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THIS ISSUE INCLUDES:

APPRAISAL: A GENDERED AGENDA?

SALLY BROWN

1,3

EDITORIAL

2

COURSE HANDBOOKS: KEY QUESTIONS

DAVID BAUME

4-6

STAFF INDUCTIONS

MARK GRIFFITHS

7

FINANCIAL COLUMN

SIMON HORSMAN

8

GROUP PROJECTS IN BIOLOGICAL
SCIENCES

J VERRAN AND OTHERS

9-11

INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENTS FOR LAW

LECTURERS

RUTH SOETENDORP

12

TIME FOR A SABBATICAL

JOHN LLOYD

13-14

WORK PLACEMENTS

TONY WATTS AND RUTH HAWTHORN

15-16

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW THROUGH SKILLS

KEVIN KERRIGAN

17-18

UPDATE

19-21

BOOK REVIEWS

22-23

APPRAISAL: A GENDERED AGENDA?

Sally Brown

Does appraisal disadvantage women? It can provide a framework to increase objectivity of performance evaluation in Higher Education, but I believe that it can also unwittingly more deeply entrench sexist practices.

Most women will be appraised by men (as will most men), because there are so few women at senior levels in Higher Education. A few institutions do offer women, if they insist on it, the opportunity to be appraised by another woman, but there simply are not enough women to do this if all took up the option.

One solution adopted by some institutions is to train more junior women who can then peer - appraise each other. But if peer appraisal is valuable/practicable for women, it is so for both genders. And if women can choose the gender of their appraiser, isn't it only fair that men should be able to as well?

Researchers like Jennifer Coates [1] have identified ways in which language patterns differ between the sexes, such as in the fairness of turn taking in interchange and amount of air time taken by each sex (women get fewer and shorter turns), and this can skew the appraisal process. In mixed gender discussions, men more commonly interrupt women than vice versa. Also women who take equal amount of time in mixed gender discussions are often regarded as 'hogging the conversation' and talking too much. Women's language patterns tend to sound more tentative, with more use of tag questions such as 'don't you think?' and 'Isn't it?' and this can come across in appraisal as lack of confidence or unassertiveness.

The way in which behaviour is perceived tends to be gendered, with women characterised as being hard, unnatural and unfeminine in contexts where men would be regarded as strong or assertive. Additionally, because women have a reputation as good listeners and as carers, their workloads tend to be apportioned accordingly, with more of

Continued on page 3

EDITORIAL

As the incoming editor for the *New Academic*, my first task has been to sort through and edit a queue of inherited articles, as well as process 'copy' which seems to arrive with each morning's post. On the whole it has been pleasurable and stimulating work, given the various educational development issues which have inspired so many authors to set pen to paper. Admittedly there have been exceptions, as with the 20 page treatises steeped in discipline jargon and the bland self-advertisements for various pet projects! But this kind of material has been more than offset by, for example, the provocative and critical debate sparked off by the likes of Graham Gibbs and Phil Race in previous issues. These authors—along with others—have succeeded in creating controversy and in so doing have made the *New Academic* a widely read magazine (with a circulation of 6,000 at the last count). On behalf of the SCED Editorial Board, thank you for such contributions, even if the response has at times proved a little fierce! I suspect that Sally Brown's current article on appraisal will provoke even more debate. There is also the appeal and value of the practical and applied articles which help guide readers in their daily Higher Education work—in this issue, David Baume's tips on course handbooks continue this approach. Especially welcome also is the frank, honest and at times humorous reflections of some authors—here we have Mark Griffiths on induction programmes for new staff and at the other end of the spectrum, John Lloyd on a welcome sabbatical.

Your contributions are eagerly awaited. In particular, I'd like to make a special plea for any discussions about franchising, outreach and continuing education projects or policies which affect teaching and learning issues associated with the breaking down of the binary line between Higher and Further Education.

Danny Saunders

Editor,

February 1993

Danny Saunders is the Curriculum Development Manager in the Enterprise Unit at the University of Glamorgan. He has particular interests in student tutoring, portfolios and profiling, and workshops for the development of transferable skills.

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THE AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING QUALITY

Editor: P T Knight
SCED Paper 73

Now that Higher Education funding is to be tied to teaching quality, institutions are urgently looking at ways of assessing teaching.

The Audit and Assessment of Teaching Quality, published this month and sponsored by the Staff Development Group of the Society for Research in Higher Education and by the Standing Conference on Educational Development, looks at what institutions have done and what they might do. The contributors see many problems but believe that assessing teaching is beneficial, while stressing that the purpose is to develop academic staff, not to damn.

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their work being allocated to supporting students and working with people and less to the highly-valued areas like strategic planning and research. Accordingly, they are less frequently invited or encouraged to apply for senior posts.

Modesty is perceived by many to be an explicitly female virtue: it is not considered feminine to 'blow your own trumpet' and social conditions make it difficult for some women to realistically list and evaluate their own achievements. Self-effacement and self-deprecation are not particularly useful qualities in appraisal interviews, particularly those related to Performance Related Pay (PRP)!

The Equal Opportunities Commission suggests in its report on Pay and Gender that PRP may widen the gap between male and female earnings, in that the subjective and general way in which many appraisal processes work make it possible for managers to make sexist judgments unchallenged. Few academics are happy about government attempts to insist on the linkage between appraisal and pay, when most systems in Higher Education have been set up with a largely developmental focus. I believe that women are particularly likely to be adversely affected by such a linkage.

It is likely that classroom observation will be integrated into performance review and I think this will be particularly stressful for women who will commonly, under proposed systems, be watched teaching by (largely) male line managers. Critical theorists such as John Berger [2] tell us that throughout society women are objectified, with women perceived always as the subject of the male gaze (in films, advertising and pictures, for example). This can be regarded by women as intrusive, and at times, threatening. Such discomfort is in addition to the normal stress that anyone feels when being watched teaching. Observers may need to be given particular training to make them aware of this.

As academics, we are keen to accredit students' experiences outside traditional career patterns, but women academics' promotional prospects are often hampered by non-linear careers; management and promotion panels rarely give due credit for the years spent outside full-time permanent work. Many more women than men work part-time or on temporary contracts in Higher Education.

Appraisal can only avoid further disadvantaging women if appraisal training directly addresses these issues. For example, it should involve recognition of the value of experiences achieved in non-linear career patterns. Consciousness raising should be included, so that at least all parties are aware of how language patterns between the sexes can be skewed inequitably. Ideally, women should have the chance to be appraised by fellow women wherever possible, even if this means radically modifying the appraisal systems of Universities and Colleges.

Andrea Freeman [3] describes appraisal as 'potentially...a tool for liberating women from discrimination in the workplace.' It can only fulfil its potential as a positive process for egalitarianism if these issues are addressed head on, rather than ignored, as they are too often at present.

References

1. Jennifer Coates *Women, Men and Language: a Sociological account of Sex Differences in Language*, Longman, London 1986).
2. John Berger *Ways of Seeing* Penguin, London, 1972.
3. 'School Teacher Appraisal and Gender Issues' in *Educational Change and Development* Volume 12 Number 2 1992 p1-3

A longer version of this article can be found in the SCED paper *What's so Special about Women in Higher Education* Volume 2

Sally Brown is a member of the Educational Development Service at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle. She is chair of SCED Publications committee and a consultant to the Oxford Centre for Staff Development.

She is interested in innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, creative problem solving and better ways of teaching large groups.

COURSE* HANDBOOKS: KEY QUESTIONS

Collected by David Baume

A student joining a new course at a new institution has to make many adaptations; administratively to learning the ways of a large and complex organisation, socially to a new peer-group, intellectually and academically, if not to a new subject then almost certainly to new ways of learning, and perhaps also domestically.[1]

A good course handbook can help the new student understand the way their course and institution works administratively. It can induct them into the academic ways of the subject and the course. The handbook can reduce student panic and confusion in the weeks immediately before and after joining the course. It can also reduce the demand on staff time in the first hectic weeks. "Have you checked the handbook?" can become a source of liberation for students and staff.

CONTENT

1. *Welcoming approach*
 - Is an introductory page or paragraph included from the course leader which welcomes students to the course?
 - Has the student mix on your course been emphasised in your welcome, such as students entering via different routes (including school leavers, mature direct entrants and Access students) and students from different ethnic groups, age groups, overseas students, students with disabilities?
 - Do you include profiles on student achievement?
 - Without patronising your students, what can you say to them to help build their confidence?
 - Is a photograph of the course tutor/course team included?
2. *Using the handbook*
 - Is a short guide included on how to use the handbook - for example, identifying which pages are essential initial reading and which pages are for later reference?
 - Would it be useful to colour code individual sections for ease of reference by the student?
 - Is there a clear and thorough contents page? And an index?
3. *Course Roles*
 - Are key members of staff identified (for example, course leader, year tutors, subject specialist tutors, personal tutors, departmental secretary or course administrator)?
 - Are staff areas of responsibility identified and explained, so that students know whom they should contact for specific purposes?
4. *Communication channels*
 - Is a list provided of names, rooms and extension numbers of staff?
 - How do tutors and students communicate with students outside classes?
 - Does the handbook describe the location of course noticeboards, staff and student pigeon holes?
5. *Location*
 - Is a location map of the site or sites provided?
 - Does the map indicate public and road transport access, and parking arrangements for cars, cycles and motorcycles?
 - Is a detailed site plan included?
 - Does the site plan identify the rooms students will use, including support services?
 - Are tutors' offices identified?
 - Is information included on access for disabled students?
 - Are rooms with induction loops identified?
6. *Term or semester dates*
 - Are term or semester dates stated, including details of reading weeks, field trips etc? (This is particularly important for students with caring responsibilities.)
7. *Timetables*
 - Has a timetable been included? (Again this is particularly important for students with caring responsibilities. Timetables allow such students to make care arrangements as soon as possible,

* 'Course' includes programme, scheme, module, or other major unit of student experience.

and reduces the chance that they will suffer a disrupted start to their course.)

8. *Aims and objectives*

- Have you included the aims and objectives of the course?
- Have you explained what "aims" and "objectives" mean?

9. *Careers*

- Are career outcomes from the course, and moves into further study, identified?
- Are actual examples of previous students' progression included?
- Are work placements and/or advice on careers included in the course? Are arrangements for these described in the handbook?
- How are students advised of career options whilst on the course, and who does this?

10. *Structure of course*

- Is the course structure described in simple terms (and in diagrammatic form where possible) to identify, for example, course units, assessment points, work placements?

11. *Course components*

- Is an outline provided of each major aspect of the course, including:
rationale,
content,
teaching and learning methods,
assessment,
key readings?

12. *Glossary of terms*

- Are simple glossaries provided:
– Of terms used on the course (for example, module, unit, tutorial, seminar), and
– Of subject-specific vocabulary and acronyms which the student will meet in the first few weeks of the course?

13. *Pre-course activities*

- Are students given guidance on what books they should buy before they join the course?
- Are unassessed independent learning activities (for example, guided introductory reading of key course texts, sample assignments, an audio-tape of a lecture for practice in note-taking) provided for students to use during the summer vacation, to help ease their transition to Higher Education?

14. *Course induction*

- Are details included of what will happen during the induction period?
- How does the induction period focus on:
socialising/orientation of students;
information giving;

assessment/diagnosis of learning needs (for example, study skills, literacy, numeracy, IT)?

- Are clear objectives described for the induction period?

15. *Teaching and Learning*

- Is a general statement provided about teaching and learning methods?
- Does the handbook describe the likely demands on students - for example, preparing for lectures, taking notes, participating in seminars, making oral presentations, undertaking individual and group projects?
- Does the handbook describe how students are helped to develop these skills?

16. *Assessment*

- Is information provided on assessment (for example, on timing, on assessment methods, on criteria for assessment)?
- Is information provided on procedures for dealing with illness, failure and appeals?
- Is course policy explained on deadlines for completing assignments?

17. *Library*

- Are library facilities, services and opening hours outlined?
- Are relevant specialist library staff identified?

18. *Computer Facilities*

- Are these described in sufficient detail?
- Do you describe access arrangements and times, support staff availability, any preferred software (such as named word-processing or spreadsheet packages)?

19. *Books and equipment*

- Are students advised which texts they will need to buy, and when?
- Are recommendations made on any specialist equipment which the students should buy, and when they should buy it?
- Is there a system for the sale and purchase of second hand books and equipment?

20. *Other course specific information*

- Are any sources of funding (internal or external) available to help students with specific needs (for example, field trips, equipment) described?
- If specialist equipment is available for student use on the course, how do students gain access to it (for example, booking arrangements, location)?

21. *Students and student views*

- Do you have any photographs illustrating the student mix, for example at the Graduation Ceremony?
- Are you including any comments by current students on how they experienced the course?

22. *Distribution*

- Is the handbook sent to students well in advance?

STYLE

The course handbook will be the students' introduction to the course. It will be the first thing they read before they start their studies. It is important to think about the style in which the handbook is written:

- *Are the sentences short?*
Academics, writing for each other about material on which they share understanding and knowledge, can cope with long and complex sentences. Students who are new to a course, possibly even new to a subject, may appreciate a simpler style.
- *Are unnecessary long and specialist words avoided, and are any necessary long and specialist words defined?*
Every subject has its specialist language. Some of this must appear in documents about the course. But some of it can probably be avoided, or explained, at this stage.
- *Is the handbook written in first or third person?*
The normal style for a course document would say, for example, "Students will be expected to...". A course handbook might be more approachable if it said "You will be expected to...", or maybe "We shall ask you to...".

PRESENTATION

It is becoming easier to present text material in an interesting and attractive way. The look of documents does affect readers' responses to them.

- *Have you made use of current technology?*
Laser printers allow for interesting and clear layout, with good use of space and different fonts, from within most current word processors. A little more effort allows the inclusion of appropriate tables and illustrations, including

photographs. Desk-top publishing allows a much more interesting appearance, but may take too long. However the text is produced, an interesting cover can help a lot.

- *How will students use the handbook?*
It may help to present it in a ring-binder, so they can add their own new material, or your updates.
- *Will you present the handbook as one volume - or will you prepare an overview of the whole course, and then make a separate handbook for each year?*
The latter may be more flexible in use - it is hard to predict the fine details of a course three or four years ahead!

CHECKING AND REVISION

Students are good judges of handbooks.

- *Have you asked your current students what they want in a handbook?*
Have you checked a draft of the new handbook with them? They can give you useful feedback on content, style and presentation. They will be pleased to be asked!
- *What arrangements have you made to revise the handbook next year?*
Again, your students can help.

This paper is adapted from 'Guidelines on the Development of Course Handbooks', produced at the University of East London by a working group chaired by Lynne Chiswick (Access Advice and Learning Development Unit - AALDU), and comprising David Baume; Anthony Bone (Health Studies); Stephanie Clark, Stella Cottrell and Robert Simpson (AALDU); and Iain MacArthur (Student Services).

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- 1 Simons, H, et al (1988) *Up to Expectations*, Birmingham:SCED Paper 53

David Baume is Head of the Educational Development and Support Services at London Guildhall University.

STAFF INDUCTION: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Mark Griffiths

The following article concerns my personal thoughts about the Staff Induction Course that I attended during the 1991-92 academic session at the University of Plymouth (formerly Polytechnic Southwest) in addition to some personal thoughts about teaching within the Higher Education system.

Before talking about the course, I feel a little background about me and my feelings towards Higher Education are relevant. I became a lecturer in September 1990 having come straight through the education system. There was always one worrying thought in the back of my mind when I got my job (and I must admit it is still there). Given that University education is supposed to be the most valued of academic experiences for its students, how is it that so many University lecturers in the country have *no* teaching qualifications? Lecturers in Higher Education are quite often selected for their research records rather than their teaching skills and I do not feel I was any exception when I entered the system. People are at last realising that University lecturers are doing jobs which (technically) they have no qualifications for! However, that is not to say that there are not good lecturers with good teaching skills.

When I secured my job here at Plymouth my attitude to teaching was positive, but I still viewed 'research' as the main reason I was here. Due to my underwhelming enthusiasm for another timetabled block out of my already busy week, I somehow managed to avoid the Staff Induction Course for 1990-91.

The following year saw a new head of department who did not let me get out of Staff Induction so easily. Since I was frantically finishing my Ph.D in what seemed like world record time, I managed once again to miss the start of the Induction Course. However, after a little 'gentle persuasion' I finally succumbed and joined an already established Staff Induction Group. As I went along to the first session I knew I did not want to be there and thought that it would be a complete waste of my time.

How wrong I was. I cannot pinpoint any one particular moment when I (metaphorically) 'saw the light' but I realised within a few weeks of attendance at the course that my attitude towards teaching had changed for the better and for the future. I had come through a University system which I disliked and here I was continuing in the same way, teaching students who probably had the same thoughts about the system as I did when I was an undergraduate. One of the first realisations I had during the course is that to some

extent lecturers have 'power' over what (or rather the way) they teach. My attitude towards a one hour lecture slot in 1990 was 'How am I going to talk for 55 minutes non-stop on something I hadn't even heard of until last week?' I would like to think I have matured somewhat since then! Over time I began to realise I had a range of options at my disposal.

Higher Education is going through a revolution at the moment. Over the next ten years there will be a huge increase in students entering the higher education system and with little or no resources for new staff. Staff-student ratios will increase significantly. In addition we have seen the abolition of the polytechnics, the increase of teaching by modules, accreditation schemes, semesterisation, evening teaching, and wider Access teaching. All of which means that teaching methods like everything else in the Higher Education system will have to move with the times. To cope with a revolutionary change in Higher Education we need radical ways of approaching emerging problems. Even if the Induction Course did not teach me exactly how to teach large numbers effectively, at least it has made me aware of the changing system's implications.

I could take a paragraph at this point to run through the course I attended and say things like 'I've learned about different types of assessment, peer tutoring techniques, counselling skills, teaching large numbers, buzz groups, syndicate groups, 53 ways to write a Staff Induction assignment', but that was never the intention of this article. This outlet gives me a chance to write about *my opinions*. One day some of my opinions about teaching may filter 'through' to my colleagues, other institutions, 'the system' even. Through the Induction Course I have realised that we do not have to adhere to the long held established traditions of University teaching and are free on occasions to experiment with new ideas. The norms of yesteryear are shifting slowly and it is up to the newer members of staff (like myself) to encourage others to adapt to their new educational climate. The concern is if many of these cannot (or will not) change their ways to meet the new educational challenges that we are facing over the next decade.

The Induction Course's greatest achievement for me was its ability to adapt to us as students. It really did practice what it preached. Future degree courses should be set up to meet students' needs rather than the lecturer's oratory skills (or lack of them).

Not only do all Higher Education institutions need Induction courses, but perhaps after every four or five years, staff should have refresher courses which examine changes that have occurred in the system since their course attendance and identify how staff members would wish to adapt to meet the changes.

*Mark Griffiths lectures in Psychology at the University of Plymouth.
His doctorate research was completed at the University of Exeter.*

A MANIFESTO

Simon Horsman

*Empowerment is a worthy ideal, now somewhat in the ascendant.
But consider this, if decisions are being made wholly or partly on the basis of money values, and you
are not involved, then you are disempowered.*

I see the noninvolvement of mainstream academics in money-based decisions as culpably acquiescent. Why academics collude in this state of affairs is beyond the scope of a financial commentator. I suspect it relates to the value system of academics which typically attempt to escape having to accept painful outcomes.

The purposes of this column are to force the realisation that all of us must get involved with money and to interpret the financial concepts, techniques and constraints that are being used to shape our Higher Education world. I want to enable you all to play effectively the role of sharp financial operator. It is up to you to retain the academic values which brought you into Higher Education in the first place. I have not found that financial awareness has required me to compromise my ideals: indeed, I think this is a false distinction.

Financial information is too important to be left to accountants. Money is too important to be left to administrators. We have always been managers: of our own time and our students. Let us now behave like managers.

On Accountants and Financial Crises

Good News! The accountants are your servants. Bad News! If you slip up, they'll take over.

Once an accountant makes a decision she or he is no longer behaving as an accountant but as an executive. Accountancy is exclusively about the presentation of high quality information to decision-makers.

Key adjectives which identify high quality information are as follows:

- appropriate for the needs of the audience
- disinterested, unbiased
- timely
- reliable
- cost-justified

Accounting textbooks and professional manifestos devote thousands of words to these attributes but for now I am leaving them unexplored.

Why do people blame the accountants? Where accountants have failed in respect of any of the key attributes, then they are rightly blameworthy. Otherwise it is either cowardice (I didn't have the guts to admit my involvement so I said it was someone else's fault - as old as Adam blaming Eve and Eve blaming a poor dumb animal) or it is a matter of shooting the messenger because you can't cope with the message.

Accountants are especially favoured for the role of scapegoat because they are messengers (they provide information) and they are also the custodians of the cheque book. In the last resort all crises are cash crises. I say this with confidence because the history of organisational crises shows that they can and do go on kidding themselves as long as they can pay the bills. Magna Carta, the English Civil War and the American War of Independence focused on control of the purse strings in circumstances where a government has run out of money and was looking for extra funds.

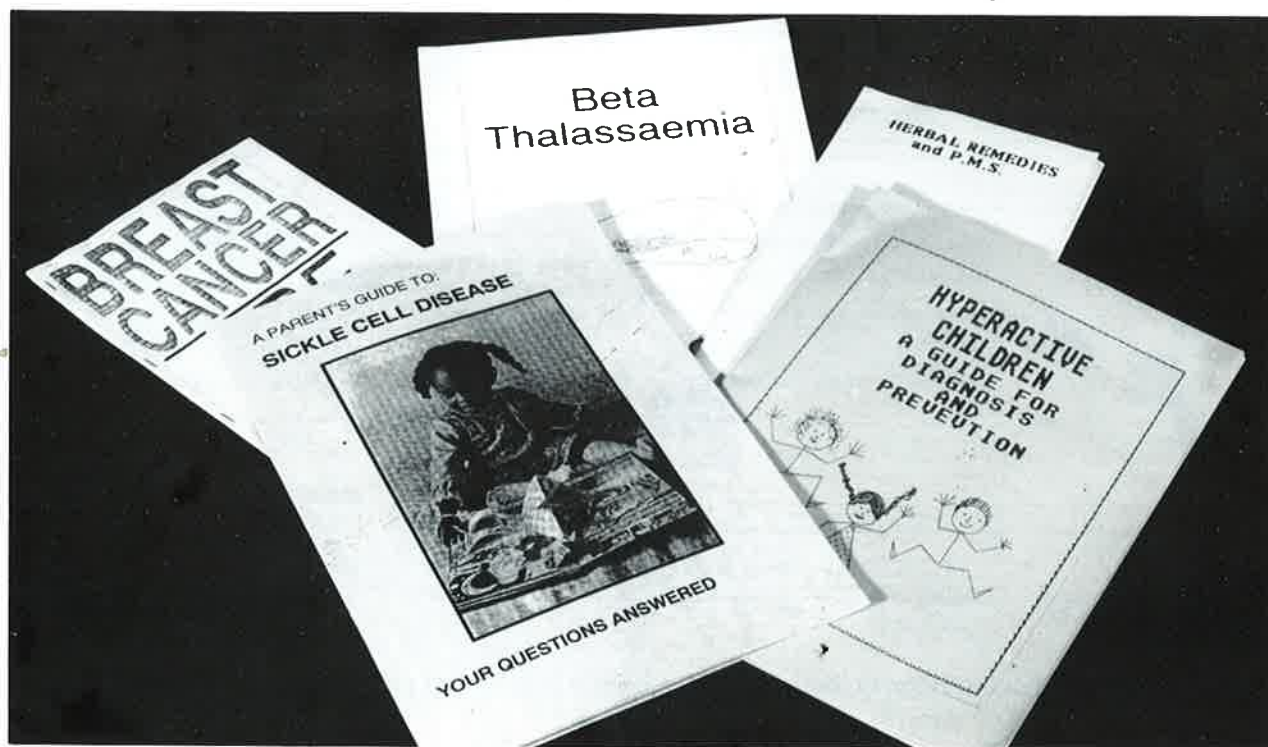
Going broke can induce extreme behaviour from all concerned. The incumbent managers normally fall or are pushed, leaving the accountants (not to be confused with the financial henchmen of the bosses) in charge - they're the one group that the bank manager has to trust if the bank is to recover any of its money. Furthermore, if the accountants have done their job of providing information according to the specifications above, they are untarnished and should not be demoralised.

In conclusion, the more the bean-counters are in charge, the more the organisation has lost its way. Organisational health lies in the free flow of high quality information, which results from competent accountants, adequately resourced and subordinate to the managers, that is US!

*Simon Horsman is an accountant and
lectures in Business Studies at Coventry
University*

GROUP PROJECTS IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

J. Verran, J. Willcox, M. Dawson and E. Bingham



All final year BSc. (Hons) Applied Biological Sciences students at Manchester Metropolitan University undertake a group project under supervision of academic staff. Staff and students negotiate a project, the product of which is assessed at the end of the 'student centred learning' unit, SCL.

This contributes one seventh of the final marks for degree students. It has two components: one is a literature search around broad topics in preparation for an examination, and the second - the subject of this paper - is a group project.


For the group project, students are divided randomly into groups of four. Part-time students are grouped together to help overcome problems associated with one day per week attendance. Each student has thirty hours to carry out the group projects; each group of students is assigned to a member of academic staff (the 'facilitator') who are each allocated ten hours to supervise one project. The nature of the project is open for negotiation between staff and students: a product is decided upon, and progress is monitored by a series of meetings. Each student keeps a log book, meetings are minuted and the member of staff is expected to attend at least three meetings. The project is of sixteen weeks duration.

The SCL project has been running for the past three academic years. The range of projects undertaken has been enormous. Many students have produced

leaflets or posters, while some have devised games to illustrate various biological concepts to children. Other projects have included a salary survey for biology graduates; comparison of biochemistry syllabuses across Higher Education; writing and recording a song on 'green' issues; teaching dental health education in primary schools; making a video on research for undergraduates; contributing to press releases and publicity schemes to reduce food poisoning caused by birds pecking the lids of milk bottles, and so on. All projects had a biology slant, and all had an end product of some kind. The transferable skills acquired were diverse, and previous experience of biology, desk top publishing, design, and information retrieval was valuable. At the end of the session, the students displayed their end products at a social event. Light refreshments were provided, and all staff attended, as well as any external clients for the projects.

Assessment embraces two components, an assessment of the end product and an assessment of the contributions of the individual members of a group. Students appraise one another without consultation (Figure 2): their comments are used to help the facilitator arrive at a grade for each member of the group (Figure 3). This 'contribution multiplier' is used as a weighting factor against the mark given for the product. The mark for the end product is given

GROUP WORK IN THE SCIENCES



**PROTECT YOUR PINTA
PROTECT YOUR HEALTH**

Did you know that drinking milk which has been poked at by birds could give you a nasty infection?

(Picture reproduced from Science, 1970)

Recent work of high school students has shown that drinking milk which has been poked at by birds could give you a nasty infection. This is because the birds' beaks contain bacteria which can cause a disease called brucellosis.

DO NOT DRINK THE MILK

First the milk bottle, about the bottle thoroughly and then the milk.

Even though all this problem is serious, simply placing a piece of paper or cloth over the hole in the top will do the job.

Remember, ask your milkman to place them over the hole when he delivers the milk.

SO DON'T FORGET: PROTECT YOUR PINTA, PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

(Project by students of North Western Regional High School, Portland, Oregon)

North Western Regional High School

PRESS RELEASE

Project: Production of publicity material by students as part of health campaign.

Press successes also shown.

Students of North Western Regional High School, Portland, Oregon, have produced a series of posters and pamphlets to help the public understand the danger of drinking milk which has been poked at by birds.

The project was supervised by Mrs. J. H. Smith, Health Teacher.

The students have also been successful in getting their work into the local newspapers.

The result of their efforts is shown in the following newspaper clippings.

One for sorrow!

Warning over magpies

Magpie pinta bug peril

Magpie menace poisons pintas



Figure 1

GROUP WORK IN THE SCIENCES

STUDENT APPRAISAL OF CONTRIBUTION OF GROUP MEMBERS

You should complete this form without consulting other group members

Name of Staff Supervisor:

Names of Group Members (including yourself):

1.
2.
3.
4.

Judge the contribution that each member of your group, including yourself, made with respect to the following 5 categories. You supervisor will use this information, together with the log books of your activity to assist in calculating the overall mark you get for the Group Activity.

Score:- N = Nil Contribution, M = Minor Contribution, S = Satisfactory Contribution

STUDENT NUMBER

1 2 3 4

Participation as member of group (n, m or s)

Contribution to planning and decision making (n, m or s)

Contribution to collection of information (n, m or s)

Contribution to production of End Product (n, m or s)

Ability to meet deadlines (n, m or s)

Figure 2

STAFF ASSESSMENT OF GROUP ACTIVITY

Nature of Group Activity and End Product:

Names of Other Group Members:

A: Mark for End Product
Use Standard Assessment Scale

B: Supervisors Assessment of Student's Contribution

Score:- 0 = Nil Contribution, 1 = Minor Contribution, 2 = Satisfactory Contribution

Participation as member of group (0, 1 or 2)

Contribution to planning and decision making (0, 1 or 2)

Contribution to collection of information (0, 1 or 2)

Contribution to production of End Product (0, 1 or 2)

Ability to meet deadlines (0, 1 or 2)

Total

CONTRIBUTION MULTIPLIER (divide total/10)

FINAL MARK (A x Contribution Multiplier)

Figure 3

at the exhibition when the quality of products can be compared.

There is often a reluctance among students to embark on group projects, and a distrust of assessment of group work amongst staff and students. However, the marks for the group project and the SCL essay agree broadly, and the overall unit mark has not differed significantly from those of more traditionally taught units, thus alleviating concern over assessment. Many of the SCL project products have been of value outside the University, thus providing students with a reward over and above 'marks'. The project itself provokes interesting discussion at job interviews. There is often value in negotiating subject matter, since biology students usually specialise within the science: the SCL topic inevitably demands a broadening of biological horizons.

The SCL unit has not been easy to manage or assess. Changes have been made in response to comments made by staff and students during monitoring and evaluation procedures. For example, there were originally two group exercises during the academic session; the second was eliminated and replaced in part by a poster display where each student presented the results of their research projects, in scientific poster format. The first exercise was made more significant in terms of time and marks. The presentation session was originally rather ad hoc: the

newer 'organised' event provided a more satisfying end point to the project, in an informal social environment.

Assessment had posed another problem in that assessment criteria were initially vague, and staff were relatively inexperienced at assessing both group work and the quality (as well as content) of a product of negotiated nature. Marks were invariably at or near maximum. It was also difficult for staff to be aware of student activities. Students tended to award one another full marks - perhaps not surprising at final year level - unless one member of a group made no contribution and received no marks from peers (yet benefited from the product mark). These problems were ameliorated by the provision of more detailed management procedures and assessment criteria; the introduction of logbooks; and the inclusion of student appraisal in staff assessment and the contribution multiplier procedure.

Assessment of group work is a well-known item of debate in education. However, it is an area which must be addressed as transferable skills training becomes more commonplace in the curriculum. This has been an adventurous exercise for our Department. One anticipates future monitoring and evaluation procedures indicating that the perception of the SCL unit's educational value will be heightened as logistic problems are solved.

The authors are in the Department of Biological Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University

INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENTS FOR LAW LECTURERS

Ruth Soetendorp

Law lecturers who have professional qualifications and professional connections may well have access to law firms, and probably spend part of the academic year in practice. Law lecturers who do not are nevertheless aware of three trends in legal education.

- A growing emphasis on transferable professional skills for law students coming from both the Law Society and Council for Legal Education.
- An expectation for law teachers to have recent practice experience,
- Growing numbers of students expecting to take vacation work in a law office.

As a result, it is probable that a short placement for the Law lecturer in a practice office or in chambers will also be seen increasingly as a vital element of continuing staff development.

My own particular area of interest is in Intellectual Property law. It is a specialist area, and in our small Law Department there are few colleagues with whom to explore ideas in depth. It is an area of Law where disputes are often resolved without recourse to litigation, and where much of the work is concerned with non-contentious matters.

My two placements were a result of contacting only three firms (the third - a small practice, swamped already with articulated clerks and other placement students - couldn't accommodate me).

A placement of two weeks duration, in non-vacation time (so as not to be in competition with summer student placements) and in non teaching time - (so as not to conflict with the teaching timetable) seemed the optimum period, although my choice of early September meant that the Courts were in vacation.

In 1990 - I asked a local patent agent (with whom I'd worked on input to our BSc Engineering Business Development course) to recommend a contact within a suitable firm. Following correspondence and discussion, we agreed the first two weeks in September.

Within that time I was involved in the follow up activities generated by a swoop on London market stalls carried out in response to a tip off that 'rip off' copies of a popular toy were on sale. As well as

insights into court procedures, the application of the new Copyright Designs and Patents Act, I experienced the exhaustion of running from office to court carrying heavy cases of documents!

In 1992 I met an Intellectual Property partner with another firm at a conference. The first reaction to the lecturer placement proposal was 'what an unusual idea!' I was offered an opportunity to spend the first two weeks in September - one in their non-contentious commercial intellectual property department, one with their Intellectual Property litigation department.

This most useful experience gave me the opportunity, amongst other things, to sit in on discussions with the Chair of a public company concerning the detail of arrangements between his Company and the owner of a patent for a process they were intending to develop together.

Hearing the concerns of the Chair, then meeting the patent owner, studying the documentation which the negotiations spawned, and being able to discuss the matters with the solicitor responsible gave valuable insights.

The staff at both firms were most welcoming and helpful. Larger firms will probably find it easier to accommodate a lecturer on placement. They need only provide a desk and chair - preferably sitting with an appropriate fee earner. And there are probably spin offs for the sponsors: lecturers often get requests for advice or to act - which can be referred back to the placement firm!

Within the parameters of an undertaking of confidentiality I came away with novel ideas for teaching materials, case studies, examination and seminar questions. As well as meeting interesting people, and making useful contacts, I felt able to give a more practical edge to my teaching.

If time amongst native speakers is recognised as invaluable for anyone seeking to improve their language skills, two weeks for the Intellectual Property Law lecturer, immersed in the Intellectual Property practice department of a nationally recognised law firm, must be equally invaluable - not to mention the refreshing stimulus that comes from swapping the 'chalk face' for 'the cutting edge'.

Ruth Soetendorp lectures in the School of Law, at Bournemouth University. She is grateful to Bird and Bird and Nabarro Nathanson for their kind help with the lecturer placements.

TIME FOR A SABBATICAL!

John Lloyd

The dreaded fiftieth is not so far away, the students have little inkling who Geoff Hurst is, and articles on 'increasing your pension power' seem to have more relevance than the latest manuals on sexual techniques. Only the other day I'm sure I overheard my head of department calculating how many temporary, part-time lecturers could be funded from a PL's bounty. I know I am far from being alone! A recent NATFHE meeting produced an attendance for which Crewe Alexandra would have been grateful. The pace of change quickens. My local technical college has changed its name and status so often that the logos cannot keep pace as the University of the Nineties beckons. There are many of us clapped out contributors to the educational world, still trying to stay afloat before the ultimate timetabling journey to the garden shed.

At such a juncture my sabbatical came through - a time to reflect, to consider - and to recharge, whilst still passing the 'measurable outcome indicators' of the research committee. The attachment should have some real substance and structure, although without the glamour of trekking in the Himalayas to check out the organisational structure of the Buddhist monasteries.

I opted for the one term version, and worked with the management team of a local hospital. Such a sabbatical has many merits, not least in that it is considerably cheaper than its longer counterparts, and I felt my sanity might be better preserved than over a longer period of 'thinking and writing' - or in my case, slowly going mad. My justification to the committee was comprehensive and only slightly exaggerated. I could serve as chief defense witness in the industrial experience inquisition conducted by BTEC and other validating bodies.

Some real live management expertise might lightly brush my shoulders, as I shared the same hospital dining room with senior health service executives. As someone with departmental wide responsibility for travel claims, this could mark a turning point in the financial management procedures of the public sector. My students include many health service people, so a view behind the X-rays would be of real value and my case studies might take a quantum leap from the 70s into the 1990s. On a wider front it is possible I can deliver student placement opportunities - and many outside speakers - to prove the virility of my Business

Studies department.

Now, after a couple of months, it is time to evaluate my original claims and to learn some lessons. First, the success and joys of the time. It has been fun to move in a new institution, with many welcoming people, and to appreciate that the problems of a new hospital trust can be just as daunting and threatening as my own University's. I had almost deluded myself into thinking that our changes were more painful and demanding than elsewhere - now I am not so certain!

In lecturing, self motivation is to me the key ingredient that no appraisal or management fad can create. New people, new location and a new rhythm can help to sustain what 25 years in the same staff room, let alone with the same coffee cups, can destroy. It is interesting to watch the 'social glue' of organisations. I'm sure that a run of minor successes by my departmental football pools syndicate helped us through one or two dodgy validations. Similarly the porters' sponsored marathon helped lighten the atmosphere of the Monday morning obstetrics clinic.

If you substitute 'patients' for students so many issues run parallel. Patients should be involved in their treatment, kept informed, be treated with dignity and respect - the Students' Charter cannot be far behind! Substitute consultants for professors and principal lecturers, and you will have 'mapped out' the battle ground for organisational warfare quite accurately. There is so much to observe, not just as a fly on the wall, but as a temporary naive and novel member of the team. People often relish the opportunity of frank discussions in non-threatening situations, to someone from 'education'. Having negotiated a couple of projects to research during my period gave me much credibility within the hospital, rather than being another free loading voyeur of the wards.

The negative aspects? I miss the subsidised infrastructure and perks earned by my seniority and cunning in college. The endless supply of paper clips, brown envelopes and telephone calls. By contrast, arranging a car parking space and a security badge proved tortuous in my new surrounds (never underestimate how long it might take or how important such formalities can be). My lack of a security badge caused me financial distress as the cafeteria imposed a surcharge on me. I almost resorted to the ultimate tactic - the whitecoat and stethoscope,

STAFF SABBATICALS

for immediate entry into hitherto barred areas and valet parking. It provides much freedom and a lack of structuring which is not necessarily beneficial to someone who requires a routine and regulations. There is also some 'stress' in meeting new people, some of whom can regard you as a management pawn in the class war, as you carry out routine information studies (and some of these people are too busy – you have to be prepared for cancelled or missed appointments). I can now appreciate those management texts on motivation and involvement. I missed being 'needed' and 'being vital', but perhaps it's no bad thing for the ego to slip a little.

On this latter theme, you never fully tear yourself away from the college. I had forgotten just how important I am to education! I was not just invited to return to meetings there, but my presence is 'vital', or 'absolutely essential' to the business in hand. I am initially flattered by this old device, but quickly realise the hidden agenda for meetings within which my contributions are less memorable than ever, in view of my recent absence and poor memory. There is, too,

the other reaction. Have you been ill? Are you better now? from colleagues who should be better informed of such momentous happenings as my sabbatical.

I furtively check my desk, for there are stories of 'reorganisation - number 24' and talk of a new dynamic task orientated department. More focused units organised on 'flat structure' principles, may mean a new hire and fire policy. All the time I am fearful that my absence will reveal to my colleagues all my inadequacies as other lecturers take over my work!

I am not there to defend my integrity and devotion to duty; I cannot even slip in a back-dated letter into the file to show my concern (nor lose those memos critical of my ability or energy!).

As my return date beckoned I hoped to retain my broader perspective. A morning in the A & E department still seems a much more damaging prospect than the new semester system or two hours with HND 1. I hope my enthusiasm is lasting and infectious. If it is then my sabbatical will have been worthwhile for this near fifty year old, my institution and, most of all, the students.

John Lloyd is a Principal Lecturer in Business Studies at the South Bank University.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN LEARNING

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(Tel: 021-446 6166 / Fax: 021-446 5991).

WORK PLACEMENTS AS CAREERS EDUCATION

Tony Watts and Ruth Hawthorn

We have recently been carrying out a development project for the Employment Department on guidance aspects of the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative. As part of this project, we have been working in five institutions, exploring the programme's impact on the help provided to students in making their career decisions and transitions. Work placements have been one of the main areas in which this impact is evident.

The aims of such placements vary considerably. In the case of some vocational courses, they are designed to meet the relevant professional body's requirements for professional practice. More generally, they are viewed as providing opportunities for exploring the interaction between theory and practice.

Work placements also, however, provide opportunities for students to explore a particular career area to which they are not yet committed. Such placements can have a considerable influence on students' career decisions. At one university (Surrey), 13.6% of the 1989 graduates had made their first contact with their employer in this way. For some other students, their work experience confirms their intention to move into similar lines of work, if not with the same employer. Or the learning may be negative in nature: as one student put it, his placement had been valuable in 'telling me what I *don't* want to do'.

This raises the issue of whether career exploration should be included among the formal aims of the work-experience scheme. If so, what implications does this have for the design of the scheme? And what implications does it have for the preparation, briefing, debriefing and follow-up which helped to convert mere experience into learning?

The validation of career exploration aims will have implications for students' selection of placements. There may be some tensions here with the other aims of the scheme. A student may, for example, wish to have experience in a career which is not clearly course-related: some teaching departments seem to be more prepared than others to accommodate preferences.

Again, the importance attached to career exploration will affect the issue of whether students should be permitted to have more than one placement. If career exploration is an important aim, there would seem to be an advantage in offering students the opportunity to explore a range of settings.

Departments sometimes resist splitting of placement periods - partly on the grounds of the extra administrative work it involves, and partly because longer placements enable students to get past the induction period and to be given responsibility. The issue is one of the trade-off between competing aims.

In terms of preparation for placements, we were struck by the extent to which many of the interventions offered (usually by academic departments) to help students in relation to choosing and securing their work-experience placements mirrored similar provision (usually by the careers service) in relation to choosing and securing a job on graduation. Thus the former included:

- Careers talks - for example, employer presentations on their placement opportunities, or talks by groups of final-year students on their placement experiences.
- Careers library - small collections of information on placement employers.
- Employer visits - opportunities for students to visit placement employers.
- Guidance interviews - interviews by tutors to help students select their placements.
- Seminars on self-presentation - preparing letters of application and curricula vitae, mock interviews.

In many respects, indeed, the processes which students go through in choosing and preparing for their work-experience placements can be seen as offering a 'simulation' of the processes they subsequently go through in applying for jobs in their final year. It is accordingly a valuable opportunity to reflect on, and thus develop, decision-making and other skills which will be relevant to their final-year choices and indeed to future career choices.

Viewing the preparation programme in these terms helps to reinforce it as a learning process. It can also reduce the lack of coordination which often exists at present between (usually departmental) programmes for work-experience preparation and (usually career-service) programmes for job-entry preparation. This was illustrated in the complaints of one group of students that the same videos had been used for both programmes!

Similar points can be made about the other stages of placements. *Briefing* can indicate how the potential

WORK PLACEMENTS

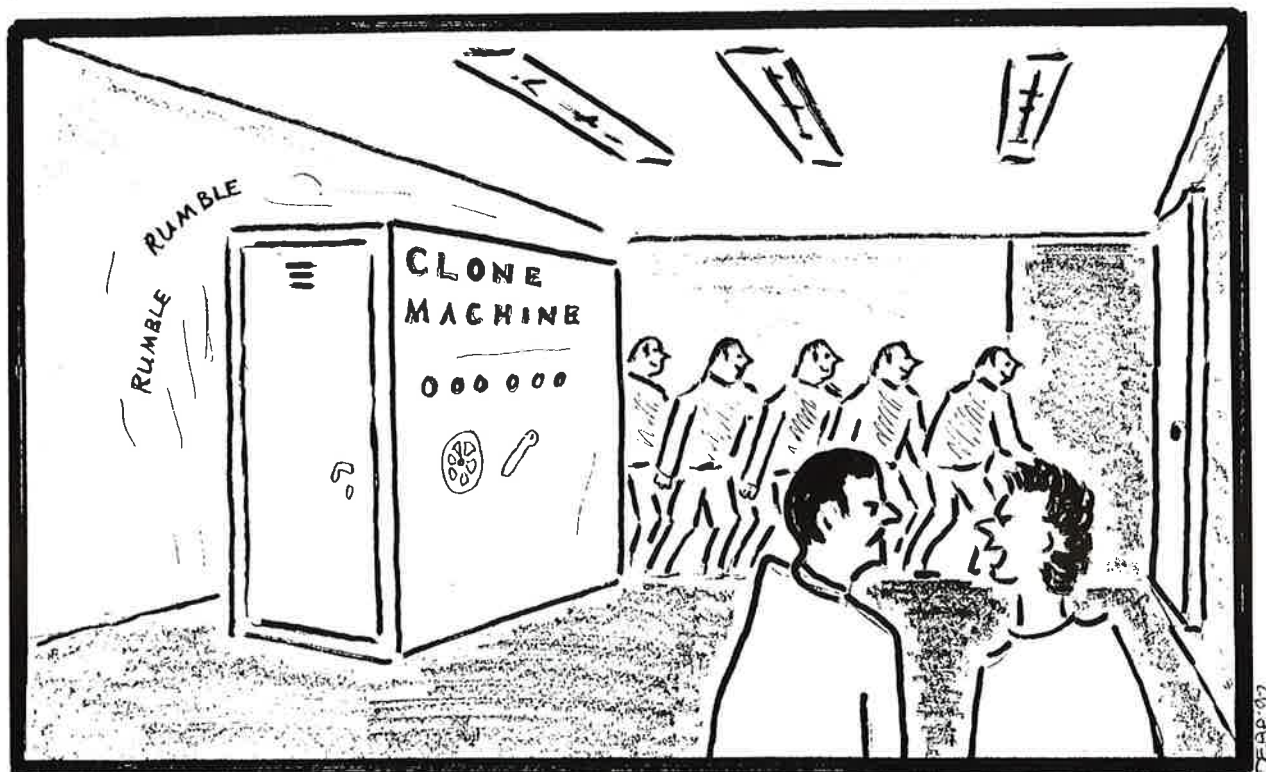
of placements for career exploration can be maximised. *Tutor visits* during the placement can provide opportunities to discuss the placement's implications for careers planning. *Debriefing* can provide opportunities for students to reflect upon their experience and to crystallise what they have learned from it, as well as to share and learn from each other's experience. *Follow-up* can extend what they have learned.

In all these respects, work experience would seem to offer a particularly fruitful area for collaboration between academic departments and careers services. Teaching departments have a lot more contact with students than do careers services. Significant attention to careers education within Higher Education courses is likely therefore to require a strong commitment

from teaching departments, with careers services in a supportive role. Some departments see this as part of their remit; many, however, do not.

But if work placements are an intrinsic part of the course, this can influence the attitudes of teaching departments to careers work. The motivation to secure placements can be felt more strongly than the obligation to ensure that students actually have a job when they actually graduate. They will also need to justify the placement as a learning process, in order to legitimate its position within the course. Careers education can be a part of such a justification. If it is, collaboration with the careers service can enhance the quality of what is offered, and lead to more extensive collaboration on the careers help made available to students.

Tony Watts is Director and Ruth Hawthorn a Senior Fellow, at the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC), which is a joint activity of CRAC and the University of Hertfordshire. [Their report Careers Education and Enterprise in Higher Education is available from NICEC, Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX, Price £7.50 (inc. p&p).



"IT WAS DECIDED THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY WE COULD COVER THE EXTRA TEACHING HOURS. IT'S REPLICATING MEMBERS OF THE PSYCHOLOGY SECTION AT THE MOMENT."

© Dennis Pollard

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW THROUGH SKILLS

Kevin Kerrigan

In February 1992 the then Newcastle Polytechnic organised its third annual Skills/Alternative Learning Fortnight. During this period the normal routine is given over to new innovative and experimental approaches to the teaching and learning process. In the Law Department, second year LLB students were involved in a one week integrated case study with input from the core subjects of tort, land and constitutional law. This discussion draws on experience of the constitutional law elements.

Case study

The students played the role of trainee solicitors in 'firms' of eight members. Each firm had attached to it a member of academic staff who played the role of the supervisory and consultative senior partner. The firms were given a scenario which could give rise to a variety of legal issues and were to develop the scenario in accordance with their clients' instructions.

The firms were required to organise their own internal proceedings including the number of meetings and delegation of responsibility. The partner assumed a reactive rather than a pro-active role so as to allow maximum freedom for each firm to develop its case as it saw fit. There were only two formal meetings with the senior partner throughout the week.

The client was a fictitious French woman, Michelle Dupont, who had been arrested, detained and interviewed by the police regarding an alleged wounding of her landlord during a dispute about rent. She was released and informed that no further action was intended but was distressed about her treatment in police custody and sought legal advice about what possible steps she could take against the police.

An interview was arranged and the department secured the assistance of a group of ten foreign students who agreed to play the part of the client, one for each firm. Each was comprehensively briefed and listened to a tape recording of the interview between Michelle Dupont and the police which had been prepared with the help of a foreign student and an ex-police officer.

The client was briefed to be rather confused and distressed about the detention and to release specific information only if requested by the interviewer. This 'double whammy' of confused, vague client and real communication problems caused by mutual language

difficulties was aimed at reinforcing in the students the essential need for clarity of language and efficient, well targeted questioning.

Two members of the firm conducted the interview while the remainder assessed the quality of the interview using new interview assessment forms which the department is developing for this purpose. The interviewers were to take instructions and give initial advice to the client. Green Form legal aid forms were available, but only if the students raised the issue of remuneration.

An effective interview coupled with analysis of the tape recording and the custody record would have revealed a range of questionable police actions which were built into the scenario including:

- inadequate caution;
- persuasion against seeing a solicitor;
- incentives/threats to confess;
- refusal to secure an interpreter;
- review of detention by the officer in case;
- insufficient meals;
- authorisation of continued detention at the wrong time.

The firms also met with their senior partner to discuss the situation, had they been Dupont's legal adviser in the police station. They were asked how they would have prepared for the interview, what materials they would need, how they would have advised their clients before, during and after the interview, and how their presence may have affected the course or approach of their interview. Several ethical considerations were posed such as their reaction to a request by their client to pass on a note to a friend or an assertion by their client that she was guilty. It was felt that it was important to introduce students to these professional ethics considerations at an early stage and in a practical context as they are vitally important to the legal practitioner and are essential to a proper understanding of his or her role in the legal system in general and in the police station in particular.

When the firms had collected and assimilated the relevant evidence they were required to complete the appropriate legal research using statute, precedent and other sources in order to prepare the initial stages of their client's case. The firms were then required to deliver an oral report to their senior partner as to their

findings and proposed action. This gave students the opportunity of practising their oral communication skills through delivery of the report and answering of questions.

Finally the firms were asked to draft initial letters in the case as appropriate (for example, letter before action and/or letter of complaint to the chief constable, and application to the Legal Aid Board). This gave the students practice at drafting professional letters and gave the department some tangible material for assessment purposes.

Conclusions

As research by Tim Wolstencroft has illustrated[1], there is a wide skills gap between employers requirements and competences of Law students on graduation especially in the areas of oral presentation, drafting of documents and negotiation. It is increasingly accepted that legal education must move to bridge this gap. The development of the new skills-oriented Legal Practice Course is seen as a step towards bringing legal education more into line with the expectations of the profession.

But what of the academic stage? Are case study type exercises the way forward to degree courses which seek to preserve academic standards while at the same time preparing students for training and a vocation in which skills are regarded as essential?

It may be said that if too much concentration is aimed at bridging the skills gap then the academic content may be neglected. On the other hand, the development of the case study could suggest a way of combining the learning of legal and transferable skills with the learning of substantive law without either losing out. A large part of the case study was taken up with traditional legal research. The students were forced to develop traditional skills of statutory interpretation and analysis of precedent because this was essential for the development of their case.

The fact that the students were left largely to their

own devices meant that they had to exercise the traditional and vitally important academic skills of problem-solving and critical thinking which any liberal arts degree should foster. The difference is that they did this in a skills filled environment. They would, through working on their own case, come to understand the extent of police powers and the extent of protection for the individual in the police station. Issues such as the role of the custody officer, the reviews of detention, availability of legal advice, the right to silence, and time limits were all encountered.

What is most important if this method is not seen to be guilty of lowering academic standards is consolidation and critique, especially towards the end of the study. There should be small and large group discussions on the wider implications of the issues raised in the case. This could be done through inter-firm discussions and presentations and tutor feedback. Discussions could take place about individual rights, police accountability, effectiveness of complaints procedures, and the role of the solicitor in protecting her or his client's interests in the police station. The experience can then be seen not to be just skills for skills sake but skills as a mechanism for understanding of the law and for the development of a well-rounded, capable lawyer.

In this way the skills element can be seen to complement rather than detract from the academic content of this aspect of the constitutional law course. A successful marriage of skills and content embodied in a thorough, well-planned student-based case study could be a step in the right direction for constitutional law courses.

References

1. 'Bridging the Gap: skills in Theory and Practice'. Presented to the Symposium 'Legal Skills and Competence: issues for the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee', 26 February 1990, IALS, University of London.

Kevin Kerrigan lectures in Law, at the University of Northumbria, Newcastle.

UPDATE is a regular column carrying news of forthcoming conferences and meetings as well as reports of recent events which may be of interest to a wider audience. If you want to contribute something, send copy to the Editor: short reports only, please!

Business/'Common' Skills Network

One of the major innovations in Business Studies education over the last few years has been the integrating of previously stand-alone subject areas and of assessed work. Recently, one of the main areas of integration has been the attempt to assess skill competences across a wide range of subject areas, using a wide variety of assessment techniques. This requires a major change in concept of both content and assessment and is proving a thorn in the side of many course leaders. Some Higher Education institutions have appointed coordinators to oversee and develop this concept of total integration of skills development but it is still proving an area fraught with difficulties.

The aim of a recently established network (at the moment covering a geographical area from Nottingham and Sheffield to Preston and Teeside) is to act as an academic focus for the development of business/'common' skills in Higher Education. Its objectives are to share experiences and practice, to collaborate in research and to identify and deliver staff development. Its benefits to members are seen to be:

- A forum to share problems and ideas
- The ability to discuss specific problem areas with specialist colleagues
- The opportunities for empirical studies - for example before and after study with students, identifying changes in behaviour as a result of teaching
- Resultant models of best practice based on academic integrity
- A forum for discussion on strategies to handle changes in curriculum
- Collaborative research and publishing opportunities for members

At the moment, members of the network are those actually involved in the delivery and assessment of skills in Business Higher Education.

It is also expected that this network will develop both from having a regional to having a national base and also from being focused on logistic problems within the new curriculum area of Common Skills to the development of Skills education and assessment throughout all Higher Education Business Studies courses.

If you would like to be part of this initiative and become a member of this network, please write to:

Sue Freeman
Common Skills Coordinator
Manchester Metropolitan University
Business Studies Department
Aytoun Building
Aytoun Street
Manchester

Conference Report

Living with Expansion in Higher Education: Coercion, Collusion or Negotiation

The first jointly organised conference of the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) and the Standing Conference on Educational Development (SCED) was held on 30 November - 1 December 1992 at the NUT Conference Centre at Stoke Rochford hall. About 85 attended.

Peter Scott, Professor of the History of Education at Leeds University, and former Editor of the Times Higher Education Supplement, gave the opening address. He said that despite the post-Autumn Statement reports, university expansion was still on. If fees were lowered, most institutions would take even more students (at the lower fees-only basis) to make up the budget difference. Professor Scott reckoned that Britain was currently an 'audit-mad' society. He described centrifugal forces at work on Higher Education that would 'decentre' universities - and make them 'post-modern'. He hoped that we would see not merely 'post-binary higher education' but all-in 'post-secondary education'. This lucid comprehensive picture of a university system in expansion set an admirable agenda for the Conference.

The ice-breaking session set teams to compose a statement on expansion by one of the stakeholders - students, parents, lecturers, senates/Academic Boards, employers et al. - as it would appear in a publication of the team's choice. Professor Scott awarded the prize for the 'Senate' which proposed circumventing its space problems by substituting for seminars tapes of recorded seminars with blank sections for students to record their own contributions. He suggested that this was an idea which had better be kept from some managers.

There were sessions *inter alia* on assessment, flexible programmes, accommodation planning, quality

initiatives, franchising student needs, accelerated degrees, CATS, part-time provision and foundation years. Many incorporated elements of the 'coercion, collusion or negotiation' conundrum in their workshop activities. Those who submitted to David Jaques's devilish ingenuity, found themselves illuminatingly stumbling and crawling blindfolded about the room to accomplish their set task.

Graham Gibbs gave a revealing if at times horrifying snapshot and evaluation of the PCFC/OCS D Teaching More Students Project. The Conference's suggestions for a further national initiative were collated and distributed. Graham will use them in negotiations for further support.

The last of the plenary sessions had Pat Cryer interviewing Professor May Cowell about Nottingham Trent University's policies and practices for living with expansion. Many in the audience wished that their senior managers commanded Professor Cowell's 'developmental' language and clear commitment.

While the joint Conference planning team is yet to evaluate the Conference, using participants' evaluation evidence, the author of this report, though one of the planners, is willing to write that it lived up to his high expectations.

Arnold Goldman, University of Kent

LISTINGS

- | | | | |
|----------|--|-------|---|
| February | | April | |
| 22 | PICKUP: The Human Resource Development Function in College and Universities. Carol Pedrick, DES Pickup Office, Magdalen Centre, Robert Robinson Ave, Oxford Science Park, Oxford OX4 4GA | 5-8 | AETT 28th Annual Conference: Designing for Learning Glasgow. Ross Hoey, Conference Manager, AETT '93 Conference, Jordanhill College, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow G13 1PP; tel: 041 950 3229; fax: 041 950 3268. |
| 23-25 | Computer in Libraries International 93 Hammersmith, London. Anne Barber, Meckler Ltd. 247-249 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1HQ; tel: 071 931 9985; fax: 071 931 8908. | 5-8 | CAL 93: Announcement & Call for Participation York. Francoise Vassie, CAL 93 Conference Organiser, Centre for Continuing Education, University of York, York YO1 2EP; email: FAV @ yk.ac.york; tel: 0904 433901; fax: 0904 433906. |
| 24-25 | Building an Effective Team Leicester. Call 0533 577804 for details. Fees: £135 | 14-16 | 7th SEFI European Seminar on Mathematics in Engineering Education The Netherlands. Prof Fred Simons, Dept of Maths, Eindhoven University of Technology, PO Box 513, NL 5600 MB Eindhoven, The Netherlands; email: wsgbfs@win.tue.nl. |
| March | | 19 | Negotiating Learning Agreements; tel: 0234 213515. |
| 10-11 | Media Relations: Off the Record Cambridge; tel: 0533 577804 for details. Fee: £16510-12
The 2nd Learning Company Conference Warwick. The Learning Company Project, TRANSFORM, Suite 55-56, 22 High St., Sheffield, S1 2GE; tel: 0742 721178; fax: 0742 729706. Fees: £475 + VAT. | May | |
| 11-13 | "Assessment '93": The CALICO Annual Symposium (Evaluation of the effectiveness of computer assisted instruction, using technology to evaluate human performance (eg. computer adaptive testing, using technology and human factors to evaluate educational technologies). Williamsburg, VA, USA, Calico, 014 Language Center, Duke University, Durham, NC 27706 USA; tel: +1 919 681 6455; fax: +1 919 681 6485; email: CALICO @Duke Mvs.ac.duke.edu. | 5 | CATS and Student Guidance; tel: 0234 213515. |
| 17-18 | Finance 1: On the Train Leicester. Call 0533 577804 for details. Fees: £135 | 12 | Confidence in Competence: Management NVQs and University Awards; tel: 0234 213515. |
| 30-1 Apr | SQM93 First International Conference on Software Quality Management Southampton. Sue Owen, Conference Secretariat - SQM93, Wessex Institute of Technology, Ashurst Lodge, Ashurst, Southampton SO4 2AA; tel: 0703 293223; fax: 0703 292853; email: CM1 @ uk.ac.rl.ib. | 21 | UKCOSA: Welcomes and Farewells - Orientation and Reorientation of International Students; tel: 071 226 3762. |
| 30-1 Apr | Human Resource Development Week 1992 Wembley, Lisa Derbyshire, HRD Week '93, Blenheim House, 630 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5BR; tel: 081 742 2828; fax: 081 747 3865. | June | |
| | | 23-26 | Ed-media 93, a World Conference on Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia Orlando, Florida, Association of Advancement of Computing in Education, PO Box 2966, Charlottesville, Va 22902, USA. |
| | | July | |
| | | 13-15 | Facing the European Challenge: The Role of the Professions in a Wider Europe University of Leeds. CALL FOR PAPERS. Professions in Europe Conference Committee, Dept of Continuing Professional Education, University of Leeds, Springfield Mount, Leeds, LS2 9NG; Pauline Neal on 0532 333239; fax: 0532 333240. |

September

1 **Simulation and Gaming Conference**; tel: Roger Armstrong 0704 20891.

December

14-16 **SRHE Conference 1993 on Governments and Higher Education Curriculum** University of Sussex. Anyone interested in contributing a paper under one of the following five theme titles is warmly invited to contact the conference coordinator (Prof Tony Becher, EDB, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RG). The five themes are: -Access and employment policies -Government and the industrial ethic -Audit, inspection and the demand for quality assurance -The State and curricular structures -Governments and professional education.

Further particulars about these events can be obtained from Dr Haydn Mathias or Lynne Edwards, Academic Staff Development Office, Teaching Support and Media Services: University of Southampton, SO9 5NH; tel: 0703 593784 ext 3784; fax: 0703 593005; email: asd@uk.ac.southampton.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

A.N. Author

The title of the article should be typed at the top of the first page of the article and the name(s) of the author(s) should then follow. If using a printer which gives type size options use at least 12 point type. Your manuscript should be double spaced: it helps us to make changes without having to bother you for 'clean copy'.

We welcome material which is clearly written and relevant to teaching and learning within Higher Education. Your contribution should be short, ideally 500-1000 words, and it should avoid discipline jargon.

All paragraphs should be separated by an extra line spacing. You can also:

- use bullet points
- with the main items listed
- in a simple and appealing form.

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Now onto the headings: please feel free to use them but keep them short. Keep a double line space between the end of the last paragraph and the next heading. *The New Academic* is devoted to shorter topical articles, so complex heading hierarchies should be avoided. Try to keep to one level of heading only.

This is a heading

Put the heading in bold type or underline it, using lower case except for the capital first letter. Keep a line space between the heading and the start of the next piece of text. Sometimes our authors give references which should be numbered in brackets [1] while the full reference goes at the end of the article. Also, you might want to include a quote [2]:

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[table 1 about here]

We will usually reset tables, but you should provide 'camera ready copy' for diagrams etc. (please contact the Editor to discuss any questions you may have). We welcome photographs and cartoons, so please send them in and again say whereabouts in the text you want them placed. Finally, on a separate sheet of paper, please say a few things about yourself and include an address for correspondence with interested readers. We do not want long autobiographies - just a couple of sentences!

If your article has been prepared on a word processor, please send a copy of the file on disk. We can handle all Macintosh and most IBM-compatible PC word processor programs.

References

- [1] Jones I and Davies D (1984) 'This is the title of an article' *Journal of Something or Other* 16 234-236
 [2] Bevan B, Thomas L, Reed H, and Evans C (1986) *This is the title of a book* Kogan Page, London

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**They Always Eat Green Apples:
Images of University and Decisions at 16**

Mike Heathfield and Nina Wakeford

Innovation in Higher Education Series, Lancaster University. ISBN 0901800163, £6.95

This is a book which illuminates the perceptual and cultural barriers which limit the aspirations of many young people in relation to Higher Education.

Using an innovative mixture of group exercises and activities (including a residential weekend at a University), interviews and a questionnaire, the authors sought to establish an interactive approach which would encourage a sample of able fourth year students to discuss fully their decisions to leave school and enter the job market rather than opt for Higher Education.

All the participants were deemed to be capable of benefiting from Further/Higher Education by their teachers. In contrast, they saw themselves as not 'the kind of person' who goes to a University or (as then) a Polytechnic and this dominant perception was reinforced by a number of factors. In school the label 'swot' was one to be avoided. It was linked with intellectual superiority, worry over school work and a

lack of fun. Similar attributes carried over to notions of Higher Education, though at the same time University students were also portrayed as lazy and pleasure loving.

These conflicting characteristics testify to the power of stereotypical images. They also reflect the virtual absence of any positive personal or social contacts between these fourth formers, their families and friends and the world of Higher Education. This valuable book testifies to the fact that this in itself constitutes a major obstacle to the widening of access: these students disqualified themselves, on social as much as academic and economic grounds, from entering what was perceived as the alien world of Higher Education. All the more need for an increase in student mentoring schemes and other developments to make all our Universities genuinely more accessible to potential undergraduates such as these.

**Gina Mitchell,
Access Unit, University of Bradford**

500 Tips for Students

Phil Race

Blackwell Bookshops, 1992 ISBN 0631188517

Phil Race covers a wide range of common anxieties which students have when approaching study. However, attempting to accommodate all students of all subjects makes heavy reading. If students followed each point with the enthusiasm with which the points are written, they would have no time for lectures. This is unfortunate, since many of the ideas are original and clearly stated: and above all, useful.

The book will probably be bought by parents, read out of courtesy and disregarded. It is not easy to 'dip' in and out of the text; the contents page is daunting. However, a lecturer on study skills could find it an invaluable planning aid.

The main difficulty is the scope of the project. There is too much for one person to write. This results

in repetition and some monotony, whereas more contributors would have led to a wider range and given a much-needed variety of style. A series of several booklets would make these valuable ideas on study more accessible to students, who could select the topics of interest and relevance to their particular course of study.

In essence this is a good book, yet it doesn't quite work. We do hope that tutors use it and will interpret the tips in a user-friendly style, so that students benefit. It may have more to offer tutors and parents than students.

**Sue Barker and Sue Howarth
Part 1 Students, Lancaster University.**

Learning Conversations

Sheila Harri-Augustine and Laurie Thomas
Routledge, 1991, ISBN 0 415 02867, pbk, £14.99

In a review in the *Times Higher* (1 May 1992) Harry Gray described this book as "exasperating", and I have to agree with that and his other criticisms. It is a difficult book to read, its lack of bibliography is frustrating and part of me is surprised that I actually did struggle through to the end.

The fact that I did is due to the fact that the basic ideas behind the book are interesting, but deserve to be better presented and without the hype about how the book will change people, organisations and the world as a whole.

The book espouses a theory of learning based on the concept of conversations, both between the learner and teachers but also internal to the learner, as the way in which meaning is generated, which lies at the heart of the learning process. In terms of the tradition of humanistic psychology into which this book clearly fits, this is an interesting approach, based on Personal Construct Theory, in that it focuses on internal dialogue as the key to learning, as opposed to the more common focus on feelings and visualisation.

In relation to the use of interactive activities the key message of the book is that we should be aware of

what we want participants to be saying to themselves during the exercise, and how we deal with that both during the exercise and the debriefing. I find one of the most relevant examples in the book is in the use of a flight simulator, and how a reflection of the learning conversation around the task helps the trainee to be aware of how they build a model of the task, and through reflecting on that improve their learning from the activity.

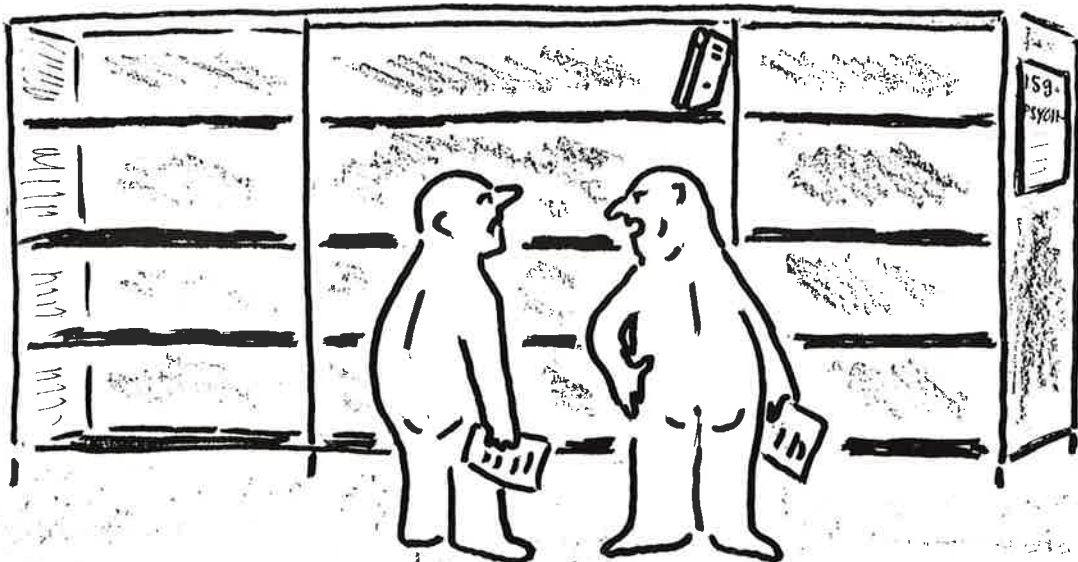
The Centre for Human Learning at Brunel University, where the authors are based, also publishes a range of software based on their developments of repertory grid technology.

Overall I feel very ambiguous about the publication and the publicity for the software because, while I generally have no objection to reading difficult texts, I feel in this case that readers are being invited to spend a lot of time and energy cutting through the jargon and complexity of the communication and I'm not sure that there are going to be enough goodies at the end!

David Andrew
University of North London

Please send material for review to Peter Knight, Department of Educational Research,
University of Lancaster, LA1 4YW.

"LOOKS AS IF SOMEONE ELSE GOT THE READING LIST BEFORE WE DID."



Cartoon: Dennis Pollard



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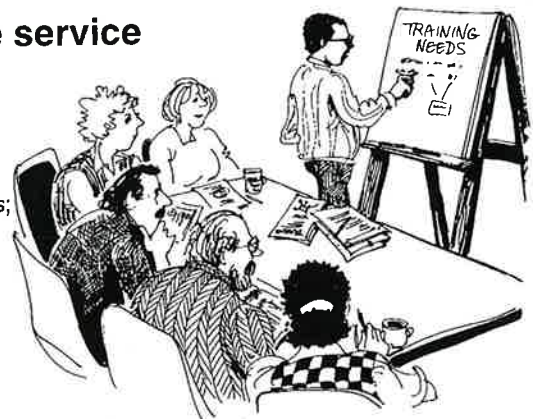
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