

# The Annual Report of the Staff and Educational Development Association



January to December 2005

The Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) is the professional association committed to improving all aspects of learning, teaching and training in higher education through staff and educational development. SEDA is committed to enabling staff, institutions and the sector to meet the fast changing demands of the external environment for the benefit of student learning. In 2005, SEDA demonstrated strengths in a number of key areas.

## SEDA's strengths

- **Commitment of the membership**

SEDA members, SEDA Fellowship holders, and holders of all SEDA awards are a community that shares the same values, being committed to:

- ▶ An understanding of how people learn
- ▶ Scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice
- ▶ Working in and developing learning communities
- ▶ Working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity
- ▶ Continuing reflection on professional practice
- ▶ Developing people and processes

SEDA has 86 institutional members across the full range of Higher Education institutions – the specialist institutions, the colleges, and the pre and post 1992 universities – as well as some of the Further Education colleges in which Higher Education is delivered.

SEDA's 118 individual members range from staff who are new to the sector to experienced and expert staff and educational developers with international reputations. The common factor is their commitment and passion to improving student learning and the student experience by developing and disseminating effective and innovative practice. *'SEDA will help all its members, whether staff and educational developers, teachers or learning staff, to enhance the quality of their capabilities in supporting learning'* (SEDA's Core Mission)

- **Independence**

SEDA's long standing independence as an organisation is a principal strength. SEDA is funded by the voluntary subscriptions of institutional and individual members and by its range of activities which include its Fellowship scheme, Professional Development Framework, conferences, events and publications.

SEDA's independence has proved invaluable in responding to national consultations on developments within the Higher Education sector.

*'SEDA will seek to influence the national debate on matters within its remit'* (SEDA's Core Mission)

- **Collaboration**

SEDA's independence enables it actively to collaborate from a position of strength with other organisations. In 2005, SEDA engaged in discussions with the Higher Education Academy, the Standing Conference on Academic Practice, the Staff Development Forum, the Heads of Educational Development Group and the Leadership Foundation. It arranged joint events and a publication with the Enhancing Student Employability Skills Co-ordination Team (ESECT).

*'SEDA will develop and sustain links with other organisations committed to enhancing the quality of learning in higher education'* (SEDA's Core Mission)

- **Internationalism**

SEDA is the UK representative member of the International Consortium of Educational Development whose purpose is to promote educational and academic development in higher education world-wide. In April 2005 the Co-Chair of SEDA presented a paper to the Council meeting in Croatia on the development of professional standards for teaching in Higher Education. SEDA has benefited from the international perspective of Professor Nicky-Sinéad Gardner who has been a member of the SEDA Advisory Group for the past four years. SEDA is represented on the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Academic Development (ICED's refereed journal). SEDA's own journal, Innovations in Education and Teaching International, has in the past year included international articles on problem-based learning and changes in postgraduate supervision. Institutions in Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia are currently working towards recognition of Professional Development Framework programmes.

- **Communication**

SEDA is committed to communicating and promoting communication among individuals and across the sector. Educational Developments is SEDA's magazine, published four times a year. It carries news and comment, book reviews and guides to materials on the internet. It prints articles of immediate and topical importance to SEDA members and is one of the main vehicles for the dissemination of new developments in practice. Articles are written in the style which most suits their content – from light, humorous or provocative pieces to fully-referenced and substantial accounts. Not only does it keep SEDA members informed, but distributing it is an ideal way of supporting the network of leaders in teaching and learning within an institution.

The SEDA JISC list is becoming an important means of contributing to capacity building by promoting interaction, sharing ideas and involving the wider community in discussions about consultations. The SEDA JISC list is at: <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/SEDA.html>

- **Thinking ahead and responding**

SEDA's combination of thinking ahead and responsiveness is illustrated by the work of all its committees. The SEDA Papers Committee, for example, states, '*The seven titles published this year result from the attention members have paid to the voices of the FE and HE sector.... The two best sellers this year were concerned with Personal Development Planning and Reflective Practice. The proactivity associated with the production of SEDA Specials reflects our commitment to collaboration with colleagues and sharing expertise and excellence via publications grounded in practice that is proven to make a difference. Feedback indicates great satisfaction with the usefulness of the publications released in 2004-05.*'

- **Researching our practice**

SEDA is committed to promoting evidence-based practice as illustrated by recent conferences and the work of the research committee. SEDA Awards are granted annually to support the costs of development-related activity which examines how we ensure that our practice as staff and educational developers is underpinned by good educational research and principles, that we appropriately evaluate and reflect on the impact of what we do, and that we review our practice in the light of the evidence we generate.

- **Value for Money**

As SEDA's members are practitioners with a real understanding of the position and the budget of the educational development agency within an HEI, it has created a range of services which strengthen and support that function. The institutional subscription brings a range of services, materials and networks. It also guarantees the long-term presence of the one association which promotes the professional standing of staff and educational development work.

SEDA's range of services has been designed to enable the educational development unit in turn to strengthen its links with its growing internal network of colleagues who are taking on educational development responsibilities – perhaps Learning and Teaching Fellows, or directors of educational projects, or Departmental Learning and Teaching coordinators, or Library and IT staff who support student learning.

- **Activity**

SEDA's activities are clustered around five areas, each designed to support the professionalism of its members and others in Higher Education:

Professional Development  
Conferences and Events  
Publications

Research  
Services to members

SEDA Committees are responsible for promoting each aspect of this work. Volunteer colleagues from many different backgrounds and with widely varying experience give their time and expertise to support the association. Many see their engagement as one of the

most rewarding forms of personal and professional development they can experience. Where SEDA has been successful, it is from the strength and creativity of its committees.

Extracts from the committee reports are presented below: SEDA Professional Development Framework (PDF), SEDA Fellowships, IETI, Papers, Research, Conferences. They illustrate the ways in which committee activities are aligned to build capacity for change among individuals, institutions and the sector.

‘The SEDA-PDF has established an approach which enables institutions to gain recognition of their arrangements for professional development. It also helps them to describe and move towards their own standards for professional development. The framework has proved to be popular and feedback confirms that the recognition process is formative, supportive and developmental.’

The number of named awards has increased to 15:

Action Research	Leading and Developing Academic Practice
Developing Leaders	Leading Staff and Educational Development
Developing Professional Practice	Learning, Teaching and Assessing Staff and Educational Development
Embedding Learning Technologies	Student Support and Guidance
Enhancing Academic Practice in Disciplines	Supervising Postgraduate Research
Enhancing Research Practice	Supporting Learning
eXploring Learning Technologies	
External Examining	

The strengths of the SEDA-PDF approach come from: SEDA’s independence as an organisation whose activities are driven by institutional and individual members within HE: SEDA’s developmental approach to recognitions which enables institutions to gain access to support and advice from across higher education at an early stage in their planning.

*PDF Committee*

‘The SEDA Fellowships offer respected professional accreditation for staff and educational developers working in higher education. Fellowships are awarded on an individual basis. There were 38 Fellows by the end of 2005.

The Summer School for new educational developers was held in Leamington Spa in June, and though the number of places available was increased from the previous year to 35, it was again over subscribed. The event was seen to be very valuable, and the number of applicants and the extent of the interest expressed has resulted in the Fellowships and PDF Committees are developing two named awards to provide support to educational developers and to facilitate achieving the Associate Fellowship

*Fellowships Committee*

This has been another good year for IETI with a number of international contributors, maintenance of its position in the social science research citation index, and a special edition on e and blended learning in relation to communities of practice, produced by the ULTRALAB team.

The numbers of pages in each edition have been slightly increased after discussion with Taylor and Francis, which enables the production of a fuller journal each time, and advice has been taken from the team of editors at HERDSA to restrict essays to 5,000 words, which results in a slicker and more focused journal. There has been greater editorial emphasis on clarity of English and on continuing to nurture new authors as well as accept work by those who are well established in the field.

*IETI Committee*

The Research Committee has led explorations into the changing nature of educational development, where it is located within institutions and how to make it as effective as possible with its series of conference presentation and events. The Reading Group has continued to meet formally at conferences, and the award scheme continues with small grant holders bringing papers reporting on their research projects to SEDA conferences.

*Research Committee*

It was an excellent year for publications, which saw the publication of high profile and exiting texts:

In the SEDA Series (with RoutledgeFalmer):

*Teaching International Students: improving learning for all*, edited by Jude Carroll and Janette Ryan, published 2005

*Quality Issues in ICT-based Higher Education*, edited by Rakesh Bhanot and Stephen Fallows, published 2005

*Changing Higher Education: the development of learning and teaching*, edited by Paul Ashwin, published in 2005

For the PDF Committee:

*SEDA Professional Development Framework guide*: a 24-page document outlining the SEDA Professional Development Framework

SEDA Specials:

No. 18: *Employability: a rationale and examples of practice*, edited by Mantz Yorke, Ruth Pilkington and Kristine Mason O'Connor

SEDA Papers:

No. 117: *Assessing Group Practice* by Cordelia Bryan

No. 118: *Peer Observation of Teaching* by David Gosling

*Publications Committee*

Conferences and events reported on two successful conferences, and a number of national one day events:

*Inspiring Learning: Diversity and Excellence* May 2005, Belfast (run jointly with AISHE)

*Professional Standards and Continuing Professional Development: Constraining or Empowering?* November 2005, Birmingham

*SEDA Professional Development Framework Briefing and Development Events* February 2005 Liverpool, May 2005 London, October 2005 Birmingham.

*Reviews of the impact of staff and educational development: a means to improve the scholarly basis for our practice*, joint seminar with the Higher Education Academy April 2005, Sheffield

*Support Days for Educational Developers working towards SEDA Fellowship* May 2005 Manchester, September 2005 London

*Pre-conference Workshop on Publication*, November 2005, Birmingham.

*Conference Committee*

### **Jill Brookes Administration**

SEDA owes an incalculable debt to Jill Brookes and her team who provided loyal, efficient and good humoured administrative support for over twenty years to SEDA and its predecessor. In 2004 Jill informed SEDA Executive that she would be closing Jill Brookes Administration in July 2005. In consequence the Executive published a tender for its administrative services and in February 2005 the tender was awarded to the Association of Commonwealth Universities, London. The handover went very smoothly, which was a testament both to the professionalism of Jill and her staff, and to the skills of Roz Grimmitt and the team at the ACU which took over the responsibility.

### **SEDA Executive 2004-05**

Dr Stephen Bostock FSEDA  
Professor Tony Brand  
Jill Brookes  
Professor Sally Brown FSEDA  
Dr Helen King AFSEDA  
Professor Barry Jackson

Dr Ray Land FSEDA  
Mike Laycock  
Professor Ranald Macdonald FSEDA  
Dr Kristine Mason O'Connor  
Dr John Peters  
Liz Shrives

John Sweet FSEDA  
Dr Jo Tait  
Maurice Teasdale

Dr Shân Wareing FSEDA  
Professor James Wisdom  
Professor Gina Wisker FSEDA

### **SEDA Advisory Group 2004-05**

Professor Liz Beaty FSEDA, HEFCE  
Professor Philip C Candy, NHSU  
Dr Paul Clark, The Open University  
Victoria Eaton, Higher Education Academy  
Dr Liz Elvidge, University of Cambridge  
Professor Caroline Gipps, Kingston  
University  
Professor Nicky-Sinéad Gardner,  
Independent Consultant  
Mike Laycock, University of East London

William Locke, Universities UK  
Dr Kristine Mason O'Connor, University of  
Gloucestershire  
Professor Bob Thackwray, Leadership  
Foundation  
Professor James Wisdom, Independent  
Consultant  
Professor Mantz Yorke, Liverpool John  
Moores University

### **Concluding comment**

This annual report illustrates the ways in which SEDA has contributed to capacity building in the past year for individuals, institutions and the sector. It is imperative that SEDA also further develops and maintains its own capacity and mission as an organisation. As well as sustaining its current membership SEDA needs to expand membership of individuals and institutions. This important subject will be a focus of SEDA strategic planning in the forthcoming year.

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