?

A structured way to get feedback from students about their learning experiences in a class. It is preferable for this to be undertaken after the students have had sufficient experience of a lecturer to make a judgement and early enough to make changes if necessary

### How long does it take?

45-60 minutes, depending on class size.

### How does it work?

The staff developer arranges to meet the class at a suitable time and the class is informed of the details prior

to the visit. When the staff developer arrives, the lecturer leaves the classroom.

The students are then organised into groups and asked three questions.

- **What helps you learn in this class?**
- **What hinders/limits your learning in this class?**
- **What suggestions do you have to improve your learning?**

The answers are collated onto newsprint and a rough estimate made of the level of agreement for each statement especially if not representative of the view of the whole group.

### What are the next steps?

The staff developer takes the feedback sheets away and collates the comments into a report for the lecturer, grouping ideas and eliminating repetition but retaining the students words as far as appropriate.

The lecturer meets with the staff developer who acts as a channel for feeding back the students' views. Sometimes it is necessary to explain the context or clarify the intention of the comments. At this stage they discuss reactions and plan actions and changes if necessary. The staff developer will provide support during this process.

### Then what?

The lecturer returns to the class, thanks the students for the feedback and discusses issues as appropriate.

### Who gets this information?

The lecturer who has requested the process retains the information and may use it for appraisal or promotion purposes or simply to assist with professional reflection.

### Why have it done?

Students appreciate the quick and immediate opportunity to provide feedback without extensive writing. They hear what other students are experiencing and are provided with a safe feedback model.

## The Student Perspective

First of all, the students perceive that their learning matters to their lecturer and others within the institution and that their views and experiences are taken very seriously. They see the benefits from their feedback and hold the lecturer accountable for this. In a very real way this process puts the students' learning at the heart of the teaching process and gives them a voice.

The process also models a safe feedback mechanism where all parties can learn from a behavioural focus. The skill of providing positive and negative feedback to colleagues is one of the more challenging aspects of being a professional and this process provides a framework

which can be adapted for many situations.

The feedback sought from students is based on their specific learning experience of what is, or is not effective. The students are not expected to give an opinion of the lecturer, rather to identify and describe the teaching practices or other factors which are affecting their learning. This in itself models a useful feedback approach. Sometimes their comments will highlight the value of their student colleagues in their learning but primarily, comments relate to the impact of the teaching practice.

Students are pleased to be heard and remarkably cooperative and insightful. They really appreciate not having to labour over long evaluation sheets and write their own comments. It also does not take long. Each question is brainstormed for about 3 minutes. The students do not need to spend extended time thinking and reflecting as the process is intended to pick up impressions which are uppermost for them.

### The Academic Staff Perspective

A re-assuring aspect of this process for the lecturer is that feedback is balanced and most unlikely to be completely negative. The positive aspects which are assisting student learning are explored first.

Positive comments in response to the question **What helps you learn?** such as:

- *active learning and our involvement in the learning process*
- *lecturers who are well prepared, organised and know their subject thoroughly*
- *lecturers who are available to help after class*
- *detailed feedback and quick turnaround of assessed work*

all reinforce aspects of teaching practice which we would encourage and want academic staff to maintain or develop.

Comments relating to **aspects hindering learning** such as:

- *assignment questions were too broad and comprehensive for the given word limit which was unrealistic*
- *the lecturer works at the level of the most advanced student*
- *the use of technical language and terminology which we do not understand*

are very direct indicators of issues to be addressed immediately and provide an opportunity for very focused discussion with the individual lecturer and the staff developer as together they seek ways of addressing the concerns.

Issues which are hindering learning are always recorded as activities which the lecturers do or do not do, rather than who or what they are. This behavioural focus is essential. Usually these practices can be changed and improved, whereas it is very difficult for academic staff members to change who they are. The staff developer who is managing this feedback needs to guide the process

to ensure the comments from the students are appropriate. Sometime this involves “un-packaging” an issue to the point where the class as a group is comfortable with the recorded statement. If the statement does not reflect the views of the whole class the numbers who do support the statement need to be indicated.

It is important for a lecturer to know whether the comment is just from one small group or reflects the view of the whole class. This is easy to record. All reports for the lecturers include the number of students present, the date and time of the survey and the name of the academic staff member who has requested the feedback.

Academic staff do appreciate the opportunity to gain feedback about the learning of their students quickly and directly with the opportunity to respond immediately. Sometimes our regular student satisfaction surveys and evaluation sheets do not provide enough specific details, sometimes faculties need a quick review of a course, sometimes lecturers need information for their appraisal or promotion exercises, sometimes student complaints require an independent safe process for exploring a situation. If a lecturer has requested the feedback as part of preparation for an appraisal or promotion exercise the information gained can feed into planning for individual professional development where poor practice can be addressed and strengths enhanced.

In all these situations the process has proven to be safe, reliable and straight forward.

### The Staff Developer's Perspective

The independence of the staff developer is an important factor in the success of the process. It is vital that confidentiality is respected and information treated carefully. However, the academic developer certainly gains an insight into the real student learning experience across the institution and this awareness is very helpful in planning for real staff development needs.

As an agent for change the staff developer can also, with the permission of the lecturer, share some of the examples of excellent teaching practice which the students describe. The Staff Developer ensures that personal comments are worded as factors affecting learning and this means lecturers more readily accept tough feedback. As the positives are collected and fed back first, there is balance in the process and staff tell us it feels fair.

It also provides the Staff Developer with a special opportunity to talk directly with students about their learning. On these occasions it is important that the staff developer does not know the names of the students. The collated statements come from the class as a whole group and no one student can then be identified.

### Challenges and areas where this process is less effective

The process has not been very effective with students for whom English is a second language at levels one and two.

Recently I used a translator with a group of Somali women who were learning English but were not literate in their own language. Their feedback was not as useful as that from other groups as the concept of providing feedback for the lecturer was so foreign to them. They wanted to say how wonderful their lecturer was but found it really difficult to say why.

## Audit and Quality Systems

When we were audited recently the academic auditor was interested in this process as a means of gaining feedback from students. In order to complete the feedback cycle we now document that the process has occurred, that a follow up meeting has been held to discuss the outcome and that an action plan has been agreed. This can now be monitored, followed through and the impact assessed. It is also expected that lecturers may return to classes to reassess the learning situation after a period of perhaps six months.

It is really important that the evaluation occurs in time to address issues and have the learners benefit during their course from the outcome. While end-of-course evaluations may benefit the students who enter the course the following year, it is frustrating for those providing the feedback if they do not see the benefit of their feedback.

## Extensions of the Process

We also use the process to gain an impression about a whole programme rather than just a paper or course within it. In these cases it is essential that all staff members who teach on this programme are aware of what is happening and agree to be possibly identified as demonstrating good or poor practice. This then gives the staff developer a chance to discuss the feedback with the whole group. Sometimes it is necessary to prepare a personal set of feedback comments for an individual lecturer. It is helpful if the students are told how this will work as they usually do not want a particular person embarrassed in front of peers. In fact, they appreciate that a respectful and careful approach is likely to work better for them.

Occasionally a situation will arise where a Faculty Dean or Head of School will ask for this process to be carried out as student complaints have been received. In these cases it is absolutely essential that the lecturer is comfortable with the process and agrees with it occurring. This may require some conversations with the lecturer first. The staff developer needs to establish with the lecturer that the manager may be part of the feedback process. On many occasions this has provided immediate clear data which we have been able to act on quickly. The students are relieved to be heard and the staff developer can focus on the specific practice causing the problems and provide immediate support.

Another valuable use of the framework of this process is to get feedback from staff about the performance of a manager. This is again done on request of the manager. In

this instance the questions to the staff group reporting to the manager would be:

- What does your manager do which helps you do your job?
- What does your manager do which hinders you doing your job?
- What would you suggest to your manager, to improve your ability to do your job?

The process is the same and a group feedback statement provided to the manager in a one to one conversation.

## Follow-up Options

The staff developer, having completed a number of these evaluation sessions, can reflect on the nature of recurring issues and determine whether an institutional or discipline based workshop or some other response is required.

Assessment is one area where we seem to require a variety of approaches; modules within the Certificate and Diplomas of teaching, workshops, short courses, customised sessions for subject groups and, on occasions, individual coaching.

## Connections with Strategic Planning

By collecting the data from this process it is possible to gain an impression of the current issues for students and where the staff development priorities should lie. Important recurring themes which appear to affect student learning for us most frequently at CPIT are:

- the credibility of the lecturer in the discipline and
- the students' perception that the lecturer really knows and cares about their learning.

These two factors have immediate relevance for staff academic development planning. Staff need to retain credibility in their field and at the same time to demonstrate that they understand the student learning process and their role as part of it. These two parallel requirements are at the heart of staff development planning.

## Conclusion

The review process described is very simple with three basic questions and a respectful process at the core. The key benefits are that students and their learning are central, that lecturers can easily and quickly evaluate their teaching and receive help and support where necessary and staff developers become aware of excellent and concerning teaching practice with the opportunity to respond with immediate and relevant guidance, all useful outcomes for a learning organisation.

### Helen Matthews

Coordinator of Staff Development activities at CPIT, Christchurch, New Zealand. She leads a small team of staff developers, is involved in educational strategic planning, coaches and mentors staff and generally assists academic staff to enhance the students' learning experience. Email: matthewsh@cpit.ac.nz

# Editorial

**Stephen Bostock** FSEDA, Keele University

I am writing this in the wake of attending the International Consortium for Educational Development fifth biennial conference in Ottawa University, Canada, on June 21-23 (see the ICED Council report in this issue). This was my first ICED conference - attendance was made easier by being held in the same place and immediately after the annual conference of the Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. As an ICED novice, it was interesting in two contrasting ways. Firstly, the main themes were largely familiar from the educational and staff development work in a UK university and on the UK scene. Secondly, the differences between countries and institutions were larger than I imagined, and not always in the direction I would have guessed. For example, in both the USA and Canada there is a huge variation between institutions in the amount of staff development for teaching and learning, its status, and accreditation. While not wishing to be nationalistic, it occurred to me more than once that in the UK the activity of SEDA in teacher accreditation over more than 10 years, the SEDA Fellowships, the ILTHE, and the recent national initiatives in accreditation of professional development, puts us some way ahead of other countries. Whether we are going in quite the right direction nationally is another matter, but there is nothing comparable elsewhere. Maybe that should make us cautious in our national initiatives.

Two high points were the opening plenary by Graham Gibbs and the closing plenary by Chris Knapper, two of the best known names on the international educational development scene and in ICED. Both reflected on the changes over decades in educational development, the trends, and the likely future. To cherry-pick a few

points from Gibbs: one change has been the growing importance of the need for evidence of impact. He recounted early work on improving student study skills, and on teaching large classes, involving training large numbers of teaching staff and considerable cost, but with no evidence of impact on student learning. That would no longer be appropriate. A second theme was the growing influence of (some) educational developers within institutions: a shift from helping individual staff to having an input into strategy and being the servant of the senior management to accomplish organizational change. (Those of us trying to do all these things may need a support group for professional schizophrenia.) A third shift is the dispersal of some educational development activity from central units to the discipline departments, which nonetheless need support and networking from full time educational developers in central units.

After the plenary, Graham Gibbs was awarded "The Spirit of ICED" by the ICED Committee, for his lifetime's work in educational development.

After two and a half days of sessions, and continuous 'networking' over many coffees and pastries, Chris Knapper returned to some of the same themes in his closing plenary. Some fragments may give a flavour: there has now accumulated a considerable body of evidence of impact of many of the activities of staff developers, for example in papers in the International Journal of Academic Development (ICED's journal); educational development has survived and grown, and will itself continue to develop; and 'Don't cover the subject - uncover it' (the escalation of content in many programmes damages learning). A final list of challenges for educational developers included: the continuing, difficult relationship between

research and education in universities; performance indicators for student learning; multicultural diversity; and the corporatization of universities. Phew! I needed another coffee and pastry.

In between these substantial bookends, the experiences of delegates will have varied with the sessions they attended, and it would be unfair to give my own preferences. What everyone shared were the beautiful surroundings of Ottawa, sunny weather apart from a couple of notable storms, and an intensive programme that kept everyone listening, talking, developing, and (if you are like me) making a list of good intentions for improved practice and greater impact. It should keep me going for two years!

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# (Re)creating a Higher Education Community of Inquiry

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In thinking about this article I found myself revisiting several questions that continue to both trouble and inform my work in academic staff development. Chief amongst these is ‘what is our vision for higher education’ (in the twenty-first century/knowledge age)? But when I say ‘our’, am I talking of students, physicists, sociologists, academic staff ‘developers’, university administrators/managers, government, society at large...? Is it any longer possible or even desirable to conceive of a unified vision that would embrace all interested parties? What remains and what I talk about here is a personal vision of higher education - politically and economically impractical maybe but a vision to which I subscribe passionately and one I consider worth fighting for!

I would like to see institutions of higher education as dynamic sites of critical inquiry where inquiry is not primarily the preserve of academics but is an activity in which students engage with their teachers from the very beginnings of their university careers. What, if anything, might in some way connect academics and students across diverse disciplines in this disconnected age of ours, is joint engagement in a community of inquiry. Sadly the vision seems impractical because, despite the lip-service paid to the needs of the knowledge society, the current performative policies and practices colonising higher education are constraining inquiry, forcing it out of the undergraduate curriculum and into elite institutions and postgraduate programmes. And we are paying a heavy price for greater access to higher education. Mass production is not renowned for fostering dialogue, creativity and critical questioning.

How to challenge this narrowness of vision? ‘Research-led teaching’ would seem to offer the possibility of recreating universities as sites of critical inquiry. The University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, positions itself as a research university and prides itself on the close relationship between its research and its teaching. In this it conforms with the New Zealand Education Act (1989) which characterises a university as an institution in which research and teaching are closely inter-dependent and where most of the teaching is conducted by people who are active in advancing knowledge. For audit purposes institutions of higher education in New Zealand must specify the expected effect of the link between teaching and research.

However, legislating for and claiming a close relation between research and teaching does not reveal much about the actual *nature* of the relation. If anything it has tended to relegate the integration of research and teaching to the ‘taken-for-granted’ category. Despite the

voluminous and complex literature both supporting and denying a link (e.g. Hattie & Marsh, 1996, Neumann, 1992, 1993), we know little about the variation in the way the research/teaching relation is experienced by academics. Yet just as we need to be aware of students’ prior understandings of phenomena before we engage them in new learning, so too do those of us who work in academic staff development need to know more about academics’ understandings of research, teaching, learning, scholarship and knowledge and their interconnection before we can work collaboratively to promote and enhance research-led teaching. We need to interrogate the ‘taken-for-grantedness’ of the research/teaching relation and work towards understanding what research-led teaching might mean in different knowledge-constructing contexts.

My recent research has focused on exploring the complexity of academic experience in this area. I interviewed 24 academic staff (men and women at different career stages and across a range of disciplines) at the University of Canterbury, about their experiences of research, teaching, learning and knowledge, and of the research/teaching relation. In my interview analysis I concentrated in particular on the metaphors academics were using to articulate their experiences of these various phenomena. The results of this analysis highlight the coherence in the experiences of individual academics (i.e. experiences of research, teaching, learning and knowledge are closely interwoven) and point to a more complex picture of variation amongst individuals than has previously been suggested.

With a very few exceptions my participants described the relationship between their research and their teaching as being a close one. This accords with the findings of Neumann (1992) and Rowland (1996). However it is the nature of that ‘closeness’ that requires careful scrutiny. I will draw on my interviews briefly to illustrate. For example David sees knowledge as “the process by which all the individual loose pieces of data are welded together into a coherent view” (David, 3). His experience of the research/teaching relation is described in terms of a ‘house that’s built’. Research occurs up on the roof while teaching lays the foundations. Engaging in both is mutually productive, the relationship, in David’s words, symbiotic. However from a pedagogical perspective there are constraints involved at undergraduate level in relating the foundations to the roof.

*Probably the most efficient way of doing it is not to give them the research right off, but to give them the next step in the chain because after all there’s so many*

*steps in the chain they have to go through before they can really appreciate in depth what the research is about... (David, 18).*

The metaphors are overwhelmingly orientational (hierarchical). In this instance learning is a process of ascending a ladder/staircase/mountain. Research takes place at the 'top' and is distant from the undergraduate student's learning experience. As Chris puts it; "Research earns double prizes so it's at the top of the great chain of being and it informs teaching and then teaching enables learning" (Chris, 14).

In contrast, for Astrid it is

*not a matter of building up knowledge to get some kind of positive edifice that results ... you know, I mean it's building, building, building more, more, more ... I see knowledge completely differently ... it's an act of engagement, it's a positive engagement with the world, not in the positive sense of constructing something that becomes ontologically present and transferable (Astrid, 13).*

Teaching and learning are, metaphorically, about establishing relationships (engagement) – between student and teacher, student and student and between students and the discourse under scrutiny. Teaching (and learning) conceived of as relationship links to the metaphor of knowledge as creation (birth). Students are invited to engage in the same research process as their teacher. Research is no longer distant from, but is an integral part of, pedagogy.

Despite the brevity and relative simplicity of the examples above, they do, I think, indicate the pivotal role played by academics' experiences of knowledge. What knowledge is understood to be (a product or a process; something to be discovered or something that is socially constructed) fundamentally shapes academics' experiences of research, teaching and learning and hence of the research/teaching relation. Thus pedagogy tends to reflect the nature of academics' beliefs regarding knowledge structures and processes. Where knowledge is understood to be hierarchical and cumulative, teachers anticipate a lengthy period of peripherality for students ("there's a tremendous amount of factual information that needs to be absorbed before the process of tying it together and seeing the connections can occur" - Grahame, 6). Understanding is delayed. Consequently students who do not progress to postgraduate study may never come to realise that knowledge is permeable and provisional rather than bounded and stable.

By contrast, when knowledge is understood to be discursively constructed, students are expected to engage with teachers in the joint production of knowledge from a very early stage in their university careers. The 'teaching' objective is to encourage students to participate actively in the inquiry processes of the discipline.

*You are trying to bring students into the process of how we acquire knowledge and what we do with it ... it is*

*kind of making them part of that little scholarly community for the time that they're here ... so that they'll leave here with an inquiring mind (Anne, 11).*

*I don't think of myself as a teacher ... I don't perceive my role here as a teacher. I would never describe myself as a teacher. I don't do teaching ... I see my role as kind of mentoring and facilitating a process whereby these co-learners – who are learners as I am a learner – are participating in a process ... (Astrid, 10-11).*

Students occupy a less peripheral, more participative role in the learning community right from the beginning.

We (I am referring here to those of us working in academic staff development) are inclined to assume that the teaching practices of academics reflect their experiences of and beliefs about teaching and learning. In recent years much research (e.g. Martin & Balla, 1991; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001; Trigwell, Prosser & Taylor, 1994) and academic staff development work has gone into surfacing such beliefs and exposing higher education teachers to alternative understandings of teaching and learning. Similar work has been done in relation to academics' experiences of research and scholarship (e.g. Brew 1999, 2001) and of the research-teaching relation (Robertson & Bond, 2001). What is missing in this jigsaw is an exploration of academics' experiences/ understandings of knowledge (which would appear to underpin experiences of the other phenomena) and a focus on the interrelation of the whole rather than just the parts. We need to ask how experiences of research, teaching, learning, scholarship and knowledge are related to form an intellectual 'world-view' which sanctions particular research and teaching practices and determines the nature of the research/teaching relation.

But to what end? It is important for those of us working in academic staff development, to acknowledge that academics are not a homogenous group and that their research and teaching practices vary according to their beliefs, amongst other things, about knowledge. Secondly, it is important that academics themselves become more aware of the factors shaping their practice. Thirdly, we need to engage students in this awareness. Understandings of knowledge and its structure need to be made much more explicit than hitherto. Fourthly, there needs to be a debate in the university community that transcends disciplinary boundaries, regarding the nature of knowledge in the contemporary world and the position of the university as but one source of knowledge 'creation' and 'dissemination'. Can we afford to graduate students who possess temporary banks of codified knowledge but who lack the ability to navigate their way in a complex world by interrogating and challenging that world? This is a likely outcome of the research/teaching drift (Clark, 1995) we are currently experiencing.

None of this is to deny the need for 'foundational' knowledge, particularly in those knowledge areas that possess a cumulative and hierarchical structure. However

we need to challenge the pervasiveness of the dissemination metaphor that sanctions a top down transmission of research findings – a kind of ‘trickle-down’ approach. Of course it is important to narrate research findings, to ‘tell’ research stories. But equally, if not more important in an institution that wishes to encourage critical inquiry or research-led teaching<sup>1</sup>, is the need for academics to model explicitly an inquiring approach to learning and to engage students in inquiry processes.

The modelling occurs all the time, in the course structure, in the nature of assessment and its feedback, in interaction with students... but I suspect it remains largely implicit, for academics and students. The modelling of how one engages with knowledge needs to be surfaced as something to be not just uncritically emulated but critically deconstructed. As one interview participant put it:

*I can say to them [the students] – look, I used to tell people this, you know, even five years ago, and I now know I was wrong – and I think that it is very good for them to see that – you know they can see you working with the material and it’s not that I am the fount of all knowledge, I’ve got it all her, I’ve got it buttoned up you learn what I tell you, but I am – a fallible human being, that knowledge comes through all sorts of ways and we’re trying to develop it – in a way what you’re demonstrating to the class is how the material arrived (Janet, 10).*

Finally we need to ensure that students have opportunities not just to be recipients of research stories and observers of knowledge constructing processes, but that they have multiple opportunities to become active participants in a community of inquiry. This process of engagement will, of necessity, be carefully structured over time, but it cannot be regarded as the preserve of postgraduate study only (despite TEAC’s recommendation to this effect).<sup>2</sup> If that is the case our ‘mass’ higher education system will be doing no more than enticing greater numbers of students into our institutions only to disempower them when it comes to the skills of critical inquiry required for success in our knowledge-challenged age!

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# Learning Development in Higher Education Network (LDHEN) - an Emerging Community of Practice ?

**John Hilsdon**, University of Plymouth

In December 2002 a colleague from Southampton University, Nicola Edwards, emailed to suggest a meeting to discuss areas of mutual interest related to our work. Her message prompted a return to an idea I'd been mulling over for a couple of years: to set up some kind of network to put 'people like me' in HE institutions in touch with each other. People like who? People doing similar sorts of work – the kind of thing that has traditionally been referred to as 'study skills', 'learner support', or sometimes 'study counselling' (Wheeler, 1984; Peelo, 1994).

I took on my first teaching post in HE in the early 90s, as the new universities were taking shape in the UK. My job was to provide academic support specifically for minority ethnic students on access programmes. I quickly became aware, however, that many other learners needed similar kinds of help, and it seemed invidious to me that such services were not available to all students. This was in the days when it was common to hear lecturers say that students coming into HE should not need help to study; to do things such as write essays, construct arguments, or use libraries - they should have learned all that at school! What was increasingly clear to me and to many colleagues, however, was that, as the access gates to HE were widening, such expectations were unrealistic and potentially damaging.

I now work at the University of Plymouth in a section originally called 'Learning Skills.' In 1999, when I arrived, this consisted of one post to serve the study needs of the whole student population (then some 17 000 on full-time courses).

The service offered consisted of a somewhat ad hoc programme of generic 'skills' sessions and one-to-one tutorials for all-comers, covering the topics of essay writing, revising for exams, notemaking, giving presentations etc. Over a four year period, and as a result of some vigorous internal lobbying, a small team was brought into being (Learning Development) working within and alongside the Educational Development section. Our aim is to work with subject staff to embed skills for learning within study programmes, as well as continuing to offer one-to-one sessions, email and web support for students.

After a decade of working in this field I have met and debated with many colleagues about the role and function of our work, via groups such as the JISCmail lists, 'Improving Student Learning' (ISL) and 'Writing Development in Higher Education' (WDHE) – but I always felt there was a need for a more specific group aimed at practitioners who, like me, spend most of their time trying to look at the learning experience in HE from the perspective of students. I found that many of us share broadly the view that study support is not just about delivering sessions covering generic 'skills' – indeed, many of us, following the work of writers such as Barrow (1990), and Gubbay (1994), are critical of the notion of 'skills', and especially the 'generic fallacy' implied by its over-general use in the production of lists of so-called 'key' or 'core' skills. Since taking a critical, as well as a productive, approach is not always politically easy (especially for those of us who owe our posts, or their funding, to local responses to initiatives such as the 1997 Dearing Report), seeking mutual support and

building confidence through meeting and sharing ideas seemed a natural step to take.

A crucial issue for those of us in this area has been the need to counter the view that what we do is merely 'remedial', and to demonstrate the academic legitimacy of learning development as a field worthy of attention by staff and students in all disciplines. There are parallels here with the 'language across the curriculum' movement in schools during the 1970s and 1980s, which drew upon the research of writers such as Barnes, Britton and Rosen (1971) and the earlier work of Vygotsky (1962) to argue that language occupies a unique place in learning and the development of thinking, such that it is the responsibility of teachers in all subjects to be teachers of language. Similarly, I would argue, it should be the responsibility of all academics to give attention to heuristics - to activities designed to give students insight into their own learning processes, and into the learning and assessment practices associated with the context of their discipline. Our work – that of learning developers – as I conceive it, is therefore to assist that process: to act as consultants and facilitators to both academics and students, and to undertake research in the field of learning.

Such a view is clearly at odds with those who see study support as simply a safety net for 'failing' or 'difficult' students. And it may not be the view that some university managers would wish to see gaining credibility if their intention is to seek the least costly options or a quick 'fix' administered by staff on administrative (as is often the case) rather than academic contracts.

After responding to the message from Nicola, in January 2003 I sent an initial invitation to colleagues on ISL, WDHE and one or two other JISCmail lists, to see if there was sufficient interest in forming a network. I was amazed at the number of replies I received, and the Learning Development in Higher Education Network began life almost immediately. Within a few weeks we had over fifty members representing some thirty UK universities – and some from elsewhere. At the last count (June 2004), one hundred and eight members were listed representing forty-eight UK universities, along with ten outside of the UK.

The list has enabled ideas to be swapped and information to be distributed on a wide range of topics related to supporting student learning. There have also been a number of interesting and helpful debates on issues such as ‘embedding’, interdisciplinarity, the use of the term ‘skills’ and how we evaluate our work. The emerging field of learning development in the UK is being described, characterised and (albeit tentatively) theorised, at least in part through the conversations within LDHEN.

One early initiative was to set up a database describing and listing the various services that members offer within their institutions. This can be viewed as an Excel file in the ‘file area’ at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/files/LDHEN/>

This reveals a wide range of models of provision, and variations in the kinds of employment and contracts held by LDHEN members. Members have used this as a way to make comparisons between services and it has been helpful for compiling information for use in discussions with both academic and management colleagues, in planning service development and delivery.

An inaugural Symposium of the LDHEN, attended by over fifty members, was held in October 2003 at London Metropolitan University. Sessions were held on academic

writing and academic ‘literacies’ (led by Phyllis Crème of UCL); on strategies for embedding skills for learning within courses; on approaches to the evaluation of our work; and on producing and sharing successful materials for supporting learning.

In association with the session on learning materials, a proposal was put forward by Jill Armstrong, from the LTSN Generic Centre, which has now evolved into a bid to HEFCE for a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, to enable HE institutions to share and develop, via the HE Academy’s online ‘portal’, high quality and proven materials to support skills for learning in a wide range of areas. As I write the news has just arrived that this bid has now successfully progressed to ‘round two’!

In my view, the most valuable and encouraging aspect of the network so far has been its role in affirming the move towards concentrating the efforts of those of us working in the area of ‘study skills’ on our collaborative work with academic staff, rather than remaining solely ‘student-facing’. Several institutions, including Plymouth, Leicester, Central England, London Metropolitan and Southampton, have developed models which encourage the synergies between educational development initiatives with teaching staff and the work of staff who support students with their learning.

In Plymouth, this has taken several forms. For example, members of Learning Development have been actively collaborating in the development of, and in teaching parts of, our Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. We have also begun promoting our service directly to teaching staff, rather than just to students. Instead of simply offering support to students individually, and outside of the curriculum, we prioritise our ‘collaborative’ service. This involves initial consultation with teaching staff about how they perceive the learning needs of their

students. Where possible, we follow this up with joint planning meetings to ensure that any sessions we deliver will take account of factors such as: the level of the students; the intended learning outcomes identified by staff; and the topics and themes recently (or about to be) covered in the programme.

A major advantage of this method, in my view, is that it contributes to the development of a context-sensitive and ‘situated’ approach to learning as a set of social practices (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and challenges the characterisation of learning support as purely remedial. LDHEN has hosted a number of lively discussions among participants about our various struggles to promote developmental, student-centred, constructivist and holistic approaches to learning, as represented by our uses of the term ‘embedding’, and to move away from the ‘deficit’ model where learning needs are seen as problems for individual students, who need to be referred elsewhere for cures or remedies.

The ‘skills’ debates of the 1990s in HE, culminating in the report of the Dearing Committee (NCIHE, 1997), which recommended inclusion of four ‘key skills’ in all programme specifications, can to some extent, be seen as an initial attempt to embed a more learning-focused approach (Drew, 1998). A major shortcoming of initiatives associated with skills, however, is that they seemed to assume that these skills exist somewhere ‘out there’ to be acquired by learners, rather like goods one might take off the shelf from a store - and they often did not describe an adequate way to link such learning to the context of study, or the practices of the discipline. These criticisms (developed in particular by Holmes, 2000, 2003) have led many of us in the field to search for new ways of thinking about the processes involved in embedding skills for learning within subject teaching and learning activities, in work with both staff and students. LDHEN has provided a valuable forum for these discussions

and a number of useful suggestions have emerged from email interchanges, and from our Symposium last year.

In fact, for many of us, as well as encouraging new thinking, these discussions have led us to rediscover older work, such as that of Barnes referred to above; to Entwistle and Hounsell (1975); and Gibbs (1981), where criticisms of generic 'study skills' were eloquently expressed, and constructivist views of how students learn were articulated. Some of the most interesting conversations to emerge from within LDHEN hint at the importance of looking at how students might interpret their HE experiences through the language and practices of particular communities - as either members, potential members, or as people excluded from those groups. As a learning development advisor, I find myself encouraging students to look for the signals and codes - especially the language-related ones - that suggest membership of the group and legitimacy within it. Rather than trying to teach 'thinking skills' in the abstract, for example, I find it useful to help students investigate how writers, lecturers and successful students in their discipline seem to organise their thoughts in written expression. For example, they often begin by defining their terms, then they give contextual and background information. They follow this up with explanations and analyses drawing on theory and then they come to some kind of judgement or conclusion. In doing these things, they use particular words and phrases (and not others!), and they include references, examples and data at certain points.

If LDHEN can help practitioners to share views and experiences about a) how students can be encouraged to look for, and develop their own understandings of such codes and practices; and b) about how academics can be encouraged to make such codes as explicit as possible (and even to become critical of them!); and if it continues to provide a means of mutual

support and encouragement for its members, then I feel it will be serving an important function. Furthermore, I hope the network will help the emerging field of learning development to grow, to begin examining the practices of its members, and to evaluate them more systematically. If we are able to demonstrate our successes in supporting teachers and learners and in making the HE experience more effective, then we will earn the right to become more confident in and assertive of our approach.

In broader terms, LDHEN is also helping practitioners to conceive of and debate their work in the context of the national and global development of higher education; to perceive how forces - some of which are contradictory and conflicting - are at work, and can lead to both academic and professional struggles. A leading contributor and co-convenor of the initial LDHEN Symposium, Sandra Sinfield, points out that many of these struggles emerge from '... *the move to a mass HE system in a country where an elitist model was the informing norm*' (2004). Academic and professional recognition for learning developers is therefore a goal we share alongside our aspirations to provide good service and to see students' learning accorded serious attention - indeed the two are inseparable aspects of a critical and democratising HE provision for universities which, in the words of Plymouth's Vice Chancellor, Roland Levinsky, should: ... *challenge established ideas and stimulate debate in society* (2003).

Discussion lists seem to have life-cycles and, although ours has been quite 'busy' for most of the last 18 months, it may be that we are in for a quieter time now. A second Symposium is planned for the autumn, and will be held at the University of Leicester. The themes outlined above are likely to play a key role in the proceedings, and the event promises an opportunity for us learning development practitioners to gather again, to catch our

collective breath and to examine where we are going in our work. If nothing else, the list has helped us to begin defining ourselves as a group with some of the characteristics that Brown and Duguid identified in their concept of a 'community of practice' (1991), such as developing a common sense of purpose and a desire to share work-related knowledge and experience.

My hopes for the list itself are that it will survive beyond its initial burst of enthusiasm and mature into what Ryder and Brent refer to as a 'dynamic learning community', and mirror or exemplify, at least to some extent, the kind of experiences we aspire to for our students in 21<sup>st</sup> century HE - where '*groups of people gather together to provide mutual support for learning and performance*' (1996), and where facilitating learners' self-organisation is a key role of teachers. The communication technologies that enable JISCmail and other lists to function is an important part of this - ensuring, in the case of LDHEN, that professional isolation and geographical distance need no longer prevent practitioners from sharing information and views; from developing forms of mutual support; and evolving structures to carry forward our contribution to the development of HE across (as well as within) individual institutions. Currently we have a UK focus, but internationalisation of LDHEN is not an impossible idea - we already have seven non-UK universities represented and suggestions from Australian colleagues to widen the debate. Our forum may therefore gain from, and help to inform the work of similar groupings in other countries and regions in future.

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# Dialogues...

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## Reflection in action - or not

**David Baume** FSEDA, Independent Consultant

I think I may not wholly agree with Donald Schön  
*Shock horror! I thought he was one of your heroes!*  
Indeed he is. But we can we stand on the shoulders of  
our heroes and  
fall off

I was going to say, peer a little beyond their horizon  
OK. What do you disagree with him about?

Reflection in action

And in what respect do you disagree with him?

I'm not sure that it happens, that it exists

Schön says that we reflect *in* action in 'the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life' (Schön 1983:40), although he is particularly interested in the practice of professionals.

You remembered!

I have the notes of the PG Cert session in which you taught this. If you now disagree with him, what will you say in that class next year?

I will again talk about Schön's 'reflection *on* action' and 'reflection *in* action' as well as about Cowan's reflection *for* action (Cowan 1998:). I shall probably link these accounts to Kolb's broader account of learning as a cyclical process (Kolb 1984).

As you usually do.

Yes. I will ask participants in the class to describe instances where they feel they have recently reflected *in* action. I will explore with them whether reflection *in* action is really a distinct process from reflection *on* action. I will further explore with them the idea that reflection that what Schön calls reflection *in* action may be simply very small-scale cycles of reflection *on* action.  
*Could you give me an example?*

I'd rather you gave me an example!

OK, Socrates! Where do we start?

You were telling me about your workshop last week, on problem based learning...where you sensed that some participants really weren't with you

Yes

What did you do? What went through your mind?

OK. They were supposed to be working in groups to devise some PBL problems. I wandered around the groups and listened in. I realised "They're not devising PBL problems. I don't know why not. I could ask them what's going wrong. I wouldn't feel comfortable doing that. I need to try something different. I could show them more examples of PBL problems. But that didn't work fifteen minutes ago, so I can see no reason why it should work again now. Better - if I have the nerve - I could work with them as a large group, and develop one or two PBL problems with them in plenary. I'll try it."

How long did that thinking take?

Not sure. Time passes very slowly when things are going wrong. Maybe 30 seconds?

So in Kolb's terms you...

...reviewed what was working, or in this case not. Failed to explain why! Came up with two other plans. Reviewed them both. Rejected one, went for the other. Decided to try it. Tried it.

You were clearly reflecting. Was it reflection on action or in action?

I don't know. What are you driving at?

If you had done this thinking over a period of say a week, that would have been reflection on action?

Yes. Ah. You're going to suggest that the difference between reflection on action and reflection in action is mainly a matter of time, of duration. They're not different kinds of reflection, just reflections at different speeds.

That's what I was going to suggest.

So - no reflection in action at all?

I don't know. But probably far less of it than we currently think there is. Do you know fractals? (Mandelbrot 1980, and any number of websites where you can see examples and make your own fractals - for example <http://www.mehmib.freemove.co.uk/>)

Weird colour posters in Athena?

Almost certainly.

So?

Fractals are shapes that look the same at all scales, or at any range at a range of scales. The learning cycle has a shape. I use the analogy of the fractal to suggest that we can look for learning cycles at all scales from tiny, a matter of seconds, to huge, a lifetime or (thanks to the written word) longer.

OK. That makes some sense. But, deep down, why do you want to lose reflection in action?

Two main reasons. Occam's razor, echoing Aristotle (for a good overview see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occam's\\_Razor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occam's_Razor)). Occam's razor suggests that, of two competing theories or explanations, all other things being equal, the simpler one is to be preferred. Occam's razor is a heuristic, a tool for reasoning, not a theory or a law. But it is often useful. And it suggests to me that two kinds of reflection - on and for - may be better than three - in, on and for. If we can function OK without 'reflection in action'. Which I feel we probably mostly can.

Maybe would could get this down to just one type of reflection?

Perhaps. But not now!

Your other reason for wanting to lose reflection *in* action?

I don't like the way it is sometimes used. We professionals

sometimes use it to mystify what we do, to hold ourselves and practices above the common gaze, to make ourselves and are skills special and arcane and thus beyond criticism.

*OK, this is a bad thing.*

It is. We developers are better than that. We work to higher standards.

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# Towards Better Practice in the Educational Development of Part-Time Teachers

**Ruth Findlay-Brooks**, University of Canterbury and **Colin Bryson**, Nottingham Business School

A considerable proportion of teaching in Higher Education institutions in the UK is undertaken by staff who are on part-time, hourly paid and temporary contracts (hereafter referred to as part-time teachers – PTT). In this article we look at how educational developers can address the challenges to improving staff development for this group and some examples of good practice.

The invisibility of such staff to Personnel systems and lack of attention to their employment by senior managers creates enumeration difficulties. However we estimate that there are between 65000-75000 such staff (Bryson and Barnes, 2000). Their contribution to teaching is significant, for example at one London pre-92 HEI 40% of undergraduate teaching (Powney et al., 2002) and at a large post-92 HEI, 20% of all teaching (Bryson et al., 2000). In some disciplines such as Languages, Art and Design and Education the proportion of work undertaken by PTT may be much higher (ibid). The key factor behind the sharp increase in the deployment of PTT has been management attempts to cope with increasing numbers of students in HE. But PTT do much more than just staff first year seminars or

laboratories. They cover the whole range of teaching roles, including assessment and student support (Allen, 2001). There are other important rationales for employing PTT, positive reasons such as the need in certain disciplines to bring in practising professionals and expose students to a diverse range of perspectives, but negative reasons too, saving cost or ‘freeing up’ ‘real academics’ to do ‘important things’ such as research or raising income. The labour markets and rationales for deployment of PTT vary sharply between academic disciplines and institutional mission. Research universities have a plentiful supply of postgraduates students and contract researchers to draw on, particularly in the sciences. Disciplines such as Architecture, Medicine and Law bring in professionals who continue working full time in the outside profession. In other subjects and the post 1992 universities and colleges the range of PTT is much more diverse and includes portfolio workers (those with several employments including other forms of education), those whose sole employment is one or more PTT contracts and retired lecturing staff.

The educational development of PTT is important, not least to ensure the quality of teaching and learning

but also to enable as full as possible participation in and contribution to the educational and academic community. Indeed students may have much, if not the majority, of their class contact with PTT. Commentators and the trade unions, NATFHE and AUT have been scathing about the current lack of support for PTT, particularly in systematic infrastructures (Husbands and Davies, 2000; Allen, 2001; Bryson et al., 2001).

The scope of the issues is rather large and we shall exclude from further discussion PTT who are already members of the institution in another capacity, the post-graduate tutors, graduate teaching assistants, contract researchers and technicians. Their characteristics and staff development issues are somewhat different to the challenges and barriers to support and development of the sessional/visiting lecturers who make up the rest of the PTT. It is provision for this latter group that will now be examined in more detail. The evidence we are going to draw on comes mainly from two recent studies that each of us has been involved in. Bryson (2004) conducted five detailed institutional studies as part of the PTT Initiative funded by the LTSN and HESDA and Findlay-Brooks is currently

evaluating PTT support in the discipline of Art and Design at a number of institutions as part of the FDTL4 ADEPTT Project (Findlay-Brooks, 2003).

Challenges to development stem from a number of inter-related sources and factors.

### 1. Management

Many managers at institutional and departmental level appear to take little responsibility for development of PTT. As we have noted some senior managers hardly seem to be aware of their existence. This is not helped by a situation where national initiatives on PTT development are rare and large scale strategies (such as HEFCE policies) seem to virtually ignore this issue. NATFHE (and to some extent AUT) does seek to raise the profile and include PTT issues in major campaigns but these have faltered at local level due to overburdening of local officers who have been on the back foot in defending other members on a host of issues.

This problem of invisibility of PTT begins with recruitment which is frequently *ad hoc* and very local – a ‘recommendation’ from a colleague. So responsibility falls on the module leader to manage the PTT, ‘as they already know him/her.’ Local managers look to the ‘centre’ to provide resources and support despite the devolution of budgeting which entails that this is not going to be provided. Competition for scarce resources and prioritisation is at the heart of weakness of provision. Many institutions have policies that in theory entitle PTT to the same access to provision to salaried colleagues but when it comes to allocating mentors or funding places on courses, local managers give priority to new salaried entrants to HE. A particular issue for prioritisation of resources is that participation for salaried staff in appraisal and at least some development activity such as peer observation of teaching (together with induction and mentoring for new entrants) is compulsory whereas it is ‘not practical’ to place this

burden on PTT (and that is argued to be fairer even by more benevolent managers). In the current HE climate of a more ‘business like’ approach many managers argue that they favour investing in those which they consider have a ‘more significant contribution to make’. Moreover increasing work intensification means that salaried academic colleagues who might provide the mentoring and other support to PTT are too busy or have other priorities. Similarly appraisal systems ‘can not cope’ with the additional burden of including PTT so no-one gets round to doing it. Indeed some managers commented in our research that given some of their PTT worked in other roles concurrently in other departments or institutions that to support them was to ‘subsidise these other employers’. This attitude is allied with a bias against part-time staff and a belief exhibited by some managers that PTT were not committed to HE and therefore any development should be their responsibility. Managers (*and there are some!*) who take responsibility and become ‘champions of PTT development’ often face a hostile climate or at best, so much apathy that embedding better practice and extending it more widely seems very difficult.

### 2. Infrastructure

Clearly it is important that policies cover PTT but it is not enough simply to have policies which supposedly offer equal access to support to all staff. The evidence shows that participation by PTT in all forms of staff development is much lower than salaried colleagues. The impact of practical impediments is often not acknowledged or addressed. PTT start work at different times in the academic year; they frequently cannot attend the university just at any time in the standard 9-5 day, 5 day week, or attend on a set of consecutive days. So having a single induction event in September that requires attendance for six hours every day for two weeks is completely impractical for many PTT. This also applies to courses that require regular periodic

attendance. They are also frequently excluded from communications loops because they may have no access to an office, telephone or computer; they are not on the email or mail system; no-one has told the educational developer that they exist; and because they tend to work off-site or in the evenings they do not get to talk to other colleagues. They are excluded from departmental, course and curriculum development meetings through not being informed or invited, and scholarly and developmental activity of any sort, such as departmental ‘away days’ or professional conferences, is not included in their contractual roles. Therefore attendance at such events, even if possible, is impeded by having to fund their own time and expenses to attend. Note that many PTT have to commute some distance to work and the insecure and uncertain nature of their teaching employment hardly encourages them to relocate closer!

### 3. Perceptions of the PTT

The diversity of PTT and roles, settings and contexts in which they work presents an immense challenge to developers. The size and nature of the role ranges from occasional one-off inputs such as the ‘guest lecture’ to designing, delivering and assessing complex courses. PTT often engage in a wider range of modes of delivery and to different levels of student than full-time staff. PTT may be new to the profession and to teaching or have a whole lifetime of experience and their familiarity with that institutional setting may vary. A large proportion of PTT have been working in the same HE institution for several years but often without any previous educational development or even induction. Their motivations and aspirations range from doing a favour for a friend to a strong vocational desire to undertake the scholarly academic role, and this will have implications about the extent they want to be integrated into the teaching team or academic community. Their income from this work may be seen as ‘pocket money’ or a vital source. They may

view their temporary and part-time status as quite suitable for their needs or highly insecure and frustrating. They may work alongside many other PTT or be the sole PTT in a department.

The ideal situation for development is where an individual has a strong sense of identity, and commitment to that role or career and to professional development, an aspiration to improve and reflect on their practice. The point that it is the cultural norm to do so is also powerful. However as we discussed above, it is hardly the norm that a critical mass of PTT are already integrated into the educational development process. For some, PTT teaching and pedagogic roles may be a minor and rather insignificant component in their construction of their identity. For others, the environment in which they teach and the treatment which they receive may serve to marginalise and alienate them. We uncovered many instances where PTT had wanted to undertake development but were refused (or were promised it would happen and it never did). The point that 'the university' offers only a transactional relationship can result, despite the desire of the individual, in a reciprocation of that approach – 'I do my teaching and go.' Thus they may insist (with some justification) on payment before attending a development event. Moreover processes such as induction and appraisal may be seen as patronising and as mechanisms of coercive control which do not relate to the goals of the PTT. Initial enthusiasm for teaching can actually be diminished if development interventions are perceived as surveillance and control, quite likely when one is subject to short term contracts and has little or no access to redress of grievances.

These factors undermine the perceived relevance and value of conventional staff development (i.e. the same provision for salaried staff) to PTT and have a strong salience for their non-participation. It is not surprising that Cox et al. (2000) urged policy makers and developers to seek the views of PTT themselves

in considering what development and support to provide. Sadly research shows that policy makers rarely do consult PTT. This is all deeply worrying in terms of ensuring that PTT are included and conversant with good educational practice and moreover with pedagogic innovations such as e-learning. Surely there must be some examples of better practice out there?

### Examples of good practice

The overall picture may look bleak but, nonetheless, during our investigations we found a number of examples of good practice, which show that it is possible to develop ways of including and working with PTT. We have selected three of these, operating at programme, faculty and institutional level, and highlighted the points they have in common. These common elements can provide a basic model for developing work with PTT.

Our first example is an induction day run by a programme leader for the PTT who contribute a high percentage of the teaching on his course. Initial needs were identified at an 'awayday' which included both staff tutors and PTT - the first time such an activity had taken place. It became clear that the PTT not only felt marginalised, but also that they were not picking up essential knowledge and key changes within the programme and the institution. The day covered practical aspects requested by the PTT themselves, as well as wider faculty and institutional issues. All seven of the PTT teaching on the course attended, and their initial feedback was extremely positive. Time was paid for. Asked about the impact of the intervention, the programme leader felt that: "The session gave us a chance to emphasise to the PTT how important they are to the programme. They never felt part of a team before and I can understand their previous reluctance to get involved above and beyond their contracted hours. The relationship started off differently this year with us investing time into bringing the

PTT online and explaining changes and systems to them. Therefore they have, from the start, been more involved. They are preparing sessions well in advance and producing hand-outs at home. There has been a real attitude change. A small investment at the beginning has paid massive dividends throughout the year." He did stress, however, that this needed to be backed up by regular workshops on aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

On a larger scale, the second example relates to the art and design faculty of a large university. The faculty covers a wide range of disciplines. For reasons of equality, all posts which made a regular contribution to the faculty, down to 0.2 FTE, have been converted to fractional appointments. A large number of PTT remain, but these are subject specialists who deliver specific topics. In most cases they are practising professionals who do not want to take on permanent teaching commitments. Even for short posts, a strong induction programme covers department and faculty issues. This is backed up by an induction pack, which gives department, faculty and university information, including development opportunities. Time on induction and staff development events is paid for. Central provision, which was found not to be reaching enough staff, has now been replaced with workshops delivered by the Staff Development Unit but tailored to faculty needs and run at flexible times such as lunch-hours. Subjects are perceived to be relevant and practical, and attendance has not been a problem. Much of the provision is driven by the head of department, who makes a point of good communication, visiting all buildings on a daily basis to talk with staff. She made the key point that: "Developing ownership is the only way and I've been able to do this".

The final example is an institution-wide initiative, taking place at a large university which employs around 2000 PTT. Many of these are professional practitioners, and their

role within the institution includes research and academic management. Designing the new approach began with wide consultation at all levels, including open forums for PTT where their views were sought. The resulting plan for academic development was part of a wider range of interventions that included contract changes, better facilities and support, probation and appraisal. The need for flexibility, reflecting the varying involvement and needs of the PTT, was acknowledged. The resulting framework was based on the number of hours worked, ranging from a basic three-day introduction to teaching for those working 30 hours or more per year, supplemented by a local induction for PTT doing above 120 hour (or one day a week), through to a course leading to accreditation for those working over 360 hours. Time was paid for at varying rates depending on whether the course was seen as compulsory or “encouraged”. PTT were also expected to undertake continuous professional development in their own areas. Induction was seen as a key element in providing a sense of “belonging”. Further provision was also designed to be flexible, with generic teaching topics delivered by the centre for learning and teaching, email and VLE training by the IT unit, and subject-specific topics provided locally by the schools and colleges.

Key challenges were found to be communication with a hard-to-reach group who rarely used staff email, the timing of events with competing pressures on time, and the perceived relevance of central provision - particularly accreditation. As one PTT remarked: “I can’t fit in what I do in a week anyway”. Efforts were made to ensure that PTT knew about events, and initial slow take-up improved as a critical mass of PTT attending started to put pressure on those who hadn’t, but local workshops continued to be better attended than generic provision. The barriers to communication and attendance have been addressed at a local level. Staff developers at one

college, for example, have put great efforts into building communication with PTT, using posters and letters to home addresses in addition to email and phone calls. They have run induction sessions in the early evening to catch PTT with daytime commitments, as well as planning development for targeted small groups backed up by one-to-one mentoring.

These three exemplars suggest a number of common features which can provide helpful pointers in planning educational development for PTT. First of all, each achieved a sense of ownership through initial consultation with PTT. Each was driven or backed up by one or more ‘local champions’ who helped to enthuse the PTT and turn policies into reality. The models are flexible, reflecting the complexity of the target group, and avoid the error of believing that there is a simple, one-size-fits-all solution to educational development for PTT. In each case, the professional nature of the PTT contribution was acknowledged, and their time paid for - a key factor in helping them to feel valued. Examples of good practice also tend to reflect ‘joined-up thinking’, realising that there are no one-off solutions, but that changes in staff development need to be backed up by better communication strategies, induction, mentoring, handbooks, inclusion in events and meetings, and ongoing support and review, as well as opportunities for accreditation.

### Conclusion

There is no doubt that PTT have been - and continue to be - a marginalised and neglected group within HE. While many aspects of support and development have moved forward, this group has been left behind, low on the list of institutional priorities and to some extent victims of the politics of organisational life. We do appreciate that the readership of this magazine will be all too familiar with the current tensions in Higher Education, and the difficulties inherent in recognising the need for yet more change when the barriers

are daunting and everyone has a vested interest in pretending that all is well. Nonetheless, as a group who recognise the key importance of educational development, we have to acknowledge that such a large group of teachers who play a key part in the student experience cannot continue to be left out. Change needs to happen, and far better to be proactive than reactive. With such a complex picture in terms of background, needs, contribution and motivation, there are no simple solutions to designing and delivering educational development for PTT. But there are models which are being implemented and are making a difference and, as educational developers, there are few better placed to provide the personal touch which can bring PTT into the loop without losing either their much-needed diversity or the individuality of their contribution to learning and teaching.

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### Web links

Further information can be found at the following resources:

<http://www.adeptt.ac.uk/> ADEPTT project website, with downloadable resources and information on support for part-time teachers

<http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/index.asp?id=17220>

The PTT Initiative - with resources and information about networks for staff development of part-time

teachers

<http://www.nbs.ntu.ac.uk/staff/brysocm/resource.htm>

A bibliography of reports and research publications about part-time teachers and related issues

<http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/sessionalteaching>

AUTC Project (University of Queensland) – resources including case studies of good practice examples, teaching ideas, guidelines and useful links

# Online Resources on Plagiarism Deterrence and Detection

**Stephen Bostock** FSEDA, Keele University

By plagiarism we mean passing off someone else's work as your own for your own benefit (Carroll 2002). It includes collusion and other fraudulent authorship. The last several years have seen a rise in interest in plagiarism; it's harder to know whether there has been a rise in the incidence of plagiarism itself. Whatever its frequency, it undermines academic standards and is an affront to good teaching and conscientious learners. Like all 'crime', it is better to deter than to detect and punish, but the likelihood of detection is a part of deterrence. Much plagiarism now involves electronic copying and pasting from the Internet, and scare stories appear regularly in the press (e.g. "Plagiarism soars as students crib from internet"<sup>1</sup>). Where technology has worsened the problem it can also be part of the solution, and the last few years has seen a growth in the availability of software for detecting both collusion and Internet sources. Plagiarism should not be isolated from principles of assessment that encourage and measure real understanding. So, although the detection of an un-cited source in a piece of student work might seem like an isolated, technical problem, it is, in fact, part of a web of principles and good practice in assessment that is not at all simple, but is necessary. Indeed, Alan Dordoy, in *Cheating and Plagiarism: Student and Staff Perceptions at Northumbria*<sup>2</sup>, wondered if cheating may not be a rational response by students to a Higher Education system out of alignment, both internally and with its social purposes (Proceedings of Northumbria Conference 2002 - Educating for the Future<sup>3</sup>).

Plagiarism and Poor Academic Practice - A Threat to the Extension of e-Learning in Higher Education? <sup>4</sup> by Mike Hart and Tim Friesner, is available in the *Electronic Journal of e-Learning* (Volume 2, Issue 1, February 2004 pp. 89-96). They review the evidence for the growth in plagiarism, its reasons, and policies to combat it. They

suggest three strategies to prevent it: assess processes as well as outcomes; reward original and critical thinking; and use technology to design new patterns of teaching and assessment. More comprehensive, yet very readable, is "In other (People's) Words: plagiarism by university students - literature and lessons" by Chris Park (2003, you may have access to the electronic version). He concludes: "there is a growing need for institutions to develop cohesive frameworks for dealing with student plagiarism that are based on prevention supported by robust detection and penalty systems that are transparent and applied consistently" (pp. 483-484).

The best single source of advice is the Plagiarism Advisory Service<sup>5</sup>, funded by the JISC. There are good resources under Advice and Guidance, Good Practice, Plagiarism Detection (traditional and electronic), and materials for students, plus three recent reports on the different attitudes to plagiarism of students from different cultures.

The associated JISC plagiarism detection service<sup>6</sup> (JISC PDS) is an online service that enables institutions and staff to carry out electronic comparison of students' work against electronic sources including other students' work. Once an institution has a contract with the service (currently free), staff are given logins with which to upload electronic copies of student work, singly or in batches. Students can also be allowed to upload their own work. Detection is quick and the reports show student work colour coded against the sources of any files with matching text. Based on a commercial service in the USA, this service is tailored to UK needs and avoids the problems with the Data Protection Act of sending material outside the European Community. It would be the service of choice even if it were not free. The site includes a demonstration<sup>7</sup> of how the software works and looks.

At the other end of the scale of detection is the quick and simple Google search engine<sup>8</sup>: type a phrase of up to 10 words, in quotes, into Google and, if it is on the public Web, there is a good chance it will be returned at the top of the hit list. The snag is that you must first select a phrase that arouses suspicion, so Google cannot be used to automatically scan one or more pieces of work.

With the availability of the JISCPDS, there is not much point in considering other web sites providing plagiarism detection. Nonetheless, there is a review of software tools at the plagiarism resource at the LTSN Information and Computer Sciences at Warwick<sup>9</sup>. "Plagiarism in natural and programming languages: an overview of current tools and technologies"<sup>10</sup> is a very thorough review by Paul Clough in July 2000. There are links to other reviews of software<sup>11</sup> at the Center for Intellectual Property. If you want to run software on your local PC that detects matches with material on the Internet, you could consider the Essay Verification Engine (EVE)<sup>12</sup>. This can be bought online and is very cheap. It accepts batches of local documents to check, but in my experience is very slow with long documents. Set it going when you leave the office for home! EVE does not compare student work but CopyCatch<sup>13</sup> does. It can also compare a batch of student reports with other standard documents you provide. There is a free version for the UK. It needs the Java™ Runtime Environment<sup>14</sup> installed so I would use a fairly modern computer for adequate speed. Textus Lite Software<sup>15</sup> (which I did not manage to get working) claims to detect both collusion between two local documents and matches of the contents of many documents against the public Web. You are given a free trial of 21 runs.

None of this software actually detects plagiarism, of course. It detects matches of some text in one document with that in another local document or in a web page. If the matching text is a literal quotation, properly cited, then no problem! So manual checking of the matches is always necessary before cheating (or, at best, poor writing style) can be confirmed. Another limitation is the use of "paper mills" by students - essay banks on web sites where essays can be bought, for example EssayBank<sup>16</sup>. As the essays are not on the public Web they will not be indexed in Google or other search engines. However, such essays may be easily detectable manually - with a US style and rather off the topic! On the other hand, bespoke fraudulent authorship, such as that by Elizabeth Hall<sup>17</sup>, may be hard to detect if you do not know a student's work.

There is plenty of advice for staff on helping students to avoid plagiarism. "A briefing on plagiarism"<sup>18</sup> by Lorraine Stefani and Jude Carroll (2001), is in the Generic LTSN<sup>19</sup> resources database. One of the series of briefings on aspects of assessment, at 16 pages it is a wise introduction. It rightly concludes that we must not throw out the baby with the bathwater by returning to traditional assessment methods like closed exams in order to prevent cheating, thus reducing the quality of student

learning - our primary goal. (The online version is actually more legible than the glossy print version). A shorter "Briefing Paper on Prevention, detection and punishment"<sup>20</sup> by Randal Macdonald is at the LTSN Physical Sciences<sup>21</sup> web site.

Resources for students include "Cite them right: referencing made easy"<sup>22</sup> by Richard Pears and Graham Shields, a resource to recommend. Freely available in its first edition, the new edition can be purchased for a modest fee. "Plagiarism and how to avoid it"<sup>23</sup> by David Gardner at the University of Hong Kong is a good practice guide with a self-test. Other tutorials with self-tests are at the Toronto Plagiarism self-test<sup>24</sup>, the University of Essex Plagiarism site<sup>25</sup>, and Indiana University's How to Recognize Plagiarism<sup>26</sup>.

For further sources, the Archives<sup>27</sup> of the discussion forum related to the JISCPDS, [PLAGIARISM@JISCMail.AC.UK](mailto:PLAGIARISM@JISCMail.AC.UK), go back over two years. You can browse them without being a list member. More links are available at the Keele web site supporting learning and teaching<sup>28</sup>, and the English LTSN Centre<sup>29</sup> also has a page of links on plagiarism<sup>30</sup>. Carroll (2002) has a page of supporting links<sup>31</sup>.

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the usefulness of the Netskills materials<sup>32</sup> on detecting and deterring plagiarism. Your institution may subscribe to these, giving you access. This review updates that by Graham Alsop and Chris Tompsett in *Educational Developments* 2.3 (August 2001).

An electronic copy of this review with linked resources can be found on [www.seda.ac.uk](http://www.seda.ac.uk)

- 1 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/11/news/2003/07/17/nplag17.xml&>
- 2 <http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/LTA/media/docs/Conference%20Publication%202002/AD.doc>
- 3 <http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/LTA/media/docs/Conference%20Publication%202002/>
- 4 <http://www.ejel.org/volume-2/vol2-issue1/issue1-art25-abstract.htm>
- 5 [http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information\\_studies/lmri/jiscpas/site/jiscpas.asp](http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information_studies/lmri/jiscpas/site/jiscpas.asp)
- 6 <http://www.submit.ac.uk/>
- 7 [http://www.submit.ac.uk/static\\_jisc/ac\\_uk\\_demo.html](http://www.submit.ac.uk/static_jisc/ac_uk_demo.html)
- 8 <http://www.google.co.uk/>
- 9 <http://www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/ltsn-ics/resources/plagiarism/>

- 10 [http://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/~cloughie/plagiarism/HTML\\_Version/index.html](http://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/~cloughie/plagiarism/HTML_Version/index.html)
- 11 [http://www.umuc.edu/distance/odell/cip/links\\_plagiarism.html#evaluation](http://www.umuc.edu/distance/odell/cip/links_plagiarism.html#evaluation)
- 12 <http://www.canexus.com/eve/index.shtml>
- 13 <http://www.copycatchgold.com/copycatchesreview.htm>
- 14 <http://www.java.com/en/download/faq/index.jsp>
- 15 <http://www.thetext.co.uk/download.html>
- 16 <http://www.essaybank.com/>
- 17 <http://www.elizabethhall.com/>
- 18 [http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/application.asp?app=resources.asp&process=full\\_record&section=generic&id=10](http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/application.asp?app=resources.asp&process=full_record&section=generic&id=10)
- 19 <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/index.asp>
- 20 [http://dbweb.liv.ac.uk/ltsnpsc/briefing\\_papers/plag6.htm](http://dbweb.liv.ac.uk/ltsnpsc/briefing_papers/plag6.htm)
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- 28 <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/links/plagiarism.htm>
- 29 <http://www.english.ltsn.ac.uk/index.htm>
- 30 <http://www.english.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/topic/plagiarism/plaglinks.htm>
- 31 [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/4\\_resource/plagiarism.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/4_resource/plagiarism.html)
- 32 <http://materials.netskills.ac.uk/>

## Book Reviews

### Teaching with Integrity

Bruce McFarlane

London: Routledge Falmer, 2003  
ISBN 0-415-33508-6 Hardback  
0-415-33509-4 Paperback,  
184pp + vii pages

### What might it mean to teach (or develop) with integrity?

Teachers or developers who have embraced SEDA's Teacher Accreditation, PDF or Fellowship framework may feel that they have at least some answers to this question. For them (us), SEDA's values are not simply beliefs, but are drivers of what we do and how we do it. The SEDA values do not guarantee that teaching or development will be undertaken with integrity. But, when taken seriously, the SEDA values require us to ask, answer and then act on our responses to, for example, how a concern for student development or a commitment to a scholarly approach demonstrably informs our work.

Of course these values are difficult. They are capable of - in fact, they often require - interpretation for the particular setting in which we work. But we can use these values from the start of our work. And if we do so, we can surely make the claim that we are teaching with at least some degree of integrity?

The Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) takes a broadly similar approach - we may call it a values - or principles-based approach - in its nine basic ethical principles (Murray 2003). These share with SEDA's values a concern for student development and for collegiality. They also go beyond SEDA, into more difficult areas. They give guidance on dual-role relationships, typically personal and professional, between lecturers and students, which relationships in summary they see as potentially very problematic (a view broadly shared in UK by AUT (2004)). And they advocate as an ethical principle respect for the lecturer's institution, further demonstration if it were needed of the width of the North Atlantic.

What other kinds of approaches can we find to the question "What might it mean to teach and develop with integrity?"

The UK General Social Care Council (GSCC 2003) offers fascinating and closely aligned codes of practice for social care workers and for their employers (this alignment is a fine idea in itself). These codes include obligations to protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers and to promote the independence of service users while protecting them as far as possible from danger or harm. Compared to

the SEDA and STLHE values- or principles-based approaches, we may consider the GSCC approach to be focused on the goals which practitioners should seek to achieve - integrity as the attainment of particular outcomes, going beyond SEDA's 'commitments' to a seeking for results.

Bruce Macfarlane urges us to consider what he calls a virtues-based approach. He offers a range of possible virtues - they include respectfulness, courage, fairness and, again, collegiality. I say 'again' not with the intention to diminish this book. I say 'again' rather to suggest that different categorisations of - it is hard to find a collective noun for them - of these different kinds of qualities which go beyond the skills and the knowledge of the teacher - categorisations of these different kinds of qualities blur and overlap with each other. I have no difficulty with this blur and overlap, and I suspect that neither would Bruce. For him, it is essential that we surface difficult issues. In working through the book's several and fascinating case studies, the author stresses, not the right answers, but the importance of explicit consideration of and conversations about particular cases and about the ethical issues that they raise.

The book is presented in three parts. In the first, Bruce considers the

professional and ethical contexts in which teachers work. He explores what he describes as the 'pedagogic gap' between a competency approach to teaching standards and the complex ethical issues involved in the management of learning; offers the virtues-based approach; and describes the study of cases which he uses throughout the book. In part two he presents, and applies a virtues-based approach to, cases in teaching, assessing, evaluating and managing. In part three he suggests and explores a set of virtues for teaching. An appendix provides four longer cases to ponder.

The author shows the power of a virtues-based approach to teaching with integrity. Further, he considers it "...essential that lecturers debate professionalism in higher education in terms of the ethical responsibilities that they possess rather than limiting discussion to more narrowly technical aspects of 'best practice'." However, in stressing the growing time and resource pressures on under which academics teach, the author also suggests to me a possible difficulty with his approach – the long time that such consideration and

conversations can take.

Learning to teach in higher education is, in the vast majority of cases, undertaken in service. Yes, debates about the values, principles, ethics, goals, virtues and other qualities that inform our teaching and our development should continue throughout our careers, hopefully (though not automatically!) increasing in sophistication and even in wisdom.

But, in the early years of the career of a teacher or developer, and also in the longer term for those whose working conditions and pressures limit such debate, some strong, clear principles, values or goals, which bear clear and, with a little thought, direct implications for action, are likely to remain very useful.

So again, what might it mean to teach or develop with integrity? In the early stages of a career, it might mean engaging with and following good guidelines, over time tailoring these guidelines to one's particular circumstances. Yes, and having the debates. And, if time and circumstances allow, moving, probably not steadily, towards virtue.

And, at every stage of our development, applying, and from time to time re-examining, an explicit and defensible basis for what we do and for how we do it. Bruce McFarlane adds valuably to our debate on how to do this.

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## The STLHE Green Papers

[www.tss.uoguelph.ca/stlhe/gguides.html](http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/stlhe/gguides.html)

At their recent conference, the Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education launched their Green Papers series, following the tradition of HERDSA's Guides<sup>1</sup> and SEDA Papers<sup>2</sup>. They aim to be "solidly based on relevant research and theory, but the approach will be pragmatic and applied".

Green Guide 1 is **Teaching Large Classes** (54 pages) by Allan J Gedalof. Based on the author's 25 years of experience teaching large classes, it is concerned largely with face-to-face teaching of groups of over 50. After a preliminary discussion, there are sections on preparation, delivering the lecture, interactive methods in the lecture, team teaching, small-group activities outside the lecture, and technology aids. I found it a good read with plenty of insights and good suggestions.

Green Guide 2 is **Active Learning** (34 pages) by Beverley J. Cameron. It begins with definitions: active learning "requires that students *participate* in the learning process

... [it] asks that students *use* content knowledge not just acquire it." (p. 9) Then follows a brief literature review. After a look at the Kolb Cycle, there follows a discussion of 17 learning/teaching techniques to promote active learning. There is a discussion of some practicalities for introducing the techniques, and a final exhortation and encouragement. This would be useful both as an introduction for new teachers and for old hands to dip into for new techniques.

Further titles are: (3) *Teaching the Art of Inquiry*; (4) *Feedback: Key to Learning*; and (5) *Teaching with Cases*. On the basis of the first two guides, the series represents an excellent contribution to the body of scholarly but practical advice for university teachers, and good value. More information and ordering is from Dalhousie University Bookstore<sup>3</sup>

1 <http://www.herdsa.org.au/publish1.htm>

2 [http://www.seda.ac.uk/pubs/seda\\_papers\\_.htm](http://www.seda.ac.uk/pubs/seda_papers_.htm)

3 <http://www.housing.dal.ca/default.asp?mn=1.3.282>

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# ICED Council, 20 June 2004, Ottawa, Canada

**Ranald Macdonald** FSEDA, Sheffield Hallam University

The International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) is a network whose members are themselves national organisations or networks of staff and educational developers, such as SEDA. Established by Graham Gibbs in 1996, ICED now has members from across Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand and Sri Lanka. The Council meets at either the biennial conference or at a host institution in the intervening years.

This was the fifth ICED Council I had attended – the others being in Austin (Texas), Bielefeld (Germany), Maastricht (Netherlands) and Perth (Western Australia) – and it was held on the day before the start of the ICED Conference at the University of Ottawa. I was attending in place of SEDA Co-Chair, Kristine Mason O'Connor.

As always Council began with a dinner the night before the formal meeting and I was just able to make it as I arrived in Ottawa from the UK at 7.30 pm, missing the starters but just in time for the main course and dessert! It was great to meet old friends again, most of whom I hadn't seen since the last conference in Perth two years ago.

The main business of Council is always to hear what has been going on in the member organisations and to discuss how to promote educational development internationally. The meeting was chaired for her final meeting by Kirsten Lycke from Norway, who will give a keynote at our November conference. A major agenda item was also a report on the establishment of the *Spirit of ICED* award which was subsequently presented to Graham Gibbs during the conference for his tireless vision and enthusiasm in setting up ICED and supporting educational development world wide. Carla

Nelissen, from Belgium, was elected as the new Chair until 2006 though, after some discussion, it was decided to rename the post as President, perhaps illustrating the different use and connotations of terms around the world.

As always we discussed the financial position of ICED and agreed that perhaps the time has finally come for us to strengthen and formalise our financial situation, not least by setting up a bank account.

Of interest to UK readers will be the fact that the Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG) had applied to become a member of ICED last year and a working group had produced a set of guidelines for membership. These included the following two clauses:

- Member organisations should, if possible, represent the majority of educational developers in the country or region concerned, or should be the primary organisation representing educational developers, though membership in the national or regional organisation need not be confined to developers.
- Exceptionally, where there are special political or linguistic circumstances in a particular country or region, ICED may recognise more than one member organisation from the same area.

The latter clause was inserted to accommodate Belgium and perhaps other countries in the future. However, these guidelines led Council to conclude that SEDA was the more appropriate member organisation. As a member of the HEDG Planning Group I was able to answer questions about the organisation though it was obvious that there was a reluctance to set a

precedent which could get out of hand.

ICED has its own journal, The International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD), and we had a lengthy discussion led by two of the editorial team – Angela Brew (Australia) and Lynn McAlpine (Canada, who will also be speaking at the November SEDA conference). Rhona Sharpe, the third member of the team, from the UK, was unable to be with us.

The final matter discussed was future meetings and it was agreed that Council in 2005 would be held in Croatia as a way of supporting what are known as 'emergent networks'. The possibility of holding the 2006 conference and Council meeting in Sri Lanka is to be investigated, with SEDA as a possible fallback. I am always loath to suggest holding things in the UK as the meetings are always held in English anyway, but it is probably time for us to offer to host a major event for ICED, though in the first instance I will be providing support to Suki Ekaratne to see if it can be held in Sri Lanka. Cost may be an issue for some, though it is certainly no more expensive than flying to Canada and will be cheaper when we get there. Watch this space!

All in all another good meeting, even if some of the issues do seem to come up every time without resolution. But it is a wonderful experience to spend time with similarly like-minded people from around the world discussing our passion for improving learning and teaching through educational development.

**Ranald Macdonald** is Head of Academic Development in the Learning and Teaching Institute at Sheffield Hallam.

# An Example of Discipline Based Induction and CPD in Education

**Warren Gilchrist**, LTSN Mathematics, Statistics and OR, and Sheffield Hallam University

There is a general desire within the LTSN Subject Groups to increase the amount of subject based education within the staff induction and continuing professional development (CPD) in universities, e.g. within postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas in Learning and Teaching. For reasons mostly to do with ease of delivery and resource constraints, most of such courses focus on generic issues of teaching. However in many subjects there exists a substantial body of knowledge and experience on the teaching of the subject and its specific problems. For example in the mathematics and statistics areas there are a range of relevant journals and a vast literature. Subject staff look to see how the generic issues, that clearly are important, relate to their specific concerns in teaching their subject. There is little doubt that different subjects do raise quite distinct teaching issues. For example it would be impossible to teach statistics without access to sophisticated computer software and without facing the teaching issues that the use of such software raises. It is further evident that CPD in educational issues, as distinct to subject development, would become more attractive to experienced staff if it could be directly related to their teaching problems in their own subject.

With these issues in mind the statistics team of the LTSNMSOR has been developing materials of direct use within such provision. The team started by talking to staff across the country to assess their needs. This led on to a series of day workshops, which were initially intended for new staff, but which rapidly added a CPD element. We then considered putting our material together as a text, but were concerned that such things get out of date and too easily gather dust. We thus started to develop the material in a Distance Learning format. The first versions of this material became available last summer. They take the form of six units on (1) The environment of the statistics lecturer, for example current problems and professional ethical issues. (2) Learning theory with direct application to statistics teaching. (3) The teaching process as applicable for statistics. (4) The teaching of specific statistical topics. (5) Issues of assessment in statistics. (6) The last unit is an e-learning unit delivered by Blackboard. It focuses on the multitude of ways the computer impinges on the teaching of statistics. The material is designed to be of about 20 M level credits. It can be imbedded as a part of a Pg Cert or Diploma or it can act as a stand-alone course giving a Certificate in Teaching Statistics in HE. The team felt it was important to obtain recognition for the material. This was done via both the subject and the educational professional bodies. The Royal Statistical Society has

validated the Certificate and has appointed an External Examiner for it. The Institute for Learning and Teaching in HE made an accreditation visit in January 2004 and the panel has recommended that those who achieve the Certificate are accredited for Associate Membership of the Institute.

There now exists a group of around 20 university staff, both new and experienced, using the material in various ways. This run is seen as a Pilot, pending full use in 2004-2005. The use of Blackboard, kindly supported by Sheffield Hallam University, enables those using the material to function as a national cohort of participants, which has considerable benefits for an area where the recruitment of new staff is rare and where staff are often isolated specialists in non-statistics departments. Indeed, it is of note that most members of the pilot cohort are working in departments other than statistics and mathematics.

Our feedback thus far has been of encouragement and we are already revising and updating the material. We are encouraging other subject areas to consider this approach to supporting subject staff in their development as educators. Those interested in further information or involvement should contact the Course Tutor [vic.barnett@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:vic.barnett@ntu.ac.uk) who is based at the Royal Statistical Society Centre for Statistical Education, Nottingham Trent University (<http://science.ntu.ac.uk/rsscse>).

## Towards a framework of professional teaching standards

SEDA's response to the UUK consultation on the development of professional teaching standards is on the web site at

<http://www.seda.ac.uk/docs/index.html>

# Academic Attention Deficit Disorder (AADD): the difficulty of 'working at home'

Mike Laycock, University of East London

Before I start on the article for Educational Developments, I decide that some brief exercise like washing the car will help me freshen up for the task ahead. As I start toward the garage, I notice that there is mail on the hall table.

I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I lay my car keys down on the table, put the junk mail in the rubbish bin can under the table, and notice that the rubbish bin is full. So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the rubbish first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the letterbox on the corner when I take out the rubbish anyway, I may as well pay the bills first.

I take my chequebook off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My new chequebook is in my desk in the study, so I go to my desk where I find the cup of tea that I had been drinking. I'm going to look for my chequebook, but first I need to push the tea aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. I see that the tea is getting cold, and I decide I should put it in microwave to heat it up.

As I head toward the kitchen with my cup a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye—they need to be watered. I set the tea down on the counter, and I discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers.

I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I realize that tonight when I go to watch TV, I will be looking for the remote, but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide

to put it back in the lounge where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers.

I splash some water on the flowers, but most of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back down on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the article for Ed Devs isn't written, the car isn't washed, the bills aren't paid, there is a stone cold cup of tea sitting on the counter, the flowers aren't watered, there is still only one check in my chequebook, I can't find the remote, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys. Then when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long, and I'm really tired. I realize this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my e-mail.

Do me a favour, will you? Forward this message to everyone you know, because I don't remember to whom it has been sent.

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# “You’re live, Mr Macdonald”

**Ranald Macdonald** FSEDA, Sheffield Hallam University

It started with a ‘phone call which I missed asking whether I would be interested in being interviewed on the Radio 4 Today programme about plagiarism. I was due to give a keynote at the JISC plagiarism conference being held at St James’ Park, Newcastle and a researcher had picked up my theme, *‘Policing and punishing’ is not the answer! Adopting a more scholarly, holistic approach to plagiarism policies and regulations*, as being of interest. Anyway, I finally made contact with a BBC journalist on the morning of my departure to Newcastle and she said she would ring me the next day to make arrangements. I heard nothing until that evening, while we were on the conference cruise down the River Tyne, when one of the conference organisers handed me their mobile ‘phone saying “It’s the BBC, for you”.

I was told that they wanted me live on air the next morning at 7.30 and that I would be interviewed by either John Humphries or Jim Naughtie, together with Frank Furedi, Professor of Sociology from Kent University. Alarm bells immediately rang in my head as Frank is known for his, shall we say, outspoken views. The interview was to coincide with the publication of a report on the incidence of student plagiarism and I could see the possibility of being drawn into confrontation.

The boat tied up at around 10.30 pm and I got to bed at about eleven-thirty, only to get up 15 minutes later with my head spinning with potential questions. So I sat down and anticipated the likely questions and wrote answers to them – this was later to prove a good move as I had rehearsed most of the questions I was to be asked next morning.

To cut a long story slightly shorter, the taxi arrived at 7.00 the next morning and I was ‘whisked’ off to the BBC studios in Newcastle. This was later to surprise many people who thought I was in the same studio as the others whilst in fact I was in a tiny cupboard in Newcastle with a microphone, headphones and a glass of water together, of course, with my by now much-read notes.

The interview itself was a bit of a blur as I was conscious of disagreeing with Frank’s points but not wanting to get drawn into a slanging match with him. Jim Naughtie’s questions didn’t throw me too much as, in a sense, I had also rehearsed my answers in the previous day’s keynote. I had emphasised that I believed we should take shared responsibility for plagiarism and that many of our students arrive at University ill-prepared and unaware of the appropriate academic practices which are expected of them, though when plagiarism does occur we should have robust procedures for dealing with it.

All too soon it was over and I wandered out of the room into an eerily quiet corridor and found my way out of the

building to the waiting taxi. Over the next few days I received a lot of emails and comments – only one from another lecturer at Sheffield Hallam was really critical, the others being very supportive. It was funny how many people said that they couldn’t work out why, when their radios came on at 7.30, they heard my voice in their bedrooms!

The real lesson for me was that both my knowledge of the topic and the fact that I rehearsed answers to some anticipated questions made me feel much more comfortable in what I found to be a very nerve-wracking situation. The interview, together with the name checks in that week’s Times Higher, gave me my ‘15 minutes of fame’ (Andy Warhol, I believe, date unknown - I’d hate not to acknowledge my sources!).

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**Ranald Macdonald** is Head of Academic Development in the Learning and Teaching Institute at Sheffield Hallam University where he has been leading the University’s development of a holistic approach to plagiarism involving staff development to design opportunities for plagiarism out of assessment, improvements in student information and skills, and changes to University procedures and regulations. This work is based on research carried out by Abbi Flint and Madeleine Freewood, current and past research assistants in the LTI, with support from Professors Peter Ashworth and Sue Clegg.

The broadcast can be heard at 7.35 am on

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/zwednesday\\_20040630.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/zwednesday_20040630.shtml)

## **And a listener’s response:**

“Wake up – Ranald’s on the radio .... “  
What’s all this? Some educational developer trying to organise group work while I’m asleep?  
I can hear Frank Furedi going on about students who think they are entitled to a 2.1.

Eh?

Then saying that cheating is consistent with the ethos of university life.

What?

Then banging on about universities turning a blind eye?  
Is this for real?

Then blaming a new client culture for a reversal of idealism and a growth of cynicism.

In your dreams, mate.

Perhaps it’s in my dreams?

But I’m sure I can hear Ranald talking about teaching students properly.

zzzzzz . . .