the New Academic

Our Last Issue!

Learning to Learn:
Purely a skill?

Publishing, not Perishing

Inspiring with Life Stories
Cross-Cultural Work Groups
A Mid-Life Crisis in Academia

Information for Contributors

We welcome all material of interest to teachers in higher education: the purpose of *The New Academic* is to promote good practice in teaching and better understanding of the processes involved in learning in all areas of higher education.

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

All material should be submitted in two copies, typewritten on single side of A4, double-spaced, and will not be considered in any other form. Submission of a paper to *The New Academic* implies that it has not been published elsewhere *and* that it is not currently being considered for publication by any other editor or publisher. All submissions should be sent direct to Ivan Moore, Editor-in-Chief, c/o SEDA office.

Everyone involved with *The New Academic* works on it only part of the time, and so delays in dealing with submissions are inevitable. All papers will be reviewed by at least two people, and expert advice sought where appropriate. If you wish prompt acknowledgement, please enclose stamped addressed envelope: return postage is essential if you wish your script to be returned in the event of non-acceptance. To speed production once your paper has been accepted, you will be asked to send finalised material via e-mail or on floppy disk.

Articles

These should be between 800 and 2000 words. References should be kept to a minimum: where necessary, author's name should be given with date in brackets in text, for example Thatcher (1992). Reference list should be in alphabetical order, in standard academic style, as in the following examples:

> Thatcher, M. (1992). How I turned back the tide, *Journal of Marine Studies*, **14**, 123-45.
> Thatcher, M. (1992). **Lessons for Canute.** Westminster: Celebrity Press.

Illustrations

Photographs, drawings and diagrams may be used for illustration: copies of artwork should be submitted in the first instance, but author should be prepared to provide originals (clean camera ready copy) or suitable bromides for publication. Photos of authors are always welcome.

Book reviews

All material to be sent to Book Reviews Editor, who will give guidance: 200 to 400 words. For presentation, please see Books section.

Forum

Contributions to debates are always welcome, and may be of any length up to 800 words (maximum): the shorter, the more likely space will be found. Forum commentary may be on any topic relevant to teachers in HE. All contributions may be subject to editing. Send to Ivan Moore or direct to the Editor.

Acronyms used in *The New Academic*:

APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
BTEC	Business and Technical Education Council
CAL	Computer Assisted Learning
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EHE	Enterprise in Higher Education
FSEDA	Fellow of SEDA
HE	Higher Education
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HND	Higher National Diploma
IT	Information Technology
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SEEC	South East England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer
SRHE	Society for Research in Higher Education
THES	Times Higher Education Supplement
UFC	Universities Funding Council

the New Academic

FAREWELL EDITORIAL

LOOKING BACK

The time has come to say farewell to *The New Academic* after 8 years of continuous publication. As I look back over those years, I realize that I have been connected with *The New Academic* - albeit in a very small way - ever since it was first thought of!

About a year before Volume 1, number 1, appeared in Autumn 1991, I was contacted by David Jaques, then with Oxford Brookes University. I had turned the former *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society* (a newsletter of 40 years standing by that time) into what became *The Psychologist* - a successful and attractive magazine going to all members of the BPS. He asked me to advise the editorial board of the as yet non-existent new "Magazine of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education".

I really can't claim any credit for those first issues though, which were produced by an enthusiastic group of what were then Standing Conference on Educational Development (SCED) stalwarts, many of whom are now - or have been - leading members of SEDA.

I came into the picture in 1994, when SEDA decided to appoint a professional editor.

GETTING A NEW LOOK

A camel is a horse designed by a committee, as the saying goes, and I would say that the first issue produced under my supposed editorship (Spring 1994) was a bit like the ship of the desert: useful and full of great ideas, but not an aesthetic success!

In a very short time, though, we settled down, with a new Editorial Board and a new remit, and the first edition of *The New Academic* with which I feel pleased appeared - Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring 1995.

A COLLECTOR'S ITEM!

As it happens, this issue has also become a collector's item - but more because of its content than because of its cover (good though that was!). Spring 1995 saw the first of our successful series on "The Art of..." - on this occasion, Trevor Habeshaw's *"The Art of Lecturing Part 1"*, with *Part 2* in Summer, Vol.4, No.2.

This was followed promptly by *"The Art of Assessing"*, *"The Art of Teaching Small Groups"*, *"The Art of Inspiring Independent Learning"*, all in two parts, as well as occasional single contributions to *"The Art of Inspiring Students"* (perhaps the most difficult art of all).

These two-part series were extremely popular, with numerous requests for reprints. But they were far from being alone, as many tutors and editors of university newsletters requested permission to copy and/or republish a great many of our practical "how to..." articles. It was clear that readers were on the lookout for sensible, down-to-earth ideas to help them do their job. It did not seem to matter what the subject area was, despite some fears from some advisors, and many teachers found inspiration from writers in such divers fields as textile design, law, physics and engineering.

FAVOURITES

I hope I am permitted to confess, while looking back, that I do have some favourites. I loved Paul Walker's *"Taking Students by Surprise"* (Vol.5, No.3), in which he demonstrates that how you look at a subject has a bearing on how you interpret it; and Stuart Hannabuss' *"Deconstructing Familiar Things"* (Vol.8, No.1) - again, because it is full of surprises.

Personal taste aside, though, I think the quality of articles published became high as soon as we instituted a proper refereeing system (in 1995). This does create more work for the editor, as Ivan Moore found when he took over the selection of articles from me two years ago. But the informed views of one's peers are a vital ingredient in the production of high quality writing.

Many of the articles were important: issues of quality, dealing with professional changes, the Dearing Report, teacher qualifications, publishing, remuneration, selection... the list is endless. We must hope that SEDA's new publication will provide a place where all issues of importance to teachers can be discussed.

A SAD FAREWELL

I shall be sorry to see the end of *The New Academic*, and particularly sorry to end my association with Lesley MacDonald, who, as Books Editor, has enlivened my days with her entertaining e-mails.

But above all, I bid a very sad farewell to Ivan Moore, with whom I have worked for many years, and who has been the inspiration behind many of our ventures.

It's been hard work, but it's been fun!

Elizabeth Mapstone

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Over the last couple of years, SEDA Executive has been developing a strategy that seeks to establish our distinctive position within the educational environment, encourages collaboration and co-operation where possible, and avoids direct competition where it is unnecessary. With the birth of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) and our application for charitable status, this re-positioning has become even more important. We are clearly a professional association for those engaged in staff and educational developments within HE.

So, who is our main constituency? It is perhaps worth thinking of it as those who are interested in change in HE and, in particular, where that change impacts on student learning. One constituency will be those who develop strategy and policy on teaching and learning (Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deans, Heads of Schools); another will be heads of educational development units and learning support units (e.g. library, IT), heads of quality assurance and academic registrars.

We also need to support staff in educational development units, learning support staff in various departments, teachers interested in educational developments aimed at improving the quality of student learning, teachers and participants on Postgraduate Certificates in Teaching in Higher Education. Increasingly those in the 'grassroots' group will be working to ILT Strategies, be involved with Subject Centres and funded projects such as the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning, and have concerns about benchmarking and the implications for teaching, learning and assessment. Additionally, we are interested in informing or influencing those in external bodies such as ILT, the Funding Councils and their work through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund, and the Quality Assurance Agency.

A NEW MAGAZINE

SEDA's role might be seen as building a community encompassing those who work at a strategy/policy level, those whose role might be thought of more as 'support' and those who practice in the classroom. The ILT and Subject Centres may address the latter role more directly. This provides us with the opportunity to review what The New Academic offers and the role of the Newsletter in informing our members and the wider constituency of what is going on. This would not preclude articles such as the highly successful 'The Art of ...' but the focus would be on developmental issues rather than 'here's what I do in my classes'.

For this reason we are proposing to create a new magazine (with the working title *Educational Developments*) which will take over the roles of the *SEDA Newsletter* and *The New Academic* and be aimed at a readership of staff and educational developers - at whatever level in the institution - and those making decisions likely to impact on these groups.

We will be looking to something that goes beyond our membership and might not look out of place on the newsstands (given that it will have a cover price!) in the way that many professional associations have directed their own newsletters/magazines. As earlier discussions at SEDA Executive concluded, this focusing more clearly on our constituency needs also to be addressed by our other communication channels such as the Web site and our journal *Innovations in Education and Training International* (with the *'Training'* about to be renamed *'Teaching'* to reflect this shift). We intend that the SEDA Website should become much more of a day-to-day focus for current news items, perhaps flagged up by the Mailbase list(s).

We hope that you have found the *New Academic* interesting, stimulating and useful since its birth in 1991. However, now is the time to move on and we hope that these proposals will take our existing readership with us as well as creating a new readership at all levels within HE.

It remains for us to thank all those who have been involved with *the New Academic* as authors, reviewers and editors. In particular we would like to thank the editor since 1994, Elizabeth Mapstone, and the Chair of the magazine's committee, Ivan Moore, for their enthusiasm and energies in recent years.

Ranald Macdonald,
Co-Chair SEDA

James Wisdom,
SEDA Publications Co-ordinator

* This editorial is a version of one that also appears in the current SEDA Newsletter

LEARNING TO LEARN: PURELY A SKILL?

Mike Rawson examines the current preoccupation with skills development in students, and suggests that it tends to leave out important aspects of higher learning. He points out that learning to learn involves significant changes for the individual, and should be regarded as much more than purely a skill.

*Mike.Rawson, Senior Lecturer,
Luton Business School, University of Luton*

Traditional HE concentration on the development of critical thinking is currently under attack in some quarters - being seen as not totally adequate to the needs of employers and therefore of learners. Adding *skills development* is seen as the answer to closing this gap between product and market need. However, there is a danger of force-fitting into the skills agenda items that require deeper analysis.

Learning to learn is one such item. Dearing's report on HE, for example, adds this to the familiar list of communication, numeracy and information technology skills.

There appear to be two main drivers for its inclusion on the skills agenda in general. The first is the importance accorded it as an essential life skill within a changing world. The second is the promise of improved productivity of staff resources within HE resulting from the development of learners who are more capable of managing their own learning. The drive to achieve these perceived benefits may stifle the question of whether learning to learn should be considered as more than purely a skill.

THE DEEPER MEANING OF LEARNING

If we consider the work of a number of prominent educationalists, we see issues raised concerning the extent and the nature of the personal learning and change involved. Bateson (1987), within a five level framework, positions learning to learn as the penultimate level - where the learner becomes conscious of his or her perceptions of the world in general, of how they were formed and how they might be changed. Bateson's generic, all-encompassing view of learning suggests that this level of learning is comparatively rare.

Mezirow's (1991) concept of *'meaning perspectives - personal paradigms for understanding ourselves and our relationships'*, however, suggests that significant personal learning and change can take place at a more focussed and contextual level. While we all need to develop meaning perspectives in order to make sense of a complex world, learning to learn in this sense involves becoming both critically aware of them and how they might be changed. Although critics of Mezirow argue that the personal change involved does not necessarily represent growth, Bruner (1987) supports the possibility of a progressive widening or *'decentering'* (away from oneself) of the learner's frame of reference for making and understanding meaning - based upon an expansion of consciousness.

The argument that runs throughout this is that *learning to learn* involves more than purely skill development. Rather the learner needs to become involved in a self reflexive learning process: surfacing and questioning the mental processes used to arrive at self and situational perceptions. While skills, for example those of communication and debate, might be developed and used, this model of *learning to learn* involves a far deeper

and more personal learning process.

While the development of this model has drawn, at least in part, upon the literature of adult learning, this is justified on two counts - firstly, that learners in HE are either adults or on the verge of adulthood; secondly, that in a changing world the journey of personal learning and change should not be delayed.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

Why should we in HE be concerned with this view of learning to learn? If education, at least in part, involves preparation for life then that is one part of the argument. Equally, in a world of change and unpredictability continued personal viability cannot be based upon skills alone. There is also the promise of personal liberation - surely still a worthy educational aim.

How then might this approach to learning to learn be encouraged? As a bridge into this area it is necessary first to expand upon the wider implications of the model. Certainly it involves understanding and dealing with aspects of self that interfere, positively or negatively, with achievement of personal potential.

For Rogers (1994) the significant nature of the learning involved can only be as a result of a combination of logic and intuition, intellect and feelings, concept and experience, idea and meaning i.e. involving development of the whole person. What is required, therefore, is a holistic view of the learner.

A typical model (Lievegoed & Lake, 1997) proposes three strands of personal development throughout the life of the individual - biological, psychological and spiritual. Boydell (1982) subdivides the psychological into intellectual and emotional, giving four areas of personal development:

- The biological - principally about physical aspects of growth, and not a concern of this article.
- The intellectual - concerned with the development of thinking and reasoning abilities.
- The emotional - about the development both of feelings and the ability to process them.
- The spiritual - involving the search for wisdom, meaning & purpose and the development of values.

While these are still very broad categories they do illustrate the much broader view of the learner and of learning that is the necessary basis for encouraging learning to learn - as opposed to the traditionally held view of HE as being primarily concerned with intellectual development. The framework not only illuminates Rogers' (1994) holistic view of the nature of significant learning, but also the often painful process of deeper learning from experience, involving the engagement of feelings, attitudes and values. If we accept the model it clearly shows how personal development involves the individual in self-reflexive learning processes.

Viewed in one way this is a wider remit than the traditional concern of HE with the development of critical thinking. Viewed in another, it would be a wider application of that critical thinking. The critical ability would need to be sensitive to the analysis of the emotional and the spiritual. It would not therefore be just a wider application: rather a wider application of a more developed ability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

Having sketched out the wider implications of learning to learn for the learner let me now try to answer more directly the question of how this level
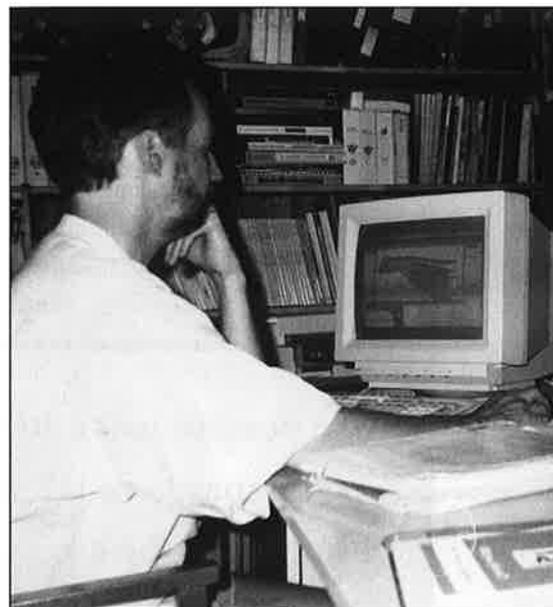
of learning might be encouraged. The aspect of HE that I specially wish to explore is that of assessment. The reason for this is the inextricable linkage between assessment and learning, or in other words, the significant influence of assessment upon students' approaches to learning.

How might assessment help, or hinder, learning to learn - particularly those areas of learner involvement and assessment design?

With regard to involvement Heron (1988) puts forward a continuum of possible assessment strategies.

Unilateral (By staff)
⇩
Collaborative Application
⇩
Collaborative Design & Application
⇩
Peer Group
⇩
Self (By student)
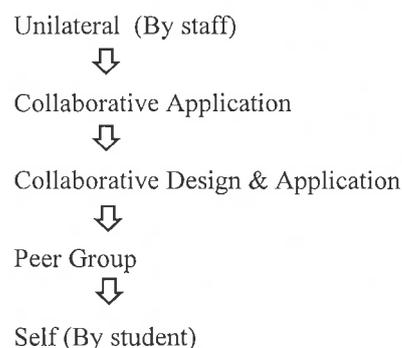
We need to accept that whichever strategy is adopted, assessment always involves making fallible human judgements and that more active involvement of the learner in the assessment process, while not without

potential pitfalls, is key to encouraging learning to learn. This is not only in respect of the development of the intellectual, critical capacities but also in terms of the necessary examination of the emotional aspects of learning, for example in peer group discussions, and to some extent the spiritual dimensions,

> # We need to learn to view participants in HE as resources to be engaged rather than as items to be processed.

for example in the search for wider meaning and purpose beyond subject specialism. While it might seem that any move away from unilateral forms of assessment should not be total - not least because of their perceived efficiency with regard to staff time - perhaps we need to learn to view participants in higher education as resources to be engaged rather than as items to be processed.

Clearly design issues go beyond those related purely to assessment strategies. Any striving toward more collaborative forms of assessment would be largely wasted if attempted in isolation. Without similar movements in the areas of learning objectives, learning designs, etc. the likelihood of significant gains is extremely doubtful. The curriculum would need to emerge from a dialogue between learner and educator.

Building upon this foundation, assessing how a person learns, and provides evidence of this, becomes as or more important than assessing what has been learned. The learning process

needs to be seen as more fundamental than the results produced - these being viewed only as provisional outcomes of an on-going process. To this end Boud (1990) puts forward a number of principles of assessment practice, including:

- critical evaluation of sources and ideas, scepticism of authority, questioning over acceptance,
- j u d g e m e n t (collective) by peers rather than supervisors,
- search for meaning and understanding process more important than product,
- work to be self - rather than other-directed,
- personal responsibility for authenticity.

These go much further in terms of the scope of assessment than is normally recognised within higher education. The first point takes the issue of critical thinking beyond its typical boundaries - and would need to be actively encouraged and supported by staff. The subsequent points take us deep into the territory of personal development - prompting the learner into a search for personal meaning and, consequently, encouraging personal responsibility for, and ownership of, learning. These are all essential elements in learning to learn.

The challenge for educators is therefore twofold, firstly, to move the emphasis away from assessment of outcomes towards assessment of process; secondly, to develop that process to embrace more than intellectual and skill development. In doing this we may need to turn the process of learning to learn upon

ourselves; to question our assumptions about what is possible within a resource-constrained environment with higher participation levels. More specifically we need to examine and develop methods and activities that encourage the necessary depth of process; to explore situations and contexts that safely challenge participants. This means not just more group work, for example, but group work that is structured to probe the areas of personal development that support the view of learning to learn argued for here. It mean not just more active and applied assessment vehicles, but vehicles that are active and applied in terms of the full spectrum of personal development. It means not just greater use of self- or peer-evaluations, tagged onto the end of traditional assessment, but use of these in a way that recognised and required the necessary depth and breadth of reflection. Above all it means encouraging negotiation and debate between students and staff and not colluding in the idea that alternatives to current approaches do not exist.

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LIFE STORIES

David Limond suggests that the ever increasing numbers of students who are the first of their family to enter HE might be inspired by the biographies of distinguished men and women who were also pioneers in their time. Many of their experiences, and the lessons they learned from them, will ring familiar bells in the minds of such readers.

Dr David Limond,
Nene-University College Northampton

In his brief but informative monograph for the Economic History Society (1992), Anderson reminds us that

Higher education is the most egalitarian part of British education, in being a unified system with no private alternative, and in bringing together students of all classes on equal terms' and it is trivially true to note that many more people now leave school and attend some institution of post-school education than ever before. The trend towards egalitarian inclusion is one which takes us closer and ever closer to the position in the US where, as the *THES* recently reported, *A record 67 per cent...of high school graduates went on to further or higher education last year'* (22 May 1998). It is also axiomatic to say that many of these new students are from the first generations of their families to have entered higher education.

Concern has been expressed - and continues to be expressed - in more or less equal measure - that either (1) the HE system will be unable to cope with these new students, or (2) that these new students will be unable to cope with that system (that is, concern that equality is now triumphant over quality so that new entrants are seen as representing the lowering of admission standards, the simplification of the form and content of teaching and the general debasing of the currency of academia).

On the other hand, concern is expressed as to the (un)willingness of academics to adapt to new students' new needs by employing new methods of teaching and assessment and by thinking seriously about standards and values. In what follows I shall address myself to the latter package of concerns, though I recognise that the former is a serious matter and those

> **The result may be ...the first generation to go forward into life not determined to perpetuate academic values.**

who write, speak and simply think in such terms are by no manner of means contemptible enemies of promise.

To repeat, the issue is this: there are many more undergraduate students in HE than ever before, many of these students are not simply themselves new, as all first year undergraduates are new, but come from groups, communities and families which have not traditionally been inducted into academic life and learning and which may not have inculcated academic values. (Though I pause here to stress that the long standing tradition of working-class autodidacts and the corresponding tradition of aristocratic muscular anti-intellectualism ensures that there has never been any simple top-down distribution of these values.)

How is the progress of these new students to be eased if they are not

simply to reject and be rejected by HE? After all, admitting large numbers of new students and then failing them - by allowing them to fail - may be counter-productive. (And, by fail, I mean not giving them worthwhile experiences which will be valued ever after rather than simply failing them in the formal sense. It may thus be possible to pass exams but still fail to get much out of HE.) The result may be a state of affairs in which we in HE are wasting their time and our own and (increasingly) their money in addition to community/state funds by doing nothing more than making this new generation the first to go forward into life not determined to perpetuate academic values. The virtuous circle of the past in which each successive generation of new entrants crowns its own HE success by ensuring that its children enter HE in turn and prosper there may become the vicious spiral of the future for members of this generation who have been failed (literally or metaphorically). They may respond to their failure by telling their children *'I tried that college thing - didn't work for me, don't you bother...'.* Even if this was always a possibility in individual cases in the past, the increased and increasing numbers of participants in HE makes the prospect of mass defection in the future a matter to which we must address ourselves now.

ENSURING POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

There may be many ways to ensure that the current generation of new entrants has as valuable (and valued) an experience as possible and these could include new teaching methods such as

> # Never underestimate the value of a cliche.

those often described in *the New Academic*. A further innovative approach might be that described in Raaheim and Wankowski (1981). This involves the use of highly specialised counselling techniques with an emphasis on the context of HE. The suggestion here is to use *'a study assistance procedure'* or *'learning through teaching technique'* (126-133). Under these rubrics Wankowski in particular has implemented plans for inviting the student who shows signs of academic and personal difficulties to change (real or imagined) weaknesses into strengths by spending time with an academic counsellor (one who is as much academic as counsellor) who has no role in teaching him/her.

Over several sessions the student is able to explain to the dis- but not un-interested third party what it is that he/she does know about some subject.

'[E]ven the most retarded [sic], shy, apathetic and nervous...became bolder, more enterprising and perceptive when explaining something that they knew well... particularl...studentswho experienced severe study difficulties' (126).

Thus the student is able to deliver short presentations to the third party and (it is hoped) comes in the process to realise how much he/she does know and can do by virtue of being able to exhibit that knowledge and ability in a less threatening and competitive environment than the orthodox tutorial/lecture. This is clearly a distinctive kind of counselling which has more in common with the varieties of 'philosophical' or 'existential' counselling advocated by Louis

Marinoff (interview with Lebon, 1998) than 'conventional' therapeutic stress counselling. There is certainly much to recommend this approach but neither it nor innovative teaching will be my subject here.

My principal theme may be summarised thus: never underestimate the value of a cliché. Indeed Samuel Smiles was happy to start his most famous work - perhaps the first systematic study of auto/biography - with the words *'"Heaven helps those who help themselves" is a well-tried maxim'.* For my own part I note the significance of the truisms that *'there is nothing new under the sun'* and that there is little to be gained by 'reinventing the wheel'.

The current group of new entrants to HE may be the largest of its kind but it is not the first.

USING BIOGRAPHIES

My particular interest here is in how students who are from the first generation of their families to enter HE can be helped in their initial adjustment and subsequent coping (and helped indeed to go beyond coping so that they come to thrive) by being reminded (or having it brought to their attention if they did not already know) that they are not the first to be in their current position. This can easily be achieved by directing them to a number of important educational auto/ biographies and memoirs. I shall briefly describe several of the items I have in mind and then say specifically what I think their worth to be, how I imagine them being used and in what circumstances.

A very obvious example of a first generation student in HE is **Ralph Glasser** from whose three volumes of autobiography I select the second (1990) as most useful for present purposes. The son of Eastern European

assistant in a barber's shop, then a worker in a clothing factory. With extreme diligence he pursued a course of study at extension classes by night and was finally rewarded with a scholarship to Oxford by dint of the strength of an essay, the failure of which he imagined to be inevitable. Against his father's will he accepted the offer and, with '*A parcel containing a few...clothes...[and] the only books I possessed...sent ahead by rail*' (3), he set out to cycle the entire distance south.

Equally poignant, though less dramatic, might be the story of **Alan White** (in Finch and Rustin, eds, 1986) who left his secondary modern school at the age of 16 with one 'O'-level and worked for five years in a shop before training as a social worker and proceeding to graduate from the then North East London Polytechnic.

Having given one example of a complete autobiography and one essay/memoir, I shall close this short selection of sources with an example of a biography, that of the late **R[onnie] D[avid] Laing** by his son Adrian (1994). Later famous as a pioneer of anti-psychiatry and humanistic, existential psychoanalysis, Laing was born to struggling lower middle-class parents whose determination saw him through school and then to university in Glasgow until his final graduation as a doctor in 1950. These are hardly the only stories that I might bring forth as examples but they span a range of types of texts and a period from the 1940s (Glasser) to the 1970s and '80s (White) and they will serve for the moment.

The themes I shall consider are these: how have these various 'first timers' coped with their changed circumstances and what specific lessons in coping with personal and academic change can be taken from these experiences to impart to the new generation? What problems do they recall which they seem to have (had) /1/ in common with each other and /2/ in common with the current new generation? I shall then conclude by considering these various figures and some of their thoughts as to the value of their experience in HE.

COMMON THEMES

Examining the narratives which I have selected it is clear that, in various combinations, they have themes in common, I shall list only two. Taking Glasser and White as a pair we find that there were problems with staff and students who came from apparently more traditional HE backgrounds, clashes of culture which only made adjustment more difficult.

Glasser tells us: '*One was surrounded by people with strange tastes and preferences to adapt to or steer clear of...and always the nagging awareness that others seemed to navigate [HE] without any special care...[while] my vigilance must never relax*' (13).

From White we hear that: '*I can still remember the look of bemused surprise on the face of a professor when...I told him that I had worked in a shop for five years*' (113).

Comparing Laing and White we find that there can be problems (though sometimes self-inflicted) in gearing up for academic work and running the course to the end without stumbling.

'*Ronnie was a well-regarded student of great promise. He was expected to sail through all his [final] exams...Quite unexpectedly he failed the lot*' (42). He resat and passed in due time but not before he and his family had suffered a great deal of anxiety.

White's failure was more a matter of being unable to capitalise on initial success. After finals (which he passed) he was ready for postgraduate work but was unable to secure funding (114). Only after a time as a research assistant (always a thankless task) was funding forthcoming - '*moral, don't give up!*' (114).

It is clear then that there have always been patterns in student experiences, perhaps in particular there have been patterns associated with cultural coping and coping with failure and defeat. In the case of the former Glasser's advice may be a cliché too, but it is not necessarily any the less valuable for that. In effect it amounts to a version of that given to another student - '*to thine own self be true*'. In Glasser's terms this is expressed as exercising eternal vigilance. From longer reading of his work this would seem to me to mean recognising those (staff and students alike) who may seek to do one down and being prepared to avoid them if possible, confront them if necessary. Of course this should not mean (to invoke yet another cliché) carrying a chip on one's shoulder as to one's social and intellectual origins but rather realising that one may well come from '*A history or tradition...[which can] be seen as a source of strength, not shame*' (White, 113). While I am not preaching absolute cultural relativism, in the context of the 1990s, as opposed to the 1970s as experienced by White, the culture from which the new entrant may well be tempted to divorce him/her self

There have always been patterns in student experiences.... coping with failure and defeat

may be more likely to be defined by ethnicity than class. The point here is this, every culture deserves to be judged by the best it can do and produce, not by the worst. There is thus no cause to be culturally defensive if one is a new entrant to HE, only to be aware (as Glasser learned and as he teaches) of the strengths and merits of one's own culture while being sufficiently self critical as to be able to see how its weakness may be liabilities in one's personal moral and social development.

The second specific lesson in coping we see here is that given by White - don't give up. Nothing important is ever achieved easily. There is always a need for application and diligence - as Laing learned the hard way and successive generations of students continue to learn.

There is also often a gap between the fortunes of those try without succeeding and those who succeed without trying. There may be a moral difference between the set-back suffered by Laing (who was a prodigious drinker from an early age until his untimely death) and that which White describes but (to be controversial for a moment) the treatment for lung cancer is surgery whether one is an active or a passive smoker. The patient (as the student) must accept the difficulty, inconvenience, even pain of the procedures necessary for eventual success no matter where (if anywhere) fault for the failure/difficulty lies.

All of this may seem unremarkable to those (academics) who have themselves been through HE and who know it best, both as recipients and providers but it seems crucial to remember that, by definition, first generation students cannot know such

things and cannot easily find them out. What they may be able to do however

> **By definition, first generation students cannot know ....What they may be able to do however is learn from those who have gone before ..**

is learn from those who have gone before and who have recorded (or had recorded) their experiences in auto/biographies.

POSITIVE MESSAGES

I return presently to the matter of how and when these can best be brought to the attention of new students but first I must explore the positive messages recorded by my chosen subjects. Here again I select two brief examples.

For Glasser: '*the really important task [in HE] was to discover...[my] identity - and let it speak'* (17).

For Laing (in his own words in an unpublished autobiographical fragment quoted by his son): '*[what] was really important...in a University curriculum... were matters of personal apprenticeship [to knowledge]'* (33). From these remarks it ought to be clear (and White concurs) that these authors see the value of HE as being, as it were, interior. That is, concerned not with what one has or gets but how (or who) one is.

WHAT OF ACADEMICS?

My final task then is simply to suggest how some or all of what has gone before might have direct implication for academics. Here I shall

make two simple points.

It seems to be quite obvious that, with a little work, those concerned with preparing material for students inductions could draw up lists of auto/biographical works in their institutional libraries and bring these to the attention of students (those who are not new entrants in my sense no less than those who are). If such early intervention had little or no effect and a student presented with academic and/or personal difficulties, there might still be a remedial course open by which a responsible academic could present the student concerned with a relevant work with a note attached saying '*Read me'*.

No life which contains any element of service to others is ever lived entirely in vain and through such auto/biographical sharing many lives may go on being useful, productive and valuable for generation to come.

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A MID-LIFE CRISIS IN ACADEMIA

John Lloyd describes that uneasy feeling, so familiar to many of our more mature readers, where old ways of working in academia seem to be discarded without due acknowledgement of their value. He calls for goodwill and a greater recognition of the "accumulated knowledge and wisdom" of those who have survived "one hundred and forty examination board meetings".

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I knew I was in trouble when, as Chair of a recent selection panel, I failed to even understand eight of the '*valid selection criteria*', and in no way would meet six of the remaining ones! The successful candidate should turn out to be some kind of wonder-boy if he manages to research, teach, administer, lead, counsel and innovate, as required, on a 0.5 temporary lecturer contract!

It is perhaps a peril of middle age to perceive those distant lecturing days through rose coloured spectacles, but today's academic pinball machine does seem to have hit tilt, leaving many of us old-lags or seasoned professionals in a state of some confusion.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

I am willing to admit that not all was wonderful in the sixties and seventies. Students had few, if any rights, and in any case nobody bothered to inform them anyway. My own student days revealed an almost perfect correlation between the academic brilliance of tutors, and their total inability to explain anything to anyone. My own tutor was the master of the mini tutorial: '*Everything OK, no problems, see you next week.*' Another had perfected the art of mobile seminars, dealing with some of the more obtuse theories of Kenynesian economics, whilst picking up his dry cleaning. Timetables seemed designed to maximise benefits for staff and maximise inconvenience to students. I have always believed that my possessing a belly of the buffalo in later life is not unrelated to the average wait between classes of some six hours, being spent mainly in the college bar.

One particular favourite was a specialist in financial economics. The initial audience of some fifty or so bright young things had quickly nosedived to a couple of young lovers looking for a private room in the afternoon, and a mature student still seeking digs. 'Interactive-sessions' or student-led seminars had not yet reached my university. The average lecture was some fifty-five minutes of spell-binding monotony, illustrated by some chalk marks on the board, and a reading list of some hundred or so references, enabling you to 'read-up' on the forty minutes you failed to understand.

Of course there were exceptions. The Professor whose seminar questions were 'drilled' at you from a couple of yards distance, whilst he removed his wellington boots and socks, kept everyone's attention. It was a very simple technique, trial by silence if you failed to respond with a sensible answer, which caused us all to do the necessary preparation and reading.

Personal tutoring as a means of filling staff timetables and producing embarrassed and harassing scenes as tutors attempt to record the latest sexual disease spreading through the final year option group, was not much in evidence.

Finding the tutor was a more popular game, one of my favourite tutors

'doubled' as a park ranger in the Yorkshire Dales, and was not the most accessible to students requiring immediate assistance.

I have no doubt that many of the faculty were outstanding academics, of high research standing, but the word 'relevance' was not high on their good lecture guide. Many of them became more zealous and enthusiastic, the more obtuse their subject. One, in particular, could be relied upon to move to a passing impersonation of the death scene speech of King Lear, when referring to the sex life of the Egyptian goat.

And yet it has to be said that generally the system worked for the minority of youngsters, well qualified and confident who succeeded in gaining degrees. Staff and students enjoyed a reasonably close relationship, based upon small group teaching, some individual help and a genuine respect for scholarship and education. This relationship and security was helped by a plentiful supply of resources and a healthy labour market promising decent jobs for life.

THE PERILS OF STUDENT POWER

In today's climate I do wonder how many of the old style academics would have survived the assault course of the modern university. The number of pitfalls is increasing, as 'student experience' becomes the 'Holy Grail' of the 1990s. With the nightmare of quality inspections causing panic among the rainforests of the world as well as with senior academics, it is possible to argue that the gods of evaluation and accountability have become too powerful, allowing too little space for eccentricity and individuality.

Student power appears to have overtaken girl power, with the modern system providing numerous ambush points for the student to seek pure revenge or provide valuable feedback according to ones own position. If it moves, evaluate it, seems to be the approach! The modern student has ample opportunities including course boards, unit evaluations, course evaluations, consultative committees, focus groups, to let their views be heard and recorded. We know such information is to be treated with sensitivity and discretion but mud sticks, in elephant memories and giant egos.

Of course the evaluation process can be a valuable weapon, in bringing under public scrutiny some of the worst excesses and worst performers. We are all aware of the games played out in university departments as we 'protect' the poor teacher, on the misguided basis of 'there but for the grace of God go I'. Such individuals are shunted around courses, in an attempt to spread the misery and avoid the open warfare when course boards explode into bloody battles between the students' union and the defending staff.

It is clearly also valuable to recognise excellent lecture courses, providing such information is accurate and is then acted on in a positive fashion. However, the whole culture of inspection and evaluation must be carried out in a sensitive fashion if we are to avoid overkill and teachers adopting defensive survival strategies.

Innovation in teaching can be dangerous, especially in the early days with students somewhat confused. If such moves lead to student complaints and the disapproval of managers, important developments can be stopped, and staff move back to more conservative (boring?) ways. Teaching staff can manipulate student opinion by opting out of the more serious and tedious parts of the syllabus, and ensuring that 'results' are rather good (generous!).

ACADEMICS NEED SUPPORT

It is perhaps too much to expect an international expert in medieval church building to enthusiastically embrace all the current demands being placed on lecturers: be whiz-kid administrator, teacher/entertainer as well as agony aunt/uncle to the final year students. Clearly college authorities must ensure adequate resources and support for staff development to equip tutors with skills to 'handle' current demands.

There is no point interpreting staff development simply as research support, as staff have to become more accessible to students, and handle a range of academic and personal issues. Another area of support particularly needed by the middle-aged specialists who missed out on the information technology revolution is administrative assistance. We all recognize the academic stars whose administrative talents have in the past produced havoc and mayhem across final year seminar groups. Course administrators, student advisors, competent department secretaries are enormously cost effective, especially during vacation times when some academics still 'hit the beach running'.

It is unrealistic to expect all the senior lectures of maturing years to embrace the new challenging environment with enthusiasm! In past times many were allowed a few years of light timetables and long lunches, in recognition of time served. Today's harsher climate makes it more difficult

CROSS-CULTURAL WORK GROUPS

A BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Glauco De Vita points out that cross-cultural group working may provide a critical edge for a company in today's increasingly competitive international market. Academics too could find this stimulating technique a productive way of helping students discover new ways of working and learning.

Glauco De Vita,
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Two important questions should be answered before considering the use of cross-cultural work groups in the curriculum. First, what makes this type of group work important in the specific academic field, and second, what are the mechanisms that, in the capacity of facilitators, we as tutors should adopt to develop high-performing cross-cultural groups. This paper explores both these issues from a business and management perspective.

RATIONALE FOR ADOPTION

Cross-cultural work groups are a reality in most contemporary organisations. As international companies are increasingly having to manage a multicultural workforce, cross-cultural groups appear to have become the most popular vehicle to capitalise on diversity and accomplish organisational tasks. At ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries) for example, cross-cultural groups are used to develop cultural synergies at all levels of the organisation and are said to have led to innovative practices, faster learning and sources of competitive advantage. While at ASEA Brown Boveri (ABB), international teamworking capability plays a pivotal role in delivering the knowledge transfer and sustainable learning so crucial to a truly transnational organisation. In essence, cross-cultural groups are increasingly seen as a critical capability that might determine the success of the organisation.

Given the above, within the academic field of business and management, the use of group work involving multicultural student membership is not simply a choice dictated by the growth of international students among the populations of UK universities or a pedagogic preference but an injunction to better prepare students for their later careers in the real world of business.

MAIN BARRIERS

Unlike mono-cultural groups, where the cultural assumptions shared by group members shape the norms of the group and enable the group to function, in multicultural groups beliefs and expectations about group behaviour are likely to differ widely thus making effective group work difficult.

As argued by Smith and Berg (1997), the main challenge faced by a multicultural group lies in the recognition that, for the group to function effectively , members must use their differences rather than their similarities as the basis of their shared actions. This requires the establishment of agreed group processes aimed at ensuring the exploration of what each

cultural perspective has to offer (decentering) and the integration of the strengths of each (recentering) so as to produce more effective outcomes through cultural synergy.

The challenges faced by multicultural groups formed in the classroom environment, however, go beyond those encountered by international teams operating within multinational organisations. Indeed, a variety of complications emerge when group work involving multicultural student membership is introduced in the curriculum (in the form of group projects, verbal/visual presentations or collaborative writing activities) as an assessed learning outcome.

First, in the real world of business, cross-cultural groups are usually formed by combining individual skills to best accomplish organisational tasks. In the classroom, however, the practice of group self-selection is still widespread. A practice which, by allowing students to build on their existing networks, rarely leads to an equal distribution of international students across groups. Moreover, as suggested by McCain (1996), self-selected groups allow for the formation of alliances of former high-performers thus augmenting the performance gap between strong and weaker students.

Secondly, as a survey carried out in the School of Business at Oxford Brookes University (Ledwith, 1998) has recently highlighted, home students tend not to like assessed group work especially when the group is multicultural as this might adversely affect their final degree classification. The problem that assessed group work is often a poor reflector of individual skills and academic abilities has been with us for a long time. And although the question of how to assess group work while being fair to the individual members of the group is one which is not unique to cross-cultural groups, it is one which in multicultural settings merits special consideration if both home and international students are to look forward enthusiastically to the learning experience.

Thirdly, language barriers are likely to be more significant in multicultural groups formed in the classroom in that, unlike international teams of professionals who are recruited also on the basis of their language skills, international students come to study in the UK especially to develop those skills, namely, to improve their English. The fact that at the early stages of undergraduate life some international students are not fully proficient in the use of the English language also means that, in spite of their willingness to work in multicultural groups, they are often hesitant to participate actively, get left behind, and find themselves providing an unwillingly marginal contribution to the group, something which inevitably gives rise to feelings of exclusion.

Whilst there are no ready-made solutions to confront these problems, the suggestions that follow constitute measures that could easily be implemented by tutors and which are likely to reduce some of the barriers that hinder effective cross-cultural work groups.

REDUCING THE BARRIERS

As mentioned earlier, the key to effective multicultural work groups lies in their ability to integrate and build on the different perspectives brought by members. In order to aid group members to develop such synergistic approaches to their work tutors should provide clear guidelines that allow for both decentering and recentering to take place. To facilitate decentering the tutor should remind the groups that the ideas of all group members should be heard before any of the ideas are evaluated. The information provided by the decentering process should enable the group to form a common view and a hybrid set of norms (recentering) which will then serve as a core foundation to build on using the different perspectives (Maznevsky and Peterson, 1997).

CREATING THE GROUPS

With respect to group formation, given the problems outlined earlier, the practice of self-selection should be abandoned. It should be the tutor's responsibility to select the composition of the group and, in spite of the constraints posed by the larger proportion of English students likely to be present, effort should go into creating groups as multicultural as possible.

For the group to function effectively, members must use their differences rather than their similarities

the ideas of all group members should be heard before any of the ideas are evaluated...

Subgroups of any kind are best avoided, including cultural subgroups as they have the tendency of using their own language during group work - a highly destructive pattern which not only creates an atmosphere of suspicion, it also slows down international students' assimilation of English.

Additional grouping criteria usually adopted to develop high-performing mono-cultural groups should also be taken into account. More specifically, where the seminar population allows, the tutor should ensure that each group has a balanced representation of both genders, and that all groups are of mixed ability (something which could be easily determined on the basis of previous assessed work).

ASSESSMENT ISSUES

With reference to the issue of assessment, since marking the end product of the team's effort and giving each member the same grade does not recognise the individual member's contribution, I suggest the introduction of an additional assessment component. This would be in the form of an individual reflective statement on the process of working in a multicultural group. Questions focusing on the role adopted within the group, changes in behaviours and working practices, critical incidents and things that each individual would do differently if he or she were to work in the same group again provide a simple framework for students to display their individual qualities of reflection, analysis and evaluation , while at the same time offering a source of information to tutors on which to base individual contribution marks (so that each

member can end up with a different mark). These reflective statements also seem the most appropriate method to directly assess the module's learning

I suggest the introduction of an individual reflective statement on the process of working in a multicultural group...

outcomes associated with group work (e.g. "be able to assess your strengths and weaknesses through working within a group having multicultural influences").

To facilitate the contribution of students for whom English is not their first language or culture, groups should be encouraged to introduce 'functional pauses' aimed at crystallising ideas and at providing opportunities for reflection and process evaluation. During such phases of the meetings, one student could act as 'process leader' and be responsible for collecting views (from all members) on the functioning of the group and its progress. In addition to creating an environment in which it would be easier for international students to participate, this mechanism would offer the opportunity to verify individuals' acceptance of, and commitment to, group's decisions.

Practices to further ensure the involvement of all members may include the rotation of the role of "process leader" (to give everyone the chance to develop these skills) and the allocation of clear accountabilities for who is supposed to do what, so as to increase each member's sense of responsibility and participation (Heimer & Vince, 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

While the suggestions discussed thus far can be seen as useful practices to both minimise the problems faced by cross-cultural work groups and encourage students to exploit cultural synergy by maximising each other's cultural strengths, it is important to recognise that multicultural group work skills development is not a top-down approach and cannot be generated by mere administrative decree. Ultimately, the key to multicultural group work skills development is the students' willingness to learn how to learn from each other. The value of what they will learn will be dependent upon the quality of their individual contributions, the chemistry of their interactions and their ability to mould their individual perspectives into a cohesive whole. □

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PUBLISHING, NOT PERISHING:

GETTING YOUR RESEARCH INTO THE RIGHT JOURNAL

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OSCAR WILDE'S ADVICE

In recent times 'publish or perish' has become the motto of academia.

Appointment, tenure and promotion have become disproportionately dependent on achieving publication. Various national-level developments, such as the successive Research Assessment Exercises in Britain, have sought to evaluate the research contribution of different departments. Moreover, the monetary reward for achievement in this field distributed to departments, has added fierce pressure on academics. They must juggle a variety of teaching, administrative and research commitments in order to publish well, publish quickly and publish often.

This is not only a British phenomenon. To a large extent the American system has long promoted a 'publish and perish' philosophy and

other countries such as Australia, have also begun to tread a similar route. So, publication becomes an individual as well as collective necessity.

According to Oscar Wilde, the only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on: it is never any use to oneself. We are conscious of not always ourselves having followed the processes of the advice provided in this article. However, following Wilde's dictum and writing from the perspectives of having written a wide array of articles over the years and having acted variously as editor, critic, advisor, editorial board member and referee, we hope we can provide some insights into the process.

BOOKS OR JOURNALS?

In many respects, research and publication is very much the international exchange currency of the

academic world. Whilst most academics claim to be effective teachers (and can provide student evaluation to support such claims), and few would admit to administrative incompetence, publication is the main area where individuals can be relatively easily compared in terms of the quality and quantity of their record. It may be difficult to judge the merit of academic A's teaching and administrative record in comparison to that of academic B. However, a comparison of the publication record produces a more straightforward comparison: a single publication by A in the *Academy of Management Review* will be judged by most people to be superior to a whole raft of B's articles in *Grocer's Monthly*.

This new culture has led to the development of publication strategies for individuals and institutions. For example, rather than wait until the end

of the research before beginning writing, academics are trying to publish as they proceed with the research. We have also seen a shift away from writing books to publishing articles.

The rationale is twofold. Firstly a book is very much an 'all the eggs in one basket' approach; it is now often seen as more tactical to write say half a dozen articles, which spread the impact among different audiences, and which treat diverse themes within the research discretely.

Secondly, there is the issue of evaluation. Books are usually of more variable quality: a book may get widely read and cited - or it may not for reasons which have little to do with its merit, such as the publisher's marketing strategy. Even if the book has been widely read, it may not be easy for others to attribute particular merit through identifying its numerous and distinctive contributions to knowledge. An article, however, is easier to evaluate in that the very location of its publication (e.g. a top journal) will ascribe merit to it, even if individuals have not read it carefully. In articles, the analysis may well be more focused, the message more concentrated.

CHOOSING A SUITABLE JOURNAL

As with marketing any product or service, choosing the most suitable journal is a question of matching the buyer's needs (those of the journal editor) with the seller's goods on offer (your article). Never forget that in the social sciences as in the natural sciences, the researcher is often at the cutting edge of critical thought. Established authors may have the benefit of experience, but editors need both types of contribution for their journals. Many aspirant authors also

overlook that editors need to fill their journals, and not only with the most erudite articles from the most eminent authors.

Editors require a range of articles to meet their readership's needs. For instance, they may be looking for the talent for the future to satisfy their publisher's future plans. One publisher of a group of journals offers a "New Faces" award, to be awarded to a previously unpublished author: it is a feather in an editor's cap to have identified and accepted such an award-winning article in his or her journal. As a consequence an editor may be keen to encourage your efforts as a

> **The very location of its publication (e.g. a top journal) will ascribe merit to it, even if individuals have not read it**

neophyte author.

Next, you should analyse the field or fields in which your article falls. Few articles have only one single focus, and most are of potential interest to readers in several specialist areas. So you should spread your work around, covering several "user groups" who could have a valid concern in respect of your findings. This advice is not a suggestion for implausible recycling of your ideas through ingenious but under-justified extension of the material. Such extension may be an accepted marketing technique with a technical product. But with intellectual property, it should be used sparingly - referees will usually see through it if it is unwarranted or excessive. But used with integrity, you may well find that (for instance) your original article on

TQM would interest editors not only in TQM journals, but also find resonances in HRM titles, in general management reviews, or in specialist publications aimed at a particular audience.

DO YOUR (NON-ACADEMIC) RESEARCH

Research carefully the internal characteristics of the potential target journals for your article. It is worth reading several times the journal's "notes for contributors" or "editorial policy". Look for coded expressions which will give you a hint whether your article would suit. Select a list of some six journals, and make up a matrix of their objectives, such as topic, length, treatment, intended audience, and refereeing process. You can then evaluate how well your article meets these criteria. Make sure you identify any exclusion criteria at this stage, and decide whether you fall foul of such constraints.

Now ask yourself why you are seeking to have your article published at all. If it is primarily for academic advancement or for reputation, then refereed journals are the gold standard. Your work will survive longer and have more chance of being known and cited, if published in major journals. But even among journals which double-blind referee all submissions, there is much variation in their status - since there is now a near-universal trend toward refereeing. Within your field, there is often a recognised pecking-order, but try to identify trends. A new editor can for instance be working hard to push up the standing of a journal. Old-established journals can become complacent with an unenergetic editor or a long-serving, internally self-sufficient editorial advisory board

INTERNAL CLUES

There are some internal clues which you can use interpretively in anticipating the reception which your article will receive at the referees' hands.

Are all articles refereed largely or solely among the EAB members? If so, you may be able to predict their preferences and prejudices.

Is a list of referees published annually, say in the last issue of the year? If so, you again can assess the balance of internal referees to external independent referees: the larger the proportion of external referees, the more the uncertainty about the outcome.

Check the submission, revision and acceptance dates, if these are given on the articles: the overall pattern of revision and the delay times between these dates and the date of publication will give you an estimation of the severity of refereeing.

A final point over refereeing which may influence your submission tactics is whether the process in a given journal is author-friendly or not. Since your article statistically is likely to be required to undergo revisions, this aspect is important. Some journals give full verbatim reports from referees, and the editor may offer advice on the best way forward in making revisions. Others may send enigmatic unhelpful statements, or even two contradictory referees' reports. There is really no way of knowing the quality of refereeing in advance, other than talking to academic colleague.

Finally, while the quality of your publication record is paramount, volume should not be totally neglected. Publication in practitioner journals will ring a certain recognition, and may improve access for future research if practitioners recognise the relevance of your work. Also, in the competition for academic appointment and advancement, criteria are being drawn more widely: industrial or organisational relevance (in addition to your key academic articles) may prove to be the additional decisive factor in your favour in the academic "pole-climbing" stakes.

WRITING THE ARTICLE

Define carefully what subject you are trying to tackle in the article. Identify the central theme, and purposively eliminate extraneous detail, confusing or unnecessary themes, or discussion which clouds the central issue. Do not try to achieve too much in one article. Serious television programmes are said to treat only four or five topics in half an hour - even with the benefit of visual as well as verbal impact. If your readers spend half an hour on your article, often you can only do yourself justice on two or three themes. If you are tackling a big issue or debate, that number of themes will probably be all you can focus on in one article. If it is a specialised point, you will need to concentrate closely in demonstrating its relevance. Most articles by inexperienced writers (and some by experienced authors) contain far too many themes. As a consequence, their articles can lack critical focus, or quality of development of any one theme.

If you are writing an article jointly with others, beware! This can be enriching collaboration. Alternatively, it can be the end of a beautiful friendship. Agree the rules clearly in advance:-

Who is to be responsible for which parts of the work? (we flipped a coin!)

Who is responsible for coordination and integration of the parts?

What is the time schedule, and what steps are taken if slippage occurs?

How are disagreements to be resolved?

How are authors' names to be listed on the paper? Alphabetically, in relation to the extent of contribution, by seniority?

Clarify the roles which the joint authors are to play - such as researcher, first-draft writer, critic, copy editor, etc?

Who is going to decide the future shape of your paper, negotiate and agree changes with the editor, communicate progress to all authors, proof read, discuss second editions (if a chapter), agree reprints in other sources etc?

Writing an article is a potentially stressful and emotionally-taxing experience. Previously-agreed rules will never solve all problems. But they help greatly in avoiding disagreements.

Do not rewrite and rewrite your paper for ever. The journalistic maxim "Publish and be damned" becomes for academics "Submit and be hopeful". At some stage, the extent of improvement on each rewrite becomes less and less. Indeed you may well start to lose your original clarity of purpose.

The changes you make may become so minor that they will have little or no effect on the quality of your article or the editorial decision whether to publish. The referees and the editor may want to address other matters altogether, and they may pull you away from your original message.

Often informed people, who are not

> **Some journals give full verbatim reports from referees... Others may send enigmatic unhelpful statements...**

experts on the subject of the article, are very useful readers, who can help you clarify the arguments of the article. A notable book on the extremely-complex geological subject of the movement of the earth's tectonic plates was written jointly with the author's non-expert partner. Even Milton Friedman collaborated with his wife Rose in *Free to Choose.* You can get too close to the subject, and outsiders can have a sharper perspective on readability.

But you also need the very best expert criticism which you can obtain from well-intentioned and analytical colleagues, from seminar presentations (this article started in that form!), and from widely-published authors in your circle of friends and acquaintances.

Finally, you should not forget to provide signposts and landmarks for readers. Your abstract is key here: write it with care, picking out the article's themes and their treatment with clinical precision. Write the introduction to the article simply and logically, laying out the objectives and plan of exposition of the article in an accessible, attractive manner.

Equally, you will know editors' bad habits of reading the conclusion first: your conclusion should summarise lucidly - not looking desperate or exhausted with the effort of completing the article!

RECEIVING COMMENTS ON YOUR PAPER

Having cast your bread upon the waters, you need to be in a philosophical mood when you receive comments from referees and the editor's letter. It is normal in the best journals for there to be some extra work which needs to be done (or issues addressed) before your article is accepted for publication. Try to see this outcome as a constructive and positive challenge, not a put-down.

If your paper is rejected, you may need to come to a judgement about how far you wish to incorporate comments of the editor/referee before you send it to another journal. This depends on how far you see these as generally valid comments or whether you see them as specific to the particular journal you sent it to. It is not unknown to send an unrevised manuscript to a different journal which accepts it without change, or whose editor makes only minor changes, or who comes up with a completely different list of criticisms. This is when you need the advice of more experienced colleagues. Some journals have horrendous rejection rates which may not indicate therefore demerit in articles, but simply a shortage of space. Both the authors of this article

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referee for journals which reject more than 90% of articles received. Many of the rejections could validly merit publication elsewhere in reputable academic journals.

If the referees' decision is encouraging, but requiring revisions, there is a skill to reading between the lines of the editor's letter.

Are there relatively minor revisions which need to be done, perhaps acknowledging the points of the referee(s)?

Are quite substantial changes required?

Or is a fundamental re-write of the paper effectively being demanded, which may essentially change the original argument? With regard to the latter, you may feel that a different paper is being demanded and it is within your rights to correspond or talk with the editor over this.

Editors are not always terribly specific and may ask you merely to address the comments (perhaps varied and possibly contradictory!) of the referees. In such an instance you may wish to attend to points 1-7, say, but argue that points 8 to 9 are beyond the scope of this particular paper. You should write a full account to the editor of what you have done (or not done) and explain your rationale. It may not make sense for you to incorporate every single suggestion/comment, but you must explain this to the editor. This will also help if (as often happens) the manuscript is sent to the same referees again and they then make an additional list of suggestions!

Most referees are positively intentioned, and react fairly to a list of the author's responses. If you feel that the anonymous referees are not so disposed, you may wish to indicate to the editor the names of individuals to whom you would prefer the article not

to be submitted. You may for instance, have had a public disagreement with them at a conference, when presenting an early version of your article. Most editors will be sensitive to such requests, if detailed briefly. Hopefully, your paper is eventually accepted by your target journal.

But try to avoid being drawn into a vortex of revision. If your revised paper is not accepted on the first resubmission, you may be embarking on a fruitless voyage, if you start second or third versions - other than for minor corrections. It might be sensible to cut your losses, resubmit elsewhere, or seriously ask yourself whether the article will ever have sufficient merit for acceptance.

But at this point, one must not lose heart. You may need to go back to step one and rethink the most appropriate place to send your paper, the most effective emphasis to give it, or the quality of its argument and exposition.

CONCLUSION

We hope we have shed some light on what can sometimes appear a rather uncertain world to an outsider. Moreover, we are emphasising that having spent perhaps several years researching a topic or issue, it pays also to put in some research on publication, and to develop a strategy as to its possible outlets. This does not guarantee publication. Clearly the substantive content of your research is important! We are assuming you have something original and different to say! However, a calculative approach may shift the odds in your favour.

The gambling analogy is deliberate. There is an element of lottery in the publishing 'game'. One of the authors recalls writing four pages of comment on a colleague's article submitted to *California Management Review:* the

following week, it was accepted unchanged.

Hopefully, the approach we suggest should enable you to make the most of what you have written about your research, and in which you have invested so much time and psychic energy.□

Mid-Life Crisis
to 'hide' such characters, especially when they tend to have their own special chairs and cups in the senior coffee lounge!

Such individuals cannot all become quality inspectors or become rooms supremos. And yet if they are 'culled' with the efficiency of a Japanese whaler, the social and academic fabric of many institutions is likely to crumble. Such individuals possess the accumulated knowledge and wisdom, know 'where the bodies are hidden' and can represent a valuable asset, balancing the more naked aggression of younger colleagues who have yet to survive one hundred and forty examination board meetings.

Perhaps a sensitive policy mixture of redeployment, staff development and early retirement represents the best way forward. Colleges which fail to utilise this collective wisdom are likely to create a hostile culture, with staff generally becoming more resistant to change and new ideas. In such an atmosphere, initiatives and innovations are likely to fall on the deaf ears of an academic community. Motivation is a difficult area where even for younger colleagues, promotion opportunities are limited, and where many senior colleagues are more concerned with survival than progression.

Good will is a most intangible factor, but without it little is likely ever to be achieved.□

BOOKS

'NICE' WORK?
War of Words:
women and men arguing
*Elizabeth Mapstone*
Vintage (1999) £7.99
ISBN 0 09 976361 3

Reading this book took me a long time - I had to keep putting it down to allow my blood to cool from boiling point. Particularly, the section on *'Playing the Gender Game at Work'* illustrates much familiar experience.

Our editor set out to show *'women and men argue as equals',* but she found that they don't. Her research (over 12 years) revealed *'that gender stereotypes permit men to discount women's disagreement and argument in all relationships'.* A range of well established theories from psychology and elsewhere explain how *'the assumptions people bring into the workplace reflect their acculturation into their share of the Division of Labour'.* Men's task is to deal with the external world, fighting public battles (and carrying off the booty), women's to nurture the well-being of the in-group, being nice. Argument is therefore men's work. Women who are inclined to thrust and parry are easily dismissed as aggressive bitches - or we can remain soft and girly by reframing argument as 'discussing differences'.

How does this affect academic work, and particularly teaching? Academic women can feel pressured (by themselves as well as their colleagues, the institution, the system) to take on pastoral work in their departments, while watching male colleagues carry off the glittering prizes. Though there are only a few direct references to
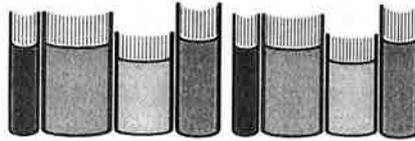
teaching in the book, the many illustrations of how men and women 'do' power in a variety of workplaces might make some think hard about how they respond to this pressure.

It might also help both men and women to understand how their behaviours as teachers may affect both male and female students. What happens to women students in an educational system where challenge and argument are highly valued? We still expect much learning to take place among groups of people talking to each other. How much do we know about what is really going on within these groups? Teachers and trainers know that it feels different working with groups of our own sex, of the other, of a mixture, but don't always have the time or the inclination to analyse this.

The book bears its erudition lightly; it is witty and highly readable. The author makes a clear case for the obsolescence of the division of labour, but offers no blueprints for improvement beyond the observation that we can only move on from here by *'listening to each other as people, not as representatives of the opposite sex'.* Really good teachers, of course, have always managed this.

I did enjoy reading the book, even if its findings are deeply depressing..... So this weekend I've shouted at my mother, my gentleman friend, the neighbours, the cat....

Lesley MacDonald
University of Durham

GROOMING AND NETWORKING
Diversity in Higher Education, Vol. 1: Mentoring & diversity in higher education
Edited by Henry T. Frierson Jr
Jai Press Inc (1997)
ISBN: 0-7623-0086-8 hardback

This edited collection of twelve papers is concerned with the role of mentoring for students and staff in HE, specifically with the issue of mentoring in relation to both the growing diversity amongst the staff and student bodies and in order to promote such diversity. The first section of the text contains two papers, by Charles C. Healy and Morris Zelditch Jr respectively, concerned with the concept of mentoring. The literature shows that there is no one clear definition of mentoring; however, a common understanding of mentoring used by contributors to this collection is that of 'grooming', which emphasises the following features: a one-to-one relationship; a hierarchical relationship where the mentor has power over the protégé; benefits flow one-way from mentor to protégé (Marilyn Haring).

However Healy in his opening paper offers an alternative, more encompassing definition: *'[W]e consider mentoring to be a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both' (p. 19).* Zelditch in his paper details the many and varied roles that a mentor can play in the 'career' of a postgraduate student.

The papers in the second section are concerned with the various approaches

and models of mentoring which focus on currently under-represented groups, in particular 'people of color', in HE in the USA. It is worth noting that each contributor usefully outlines their particular working definition of mentoring, before illustrating which approach they have adopted at their institution and how successful it has, or has not, been. Of particular interest is the paper by Marilyn J Haring which is concerned with 'networking' as an alternative to the 'grooming' model of mentoring. She clearly demonstrates how the latter approach is built on a series of misconceptions of which the most significant and dangerous is the assumption that a potential protégé will share a common background in terms of 'race'/ethnicity, gender, social class, ability and so on. The grooming model is also characterised by an emphasis upon hierarchy and a power imbalance in favour of the mentor.

Haring also warns of the danger (which is not often discussed in the wider literature on mentoring) whereby 'mentors from the majority culture will unconsciously (or consciously!) mentor underrepresented students towards assimilation into the majority culture' (p. 67). The networking approach to mentoring adopts a more egalitarian approach whereby the complex situation and needs of under-represented students are recognised and dealt with.

The third and final section of the collection addresses the potential detrimental effects which can arise for students from under-represented or on-traditional backgrounds within a mentoring relationship. Reginald Wilton describes the phenomenon of 'negative mentoring' which can occur for students 'of color' and the ways in which it can impact upon their level of achievement, their self-concept and their aspirations. The final chapter by Theresa McCormick addresses the five pitfalls of mentoring which can befall students 'of color' and others who are on the margins of academic environments. All of the pitfalls are significant, but in light of the Macpherson report (1999) on the murder of Stephen Lawrence it is worth repeating here the third pitfall outlined '"Traditional" mentoring promotes and maintains the status quo by socialising protégés into the "rules of the game" and many of the "rules" one must learn in order to be in the "inner circle" are discriminatory against women and minorities' (McCormick, p.191).

Both of these authors offer ways in which the negative effects of mentoring for non-traditional students might be ameliorated.

The US focus of the entire text means that it is not useful as a direct resource for those interested in setting up a mentoring programme or those seeking to refine their programmes in the UK. However I would recommend this collection as an essential reference text as it highlights some of the structural barriers which exist when seeking to promote diversity amongst students and staff and when dealing with a diverse student and teaching body. It acts as a useful counterbalance to the many texts on mentoring which fail to address adequately the problematic nature of the 'grooming model' and are not cognisant of the potential difficulties which can arise where the mentor and protégé are not matched. (Of course, 'matching' in a simplistic manner does not necessarily guarantee successful mentoring relationships; it is one factor, albeit an important one, amongst many.)

The importance of these concerns cannot be underestimated as the student and staff bodies, in both the UK and the USA, incorporate more people from non-traditional backgrounds. Consequently this text is useful in beginning to attend 'to creat[ing] a new consciousness in the academic borderlands - one that heals, one that connects diverse cultures, languages, realities, and ways of knowing'.

Mehreen Mirza
University of Central Lancashire

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HOW TO DO IT ALL...
Managing the pressures in teaching: practical ideas for tutors and their students
Stephen Cox and Ruth Heames
Falmer Press. London (1999)
ISBN 0 7507 0836 0 hardback
ISBN 0 7507 0835 2 paperback

The authors of this book begin by pointing out the multi-dimensional roles tutors play, which include that of assessor, counsellor, researcher, administrator, manager, consultant, scholar, curriculum developer. Today's academic is truly an all-singing, all-dancing person. The expressed aim of the book is to 'encourage you to take time out from that "I'm too busy" syndrome and consider your role as a tutor and how you manage that role on a daily basis' (p.1), to enable both you and your students to manage the learning process more effectively. This sounded attractive, although a small voice somewhere said 'Can any one

person really manage all these roles effectively - can we 'do everything' well?'

The book is presented in helpful sections which have photocopiable materials for activities with students and practical examples of handouts. The section on *Helping Students to Reduce their levels of Stress in the Classroom* has very clear materials to use on building teams, setting the learning agenda and developing students' awareness of their own learning methods and styles. The section *Teaching Techniques* that can reduce the pressures on tutors and students focuses on managing the assessment load, introducing peer assessment, facilitating peer feedback and academic feedback on assignments.

Most of us will have used some or all of these techniques in our role as tutors but it is useful to have a book with all the approaches published together. The materials are well presented, and cross-referenced . This provides an excellent practical handbook for academic staff, both new more experienced , who want to streamline some of their practices. I shall be using it myself for this purpose.

However, although some reference is made to getting help from an Academic Development unit or similar in the section Institutional support for tutors I felt this was the weakest section in the book. Good academic support, including the provision of accredited training, can help new and established tutors to manage and develop their roles. All large professions offer continuing professional development opportunities and a book of this kind would provide an excellent supplement to an accredited CPD training scheme.

Irene Selway
University of Portsmouth

INNOVATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

Innovations in Psychology Teaching

Edited by John Radford,
Darren Van Laar and David Rose
SEDA Paper 104 (1998) £ 14.00
ISBN 1-902435-01-X

The aim behind this series of SEDA Papers is to inform teaching practice in diverse settings , and in Paper 104 e ighteen case studies of current innovations in psychology teaching are presented. Authors describe the context of their teaching and their responses to difficulties encountered; each innovation is evaluated in terms of its success and shortcomings. It is refreshing that contributors are open and honest that no innovation is a panacea.

Some case studies address questions all practitioners are likely to ask themselves at some point to improve their regular teaching style, e.g., What handout format would be most effective? What is the most effective way to use student presentations? Could learning journals support students' reflectivity? How to guide students in reading, self-assessment and revision? How to organise students' work in 'real' settings like companies and businesses? The fact that such questions are faced 'head on' and addressed in a very practical way makes for stimulating and helpful reading.

A number of innovations incorporate multimedia and IT for teaching and learning purposes. In order to develop students' IT skills one contributor created a web site to provide a wide range of links and another made case studies available on-line. The tools needed to produce one's own video resource are discussed.

Running a module completely based on e-mail without any face-to-face contact with students is an option to cope with ever increasing numbers of students.

Innovation can mean challenging the traditional ways of teaching the discipline. Rather than lecturing on the subject, students were given the opportunity to learn directly about counselling through peer counselling. In a bid to make psychology more relevant, a group of students were encouraged to choose their own example from daily life for psychological analysis. In another course students were empowered to write their own psychology textbook for fellow students. I was particularly intrigued by the idea of teach ing introductory courses not through the delivery of a polished narrative of the developments in the discipline, but rather by using key research studies, opting for depth rather than breadth, to encourage deep rather than surface learning.

The book is full of good ideas for psychologists – and as it is so subject-specific, it should be easy to transfer at least some innovation to one's own practice.

Franziska Vogt
Edge Hill College of H E

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SKILLING SCIENCE STUDENTS

Innovations in Science Teaching 2

Edited by Ivan Moore and Kate Exley
SEDA paper 107 (1999) £14.00
ISBN 1-902435-04-4

Innovations in Science Teaching 2 reflects recent advances in the uses of IT within science teaching. Each of the 27

case studies is structured to illustrate skills developed, learning strategies employed, problems analysed and outcomes achieved. This style helps the reader to understand the rationale and usefulness of the projects. Of particular interest are the detailed evaluation methods employed in some of the case studies; these together with student/staff feedback will help readers transfer such applications into their own teaching.

The collection of papers is divided into subject-specific sections including environmental sciences, biology, chemistry, physics, human science and science education. Each case study reflects the trend towards student centred learning (SCL) either by improving the learning environment for the student, or by implementing CAL into science-based activities. One key theme is the use of teaching resources to optimise the transfer of learning skills. This is of great interest to new lecturers wanting to widen student attribute skills within their courses, and also more established lecturers interested in stimulating student awareness of practical IT-based applications used in industrial contexts.

Case studies 7 (student self-assessment of records of practical work in biology) and 24 (reflection on final year students teaching each other) give invaluable insights into how students perceive the shift from traditional lecturing styles to SCL approaches. These examples show that students can and will respond positively to such initiatives so long as they are well directed. They experience learning actively and are encouraged to develop new skills and reshape existing ones, developing independence of work, time and resource management, information retrieval and the ability to work well within a team based environment.

One message that emerges is that far from being an easy way round teaching (as it may be viewed by some sceptical colleagues), the adoption of SCL and CAL in the teaching environment requires more resources, greater time management and greater staff effort, but is worthwhile in terms of the progression of student learning.

The book usefully illustrates possible ways of improving science teaching. It is worth reading to gain an insight into the direction students believe education and learning are going, and practical ideas on how to facilitate independent learning on both group and individual levels.

Charles Brennan
University of Plymouth

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INSPIRING THE INEXPERIENCED
500 Tips for Further and Continuing Education Lecturers
David Anderson, Sally Brown and Phil Race
Kogan Page(1997) £15.99 pb
ISBN 0-7494-2411-7

If 'common sense' were not a rare commodity, there would be no readership for this book. It organises, codifies and summarises a wealth of experience and wisdom. The ethos guiding the book is pragmatism, and it promotes clarity of purpose for lecturers together with participation for students. The tips are organised into seven chapters, two on the curriculum dealing with planning and delivery of teaching, and one each on: flexible learning, assessment strategies, supporting diverse students, managing your professional life and administrative responsibilities. Each chapter has five to ten sub-sections, each sub-section has 10 to 15 'tips'.

The teaching philosophy behind the tips aims above all at effective teaching, with some attention to the efficient use of lecturers' time. It stresses negotiation around parts of the curriculum and active involvement of students in the learning process. There is a strong emphasis on evaluating the learning experience, with ideas on generating evidence through assessment.

The tone of the book is compassionate, and ishows concern for lecturers' welfare in a changing environment. The longest chapter is on managing one's professional life, including *'Dealing well with stress'* and *'Coping with mergers'*. I particularly liked the sub-chapter in *'Supporting diverse students'* , which in addition to the predictable recommendations about cultural sensitivity has the (to me) revelatory suggestion *'Make arrangements to celebrate success'*.

I approached this book as an inexperienced lecturer, and found that the jargon took some perseverance, but I expect that *'key skills'*, *'validation processes'* and *'learning agreements'* would be familiar with most readers. I agree with the publisher's assertion that this book will be a resource for trainee and newly qualified lecturers as well as for experienced lecturers and staff developers. Perhaps its greatest strength is that it simplifies issues which may seem overwhelmingly complex and even threatening. Its format means that one can dip into it for instruction, inspiration and even affirmation.

Justine Schneider
University of Durham

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