Educational Developments – The First Five Years

15 key texts in staff & educational development

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Editors

SEDA Paper 122

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Introduction

SEDA published the first issue of Educational Developments in January 2000. The Institute of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education had been launched in the summer of 1999. SEDA's earlier magazine, The New Academic, had been aimed both at SEDA's members (the educational developers) and at the large number of teachers who were enthusiastic about improving their practice. This second group were the natural constituency of the new ILTHE, so SEDA was happy to shift its focus more specifically on the development of its own members as professional staff and educational developers. This was the brief for the new magazine.

Although much has changed, SEDA's mission is still to support the (much larger) group of developers, and what is now an even larger group of colleagues who do not see themselves as primarily professional developers but who are doing development work.

As part of that mission, SEDA has launched the "Supporting Educational Change" award, the outcome of which entitles a successful participant to eligibility for SEDA's Associate Fellowship. This award is designed for colleagues who are working on educational change in its widest sense and who recognise the importance of learning and working with the members of SEDA. Through a choice of on-line or residential courses, participants can engage with tutors, mentors and each other to enable them to shape their own professional growth, and evidence that growth in their portfolio.

In the first five years of Educational Developments the magazine carried around 157 substantial articles and we, as the editors of this compendium, would have found it almost impossible to select the 15 "best" from such a rich collection. And that is not SEDA's way – we give thanks for all good work given freely. We try to avoid the sort of divisive assessment which hampers so many students!

Rather, the principle of selection for this compendium has been to help newcomers to this world of staff and educational development to see some of the main themes which have helped shape the world we are in today. We hope this compendium will be especially helpful to participants on SEDA's "Supporting Educational Change" award. In the articles, the reader will see the interplay of some of our main concerns: how to improve what we do, how to research and evaluate, and how to best serve our colleagues and our institutions. These are educational developers negotiating structures, funding, pressures, language, attitudes and assumptions, deploying ingenuity and optimism and focussing - through the complexities of higher education institutions - on the improvement of the students' experiences of studying and learning.

The articles, as presented here, are substantially as they were published in the magazine – occasionally an old acronym has been expanded. Although the Learning and Teaching Subject Network, the Generic Centre, parts of HESDA, the National Coordination Team and the ILTHE merged to form the Higher Education Academy, the earlier language and acronyms are so widespread that we have elected to keep them as they were. In a few cases, out-of-date URLs have been removed. We chose to keep the author's job titles as they were at the time of publication, as in part they reveal some of the developments and instabilities of the years from 2000 to the end of 2004. A further 24 articles from these years are available from the SEDA or the Higher Education Academy web site.

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On-line articles from Educational Developments

**These are available from the SEDA web site www.seda.ac.uk
or from the Higher Education Academy web site www.heacademy.ac.uk**

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1.1	A Review Of Virtual Learning Environments	Stephen Bostock FSEDA, Department of Computer Science, Keele University
1.2	A Review Of Online Resources For Computer-Assisted Assessment	Colleen McKenna and Ian Hesketh CAA Centre, University of Luton
1.3	A Review Of Web Resources On Using Presentation Software	Manuella Essaka, UMIST
1.4	A Review Of Online Resources To Support Evaluation	Martin Oliver, Higher Education Research and Development Unit, University College London, Jen Harvey, Learning and Teaching Centre, Dublin Institute of Technology & Grainne Conole, Institute for Learning and Research Technology, Bristol University
	A Review Of Web Resources For Online Tutors	Rhona Sharpe FSEDA, Institute of Educational Technology, The Open University
	Finding Information On Educational Research – The World Wide Web: Chaos, Hindrance And Help?	Graham Alsop, School of Computing and Information Systems, Kingston University
2.2	Online Resources To Help Students Evaluate Online Resources	Stephen Bostock FSEDA, Department of Computer Science, Keele University
2.3	Plagiarism: Online Tools To Relieve The Tedium Of Detection	Graham Alsop and Chris Tompsett School of Computing and Information Systems, Kingston University
2.4	Web Resources For Problem Based Learning	Tina Overton, Director, LTSN Physical Sciences, University of Hull
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	Principles To Support The Enhancement Of Teaching And Student Learning: Implications For Staff And Educational Developers.	Norman Jackson, LTSN Generic Centre and University of Surrey
	The Resource Discovery Network	Stephen Bostock FSEDA, Academic Staff Developer, Department of Academic Affairs, Keele University
3.2	How Educational Development/Learning And Teaching Centres Help Higher Education Institutions Manage Change	David Gosling, Co-Director of the TQEF National Co-ordination Team, and Vaneeta D'Andrea, Director of the Educational Development Centre, City University.
	Web-Based Staff Development	Amy Pearson, Education Development Unit, University of Salford
3.3	Partnerships For Progression: Evolution Or Transformation?	Peter Scott, Vice-Chancellor of Kingston University and Chair of the HEFCE / LSC National Steering Group for Partnerships for Progression.
	Designing Web Sites That Are Accessible To All	Stephen Bostock FSEDA, Advisor for Technology and Learning, Keele University

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4.2	Nurturing Creativity	Norman Jackson, LTSN Generic Centre and University of Surrey[1]
	Supporting Students With Disabilities In Higher Education - A Review Of Web Resources	Amy Pearson, Education Development Unit, University of Salford University of Salford
5.2	53 Interesting Ways In Which Colleagues Resist Change	Steve Outram, De Montfort University[2]
5.3	Online Resources On Plagiarism Deterrence And Detection	Stephen Bostock, FSEDA, Keele University
5.4	53 Ways Of Managing Resistance To Change	Steve Outram, Higher Education Academy[3]

[1] An early draft of this article is at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id157_guide_for_busy_academics_nurturing_creativity

[2] www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id554_complex_change_in_heis_paper6

[3] www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id555_complex_change_in_heis_paper7

1 Learning and Teaching Strategies: the implications for educational development

Graham Gibbs, Centre for Higher Education Practice, Open University

Introduction

The HEFCE Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy initiative will provide institutions in England with funding totalling about £50m, over three years, to support the implementation of a more strategic approach to the improvement of teaching and its effectiveness. Institutions will be required, from 2001, to report on the achievement of explicit learning and teaching targets, as part of annual operating plans. This will move educational development to the centre of institutional planning, management and evaluation, and will have a dramatic impact on the role and functioning of educational development staff and their centres. Some institutions in other parts of the UK, and all institutions in Australia, are also developing Learning and Teaching Strategies, but without external funding. This article outlines what impact the development of institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies might have on educational development, and the challenges and opportunities this may entail over the next five years.

The HEFCE Learning and Teaching Strategies initiative

Before the 1990's most educational development in the UK focussed on individual teachers and individual modules. Activity was largely responsive, or driven by the interests and personal style of educational developers, rather than strategic, partly because most institutions had no strategic goals for their teaching. The overall quality of educational provision was often seen as the sum total of the quality of individual teachers. Educational development was largely peripheral to institutional planning and management, even where it was active and valued.

By the early 1990 it had become clear that the pressures brought about by the massification of higher education, and by its reorientation towards the employability of students, were beyond the ability of individual teachers to respond to. It was also clear that little progress was going to be made in shifting to more resource based, independent or flexible learning, with or without the exploitation of IT, unless institutions paid attention to their infrastructure, funding and accountancy systems, rewards systems, use of learning space, and so on. The MacFarland Report (CSUP, 1992) recommended that institutions should develop comprehensive learning and teaching strategies to deal with such issues. The Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) focussed attention on the goals and success of entire degree programmes and on the infrastructure that supported, or failed to support, the quality of teaching. A small number of institutions,

often those facing the largest scale challenges, started developing institutional strategies. The Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) was emphatic about the immediate need for Learning and Teaching Strategies in all institutions. A commissioned report to the HEFCE on improving teaching argued that both institutional learning, and teaching strategies and discipline-specific networks concerned with teaching, were necessary if either project-based initiatives (such as the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme) or institutional initiatives (such as Enterprise in Higher Education) were ever to lead to wide scale embedded change (Gibbs, 1997). By 1998 the HEFCE wanted to develop an initiative around the implementation of strategies but was not confident that there was enough good practice in the sector to build on. A research study was commissioned to find out if higher education was ready for such an initiative (Gibbs, 1999). It showed that at the start of 1999 nearly 50% of institutions had a strategy and submitted documentation. However while a small number of institutions had well developed strategies that they had worked with for some years, most documentation omitted much of what a strategy would eventually need to contain. For example there were many policies in place but few mechanisms to implement policies, monitor the extent of their implementation or evaluate their impact. Few strategies had a coherent rationale, were linked to institutional missions, or were an integral part of institutional planning and management. While educational development activities, such as programmes for new lecturers, were often mentioned, educational development was rarely described as having a strategic role. Most of the other 50% of institutions reported that they were in the process of developing such a strategy. Only three institutions reported that they had no intention of developing a strategy, and all three have since changed their minds. The sector was ready, but in need of support.

In May 1999 the HEFCE announced the £90m 'Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund', much the largest component of which was financial and practical support for institutions to develop and implement institutional learning and teaching strategies (HEFCE, 1999). The funding is an entitlement (i.e. not competitive): all institutions that submit a strategy in January 2000, and an accompanying plan specifying what additional activities they will undertake with their funding, and accompanying measurable targets, will receive their funding allocation, based on student numbers. Institutions that would like to spend longer developing a strategy may submit outline plans for an 'emerging strategy' but are still entitled to full funding. The funding is for three years in the first instance. What happens after

that will depend on how successful the initiative is in moving institutions forwards. Details of the initiative and all HEFCE publications can be found at www.hefce.ac.uk.

The HEFCE commissioned the Centre for Higher Education Practice at the Open University to produce a guide to good practice, based on institutions' existing documentation and on case studies from visits, explaining what a Learning and Teaching Strategy might look like and how it might develop over time (HEFCE, 1999b). This has been sent to all institutions and, subsequently, reprinted twice to meet demand from institutions to support internal seminars and meetings. Five regional seminars for Pro Vice Chancellors and heads of educational development units have been mounted (attended by 265 staff from 141 institutions) to explain the initiative and to discuss the most appropriate form of Learning and Teaching Strategies in different kinds of institutions. A www site has been mounted to share documentation and practices associated with Learning and Teaching Strategies.

As educational developers are asked to work with their PVCs (Teaching and Learning) to develop and implement an institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy they may face a number of challenges.

Providing a coherent educational rationale for the strategy

The best Learning and Teaching Strategies start with a clear educational rationale. In the USA this may be based on the 'Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education' and in Australia it might be based on the student learning research which underpins the use of the Course Experience Questionnaire which is used for quality assurance in all Australian institutions. At present most Learning and Teaching Strategies from English institutions lack such any such rationale, and PVCs are not often in a good position to write one. It is already falling on educational development staff to invent such a rationale – and it is not easy!

Analysing the context and providing convincing rationales for action

Learning and Teaching Strategies need to undertake an 'environmental scan' and analyse the challenges and changes the institution faces which will have implications for teaching and learning. If this analysis is not well argued it can be difficult to convince staff to take the strategy seriously. Judging from the often unconvincing pre-ambles in documentation, the weak diagnosis of problems, and sometimes the complete lack of a case for needing any kind of strategy, senior management may need help with this analysis.

Providing evidence or a conceptual argument behind choice of tactics

The MacFarland Report (ibid) analysis of what is changing in higher education seemed impressive at the time and still stands up today, but the case which it then went on to make for the use of IT to achieve improved cost-effectiveness, and to solve all other known problems, appears even more deeply flawed today than it did then. Even where there is an impressive analysis of the context there may be a weak case for proposed teaching tactics to address the problems. Educational developers have a role in helping to select the most appropriate tactics to achieve particular strategic ends.

Concentrating on strategy rather than on tactics

Educational developers are used to dealing in tactics, especially at the level of classroom practice. They are less used to thinking strategically and matching institution-wide initiatives to the achievement of institutional goals. They may be used to helping teachers to implement policy but they may be less used to developing policy and devising mechanisms for implementing it. They may have superb interpersonal skills and training skills but little organisational development expertise.

Being proactive

Leading new initiatives may seem like a great idea, even if we don't have much experience of doing it, but this may well involve stopping doing some of what we are used to doing – such as being responsive to requests. Being strategic may involve saying no to requests for assistance with some kinds of innovations or use of tactics, or saying no to a lecturer from a department which has prioritised changes other than the ones the lecturer is interested in. It may involve rationing help and effort in line with institutional priorities rather than following ones nose or the noses of our most frequent and valued clients.

Operationalising goals and setting targets

Educational development has seldom had to evaluate its impact in quantitative ways or to think about operationalising its goals or setting measurable targets. It has been content to account for *inputs* (how many workshops run on putting a teaching portfolio together) rather than *outputs* (how many people submitted teaching portfolios as part of cases for promotion) let alone *outcomes* (has the culture changed so that teaching is valued to a greater extent?). We have a lot to learn about how to specify the outcomes of our efforts in useful and convincing ways, and how to measure the achievement of these outcomes.

Becoming involved in monitoring and evaluation of the strategy

Educational developers are used to helping teachers to evaluate their teaching or their courses. They may even have got involved in evaluating departments or curricula, especially if they have been directly involved in TQA. But few have been involved in institutional evaluation. American institutions often have an 'office of institutional research' or some such function which is capable of answering the questions prompted by recently published performance indicators for England, such as: "Why is student retention worse here than elsewhere?" However in America these offices are usually separate from faculty development centres which do not have the capacity to address such questions. When I was at Oxford Brookes University every time there was a question like this someone had to find a small pot of money and put it out to tender as a research project (and the Psychologists usually ended up doing it rather well).

In future, educational development will need to be able to perform this function for the institution, and its traditional grass roots evaluation function may need to be left to teachers to do for themselves. Educational development will also need to monitor the implementation of policy. For example most institutions appear to have a policy that part-time teachers should have a mentor, but few implement this policy and even fewer know if it has been implemented, let alone know if this has had any positive impact on teaching or student learning. Part of being strategic involves following through on policy and monitoring implementation and impact.

Re-organisation and rationalisation of support functions

It is not unusual for institutions to re-organise portfolios of responsibilities so as to have a single person in the senior management team responsible for all aspects of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. In some cases this has led to the creation of a new senior management position. New PVCs with new portfolios nearly always re-organise what they are responsible for. In any case Learning and Teaching Strategies are about joined up thinking and this includes coherence of support functions. Educational development units' position in relation to the library, student services, personnel, IT services and so on will be scrutinised (again). One centre established twenty years ago has already been 'rationalised'. Some institutions are making substantial strategic investments in the supporting infrastructure, such as in 'learning resource centres', and this can make additional changes in teaching possible and changes demands made on educational development.

Some of the issues raised above may seem more like threats than opportunities, but the balance overall is undoubtedly positive. The following issues offer tremendous scope for educational development to have a real impact.

Increased funding

There will be substantial sums of money available, up to £2m per institution, and most of this will be spent on educational development activity, if not all on educational development centres. Institutions are also committing matched funding, in some cases. While this is funding for only three years in the first instance the initiative may be extended and there are likely to be other knock-on effects. When the Enterprise in Higher Education programme stopped many institutions retained staff, functions and even whole units that had previously been supported by external funding, and the same may happen again. We are likely to see a step change in institutional investment in educational development.

The Institute for Learning and Teaching

The HEFCE has encouraged institutions to consider ways to support membership of the ILT. Support for the development of teachers' portfolios, for programmes for new teachers and even for accreditation and membership fees, are all likely in many institutions.

Recognition and reward

A central purpose of the HEFCEs 'Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund', of which the Learning and Teaching Strategy initiative is a component, is to redress the balance of attention between research and teaching. And central to this is recognition and reward for excellent teachers. While the HEFCE will mount its own national reward scheme it recognises that institutions have to learn how to do this for themselves if values are to change. There are many new and interesting schemes being put in place which go beyond including teaching amongst promotion criteria, for example:

- Teaching Fellowships for spreading an innovation to other departments (Sunderland University);

- reward for innovations related to the institution's Learning and Teaching Strategy, and a role in implementing the strategy (Napier University)

- Readership posts for scholarship of teaching or for leadership of change in teaching (East London);

- salary increments or one-off special financial awards for particular teaching achievements in the previous year, assessed through annual appraisal (Open University)

There is plenty of scope for developing new recognition and reward mechanisms and now there is also funding to implement such mechanisms.

Staffing

Institutions are planning to place new staff in educational development centres or to second departmental staff to centres. They are establishing new posts (such as a Readerships and Research Fellowships to support pedagogic research) and setting up new organisational structures for those with teaching responsibilities (such as subject-based Teaching Co-ordinators who lead Faculty Teaching Development Groups). Using the funding to provide additional educational development expertise is very common. A key role for established educational development staff may be to train, mentor and support a larger, more distributed team than in the past.

Infrastructure changes

- Institutions are being encouraged to re-think many features of their infrastructure and systems, for example:

- what a teacher's duty consists of, other than class contact hours;

- how time to develop new courses or new course materials can be built into teachers' duty allocations or into longer term departmental business planning;

- how teaching and learning space can be reconfigured;

- what categories of FT and PT staff the institution needs to support different teaching functions, leading to the creation of new types of posts with new terms and conditions, and new demands for training and monitoring;

- policies on appointment, probation and appraisal which give more prominence to teaching;

- refurbishment of quality assurance systems, and accompanying specifications of course documentation, so as to implement the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Educational development after five years of Learning and Teaching Strategies

If institutions take Learning and Teaching Strategies seriously, then within about five years educational development will probably look very different than it does today. It may be:

- mainstream, and necessary to help the institution to meet HEFCE conditions of funding. As a consequence it will be more integrated into university structures, funding and policy and the Head of Educational development will find her or himself as a member of the senior management team, or very close to it.

- more devolved and Faculty or Department-based, to implement Learning and Teaching Strategies which will have become largely devolved. In Australia this

has threatened the existence of central units that could not adapt fast enough and could not be helpful enough to departments;

- more accountable, with explicit targets and quantitative monitoring and evaluation, reported to the HEFCE in order to retain funding. It will be harder for institutions to maintain an educational development commitment which is substantially less than at other institutions. In Australia publications such as 'The Quality of Australian Higher Education' (1998) have provided benchmarks which expose lack of institutional commitment to teaching, where it occurs;

- less 'maverick' with less freedom to pursue personal interests and less scope to respond to the idiosyncratic interests of teaching enthusiasts but with a more planned strategic focus;

Overall, educational development will have more of an institutional role, concerned with the performance and development needs of the institution as a whole, rather than with individual teachers. For example programmes for new teachers may be reconceptualised as tools of long term organisational development, growing the change agents of the future, rather than as staff development for individuals who now know how to give a lecture.

Whether any of this comes to pass, and whether educational developers are on board if it does, will depend in part on the extent to which educational developers get actively involved in the construction of Learning and Teaching Strategies in the early stages, when the mould is set. Seize the day!

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2 An Alternative Perspective on CPD
Helen Beetham, Development Officer, University of Plymouth

What's the point of CPD?

It seems likely, in the short term at least, that Institute of Learning and Teaching requirements will be designed to ensure that all staff can demonstrate a threshold level of CPD activity. The primary aim is to establish a professional body with broad membership and support, whose standards are acceptable to individual members and are not too onerous for institutions to assess. It can only be good news for student learning if individual members of staff are reflecting on and developing their practice to remain in good standing with their profession. While we work towards the short-term goals, however, we should not lose site of the underlying reasons why staff need professional development opportunities.

Learning and teaching in HE is emerging as a distinct profession at this moment in history for a variety of reasons, of which an important one is the need to respond collectively to change. The pressures for change are well known - massification, diversification, the information revolution, competition from other providers, employability, lower unit costs, a wide range of government agendas such as lifelong learning and public accountability (1). Unlike many other professional bodies, learning and teaching in HE will have no time to establish itself as a stable community of practice, working to recognised and well-established standards. Almost the only constant will be the need to change. CPD will therefore have to support staff not only in developing their own practice but in developing the collective practices of their profession. In business terms there is a need for 'learning organisations' and a 'learning culture' (2) as well as individuals who are committed to their own learning within the given organisations and cultures of HE.

For developers, the requirements for staff CPD are assumed to flow from the requirements of student learning. Translating the pressures for change into positive outcomes for student learning over the next five to ten years will require a range of new skills and approaches on the part of university staff. Collectively, they will probably need to:

- undertake more-or-less constant curriculum (re)design and development;

- keep informed about educational policy and pedagogical theory, and translate these into practice within their own local (institutional / disciplinary) context;

- develop a much wider repertoire of learning and teaching approaches (e.g. distance learning, design of interactive resources, computer conferencing) and ways of working (e.g. project teams, specialist contracts, hot-desking);

- secure resources, internally and externally, to support specific developments;

- work closely with other departments and specialist teams, and with other bodies within and beyond HE;

- continually review, monitor and evaluate pedagogical practices - their own, and those of their department / institution.

SEDA members can no doubt add more; it is no coincidence that many of these activities are currently carried out by educational developers.

We can be fairly sure that not all staff will adopt this developmental role to the same (or indeed any) degree. It is also true, though, that unless a substantial number begin to adopt it soon then the needs of students in the coming decade will not be met. Just as educational and academic development units have become more central to the life of institutions (3) - and for much the same reasons - the development agenda has become far too large for us to manage on our own. CPD which focuses only on individual development is a luxury we probably can't afford.

What's in it for staff?

If that is the educational development agenda, is there a professional development agenda which supports it? Put another way: why on earth would academic staff choose to develop as *developers* when much easier CPD options are certain to be on the menu?

Here I would like to draw on three recent exercises, carried out among staff and educational developers, to suggest some answers. The first took place during an evaluation workshop for the EFFECTS project* in July 1999. Developers who were involved in delivering new CPD programmes within the EFFECTS framework identified factors which had motivated staff to take part (4). These programmes ask staff to undertake a curriculum development project involving review, design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of their outcomes. The second exercise was a survey of the SEDA and EFFECTS mailbase lists, carried out by the author during January 2000. This asked what would motivate academic staff to contribute case study materials to a national resource of learning and teaching innovations (5). While the question is fairly specific, it

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* The Effective Framework for Embedding C&IT using Targeted Support (EFFECTS) was a Teaching and Learning Technology Phase 3 project, which (among other things) led to the creation of the Embedding Learning Technology award within SEDA's Professional Development Framework.

presumes underlying CPD activities focused on innovation and change. Finally, developers attending a SEDA workshop at the University of Central London in March 2000 brainstormed a list of factors motivating staff to undertake CPD (6). The results are summarised *below:*

(1) Factors referenced in all three exercises:
Professional advancement / career progression
• Academic credit
• Additional funding for specific development projects
• Time off from other responsibilities to focus on development

(2) Factors referenced in two out of three:
• Student learning outcomes
• Personal satisfaction, including intellectual satisfaction
• General recognition and acknowledgement (e.g. from colleagues)
• Publication opportunities

(3) Factors mentioned in the e-mail survey but not in the other exercises:
• Support, encouragement (e.g. from educational developers)
• Simplicity / ease of documentation (i.e. evidencing CPD should not represent a large additional investment of time)
• Networking / building a community of practice which values professional development
• Conditions of membership for ILT (but staff would need to see the benefits first!)

None of these surveys asked academic staff directly about their motivations, and this is important work which remains to be done. The larger number of factors mentioned in the email survey may simply be due to the greater amount of time for reflection afforded by this medium, and in the context of the other two exercises it may have been felt that the 'support and encouragement of educational developers' did not need to be explicitly spelled out!

A number of tentative conclusions can at least be drawn. Happily for developers (and other optimists) there appear to be several *intrinsic* motivations for CPD, among them personal intellectual satisfaction, the improvement of learning outcomes for students, general recognition and the acknowledgement of colleagues. The desire for more time and resources to devote to development could also be taken as a sign of intrinsic commitment to this agenda, even if it reveals a culture of special pleading rather than mainstream activity. Surely CPD opportunities should be available which exploit these existing motivations to the full.

Unhappily, the extrinsic factors seem to predominate. Of these, career enhancement is in the hands of institutional decision makers and the national funders whose allocations of money send such clear messages about what kinds of staff activity are valued. However, there is every sign that the national agenda is becoming more favourable to staff who specialise in learning and

teaching and its development, and SEDA members will continue to push for institutional initiatives which provide even greater career incentives such as teaching fellowship schemes and second merits. Developers now need to be inventive about the ways in which CPD schemes can be tied in with these tangible rewards. While the ILT will provide a crucial lever, it was noted during all three exercises that - at this point in time - the actual benefits of ILT membership remain to be proven to staff.

As far as allocation of resources goes, educational and academic developers are increasingly likely to have a voice within institutions. There seems little reason why funding for specific development projects should not be tied - loosely or firmly - to CPD, for example by weighting bids to institutional innovations funds, or by designing development opportunities specifically around the needs of funded projects.

Academic credit is an issue firmly in the educational developers' court, and the community now has considerable expertise in gaining institutional accreditation for programmes of professional development. Publication opportunities are also becoming more widely available, for example through SEDA and (hopefully) the new subject centre journals. Whether or not one approves of the publication mentality, it is the case that the more academically rigorous our CPD programmes, the more credibility attaches to research and development activity in the field of learning and teaching.

So what kind of CPD is needed?

Supporting staff in the transition to a more developmental role, and ensuring a good fit with their own professional development agendas, will not be straightforward. Developers too will have to adapt. The following suggestions are drawn from the experience of developing a CPD programme in Embedding Learning Technologies (ELT) for staff at the University of Plymouth. This work was done as part of the TLTP3 EFFECTS project, which provides a national framework for the development of similar programmes at other institutions (7). The programme is now validated at Masters level and has 16 members of staff enrolled. Two other CPD modules (in embedding Key Graduate Attributes and Skills into the curriculum and in developing links with employers) have also been accredited as part of the same Integrated Masters Programme.

The modules at Plymouth and the EFFECTS programme as a whole are still undergoing evaluation, so it is too early to say whether they actually support staff effectively in adopting a more developmental role. However, there are a number of features of these programmes which make them particularly well adapted to meet the needs outlined above.

Informed by developmental values

SEDA has always insisted that the values underpinning good practice should be made an explicit feature of the development process. As CPD becomes a mass activity, the more readily measured outcomes are bound to be emphasised over those aspects of process which are difficult to evidence and assess. For change agents, however, values are not an optional extra' but an essential piece of kit -who would set off into unknown territory without a reliable compass? The modules at Plymouth ask participants to focus explicitly on their values and beliefs in undertaking curriculum development, and all EFFECTS programmes use the SEDA values to give participants some constant points of reference, at a time when their actual practices may be undergoing radical change.

Specialised

Staff will need such a wide range of collective skills in future that it seems probable that individual roles will continue to diversify. The CPD programmes which support staff will therefore not be one-size-fits-all. An advantage of staff choosing to specialise in, say, key graduate attributes and skills, transition to HE or the use of learning technologies, is that professional development acquires some of the status of subject specialism. *The scholarship of teaching* (8) becomes more meaningful when staff have voluntarily chosen to pursue a branch of that field that is of personal relevance and interest.

Focused on innovation

Specialised programmes like ELT offer a framework within which innovators, mavericks and enthusiasts can be supported, above and beyond the requirements of competence. Promoting innovation and diversity will be vital, not only to the sanity of educational developers (!) but to the long-term capacity of the HE sector to respond to change. To allow this, there need to be models of CPD which are loosely structured, open ended as to final outcomes, and individually negotiated with participants.

Based around real development issues
Increasing numbers of academic staff at Plymouth were already working on curriculum/ learning development projects with the support of innovations funds. For individuals, we felt there were obvious advantages in tying professional development opportunities to work they were already undertaking and from which they - and their colleagues and students - expected to see tangible benefits. From the point of view of student learning, there are even greater advantages in ensuring that such developments are effectively supported and carried through. This connection also ensures that staff retain ownership of the processes and outcomes of their own CPD.

Working through action research

Action research would seem to be particularly relevant for professional development which is also aimed at learning and teaching innovation, as it *'is carried out by practitioners seeking to improve their understanding of events, situations and problems so as to increase the effectiveness of their practice'* (9). Our SEDA accredited course at Plymouth already required new lecturers to complete an action research project as part of their initial programme. We wanted to extend this approach to encompass a wider range of methodologies in educational research -adding to the intellectual challenges and rewards - but in a way which would also value the practical experience of longer-serving staff.

Academically accredited

As staff pursue learning issues in greater depth, and with greater scholarship and understanding, they may well expect academic as well as professional recognition for their efforts. We have accredited our CPD modules at Masters level, as have all the other programmes so far developed within the EFFECTS framework. This adds to the incentive for staff, who may already have masters credits from completing initial SEDA - or ILT -recognised programmes. A focus on the (action) research element and an expectation that at least some participants will publish their outcomes also contributes to academic credibility. At Plymouth we already have one article and several conference papers accepted.

Collaborative

The ELT programme brings together members of staff with different roles in the embedding and support of learning technologies, helping to ensure effective collaboration. Nationally, we have adapted the EFFECTS framework so that individuals may provide evidence that they have achieved a particular outcome collaboratively with others, rather than simply through their own efforts. At the same time our involvement in a national network enables us to collaborate as developers, sharing resources and best practice, and helping one another deal with issues such as accrediting our courses and integrating them effectively with our respective institutional agendas.

Critically independent...

It is fashionable for developers in learning technology (and no doubt elsewhere) to follow Rogers' categorisation of staff into *'early'* and *'late'* adopters and rail against individuals' *'resistance to change'*. While there are certainly closed minds in academia, there are also reflective practitioners who oppose certain agendas because they fear a negative impact on student learning. In designing the Plymouth modules, my colleagues and I have been very clear about allowing opportunities to critique the underlying agendas from an informed perspective, as well as offering examples of 'best practice' in carrying those agendas through. There must surely be room for CPD which is not tied to appraisal or other institutional monitoring procedures, which allows for open, scholarly exploration and develops in a wide range of staff the *'conscience of teaching and learning'* (10).

...but institutionally embedded

In consulting on the EFFECTS framework we have been told repeatedly that we should not make institutional development the responsibility of individual staff. Surveys of systemic change in higher education (11) emphasise that it requires - in addition to staff with appropriate expertise - leadership commitment, a favourable departmental climate, good information and interpersonal networks, appropriate reward structures, and of course available resources. However, there are two ways in which a CPD framework can become a lever for change at institutional level. First, the development team supporting the framework may well have some central influence, through which they can advocate those institutional changes needed to support local innovation (top down). Second, the work of participants can be scaled up throughout the institution, given effective avenues of dissemination and large doses of political will (bottom up). Both of these processes help to keep institutional agendas in line with the real experience of staff in departments; both may be strengthened if the CPD pathway(s) concerned are explicitly cited in the institutional learning and teaching strategy, as we have worked to ensure at Plymouth.

Implications for SEDA

While the ILT focuses on those forms of CPD which can be required of staff, SEDA may wish to focus on the needs of those who are taking forward the learning development agenda. Between the professional competence expected of everyone and the learning and teaching fellowships for the starry few, there need to be credible reward structures for staff who choose to specialise in learning and teaching for some or all of their careers. These staff will need specialist support, integrated around the specific curriculum issues which concern them, their colleagues and students.

The question is how SEDA can help developers to offer these opportunities. The EFFECTS project - like the original SEDA teachers scheme - shows the value of shared frameworks for development. Developers in institutions can see the benefits: generic learning outcomes and values, guidelines for the development of their programmes, a common rationale, a network of practitioners with similar concerns and a body of supporting materials that have been proven in use. They are free to interpret these in whatever way meets the needs of their staff and students.

Other specialist groups exist - for example the subject centres - with an interest in developing frameworks and awards of their own. No doubt more will emerge as new agendas appear over the horizon. These groups have specific kinds of educational expertise, but they do not have experience in managing national schemes or in the core values and objectives that inform effective educational development. A body such as SEDA could give coherence to a wide range of new CPD initiatives, and help others to develop to meet the changing needs of staff and students. At the same time, the actual support structures offered at institutions need to be effective. Therefore there is an ongoing need to recognise and support developers working in institutions, affirm the value of what they do, and monitor the quality of the programmes they provide to staff.

SEDA is currently talking with EFFECTS and other organisations about future developments in accreditation. I hope this article has shown why a scheme is urgently needed to complement the agenda for universal standards of CPD which is being taken forward by the ILT.

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1 An excellent overview of these pressures is given by Lueddeke, G (1998) UK Higher Education at a Crossroads: Reflections on issues and practice in teaching and learning, *IETI*, 35 (2)

2 See for example Senge, P (1990) The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization. New York: Doubleday; Otala, M (1995) The learning organization: theory and practice, *Industry in Higher Education*, June.

3 Gosling, D (1996) What do educational development units do? *International Journal for Academic Development* 1 (1); Lueddeke, G (1997), Educational Development Units in Higher Education: much ado about something? *Quality in Higher Education* 3 (2).

4 Five institutional programmes were represented (Plymouth, Southampton, UMIST, UNL and Oxford Brookes). Items are given in no particular order.

5 The survey was carried out by email during January 2000 to SEDA and TLTP EFFECTS mailbase lists and received 47 responses. Items are given in descending order of popularity.

6 22 educational developers were present, including the workshop leaders James Wisdom (who facilitated this section) and Chris Rust. Items are given in no particular order.

7 I am grateful to all of my colleagues, and most particularly to Paul Bailey, for ongoing discussions over the last 15 months which have helped to clarify these ideas. They do not, however, represent the policy of the EFFECTS project or of the University of Plymouth.

8 Boyer, E (1991) Scholarship Reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate, Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

9 Kemmis, S and McTaggart, R (1988) The Action Research Planner, Deakin University Press. See also McKernan,J (1993) Teaching educational action research: a tale of three cities. *Educational Action Research* 2 (1).

10 Boud, D (1995) Meeting the challenges, in Brew, A (ed) Directions in staff development, SRHE / Open University Press.

11 Higher Education Quality Council (UK, 1994) Choosing to Change, London: HEQC; Wright, Q and O'Neil, C (1995) Teaching improvement practices: successful strategies for HE, in Wright and Associates (eds), Teaching improvement practices: international perspectives, Bolton: Anker Publishing. Both cited in Lueddeke, G (1997) Emerging learning environments in HE: Implications for institutional change and academic developers. *IJAD* 2 (2).

3 Orientations to Educational Development

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Over the last two years the SEDA Small Grants initiative helped fund a qualitative study of educational developers as a community of practice. Using Stones' (1996) notions of 'agent conduct analysis' and 'agent context analysis' as a way of understanding practice, the research sought to characterise the strategic conduct of developers as mapped against the organisational forms and academic cultures within which they work. The study involved thirty-three respondents in twenty-two UK higher education institutions (HEIs), the latter chosen to represent large and small, old, new and middle-aged institutions. Twelve orientations to educational development were identified from the data. These are analytic categories which include the attitudes, knowledge, aims and action tendencies of educational developers in relation to the contexts and challenges of their practice, but they do not relate to developers' personal characteristics, and are not fixed. Most of us would probably find ourselves represented in a profile of several of these orientations as we go about our practice in different contexts. You might like to compare your own way of working against this typology.

1 Managerial (Human Resource Management)

Respondents with a strong managerial orientation reflect this concern in the views they hold concerning the need for strong strategic leadership in institutions, seeing this goal-oriented approach as more professional and effective.

> 'I think the issue here is the need to develop strategic leadership ... I think institutions can also become good at institutional signalling. They can do this through contractual requirements, performance review, putting appropriate policies in place, applying resource constraints. These are all levers for change that can be used but all the levers must be pointing in the same direction, and this leads us back to the need for clear strategic direction and management.'

Some developers of a managerial orientation ally themselves fairly firmly with aspects of the institutional mission, almost to the point of devising institutional systems that will render the educational process teacher-proof.

> 'Teachers have an obligation to teach well. Institutions have an obligation to make it possible for teachers to teach well. They actually have an obligation to make it difficult or impossible in the medium term for teachers to teach badly. And staff developers have the role of helping all this good stuff happen. And that's where I locate myself in the grand scheme of things.'

2 Political-strategic (Investor)

Other educational developers appear to operate more from a belief that strategic action depends upon the operation of influence and power relationships within the micropolitics of higher education organisations. From this perspective, as Educational Development is often perceived by some colleagues as marginal, vulnerable and, because of its centralised 'top-sliced' funding, a somewhat 'parasitic' operation, it behoves educational developers to keep a wary weather-eye on shifts in organisational power relations, and to seek strategic alliances or support from wherever they may be gained. The need for effective positioning of an EDU within an organisation in order to maximise advantages of power becomes paramount.

> 'For units there is an important question to be addressed, which is "What kind of beast do you want to be?" Are you a training unit operating at that level and offering skills courses on, say, how to use the Web, or do you see yourself as being about R&D, as part and parcel of the executive arm of the institution?'

Informal personal contacts or networks, and the identification of powerful champions for an organisational cause are seen by developers of a political orientation as more effective bases of strategic action than more formal reporting channels.

> 'I must be honest it's only in the last eighteenth months/two years I've used the going-around-and-having-a-cup-of-coffee-and-a-word-in-the-right-ear. I was very naive and thought you could do it all sort of by-the-book and a few committees. Doesn't work. It's more important I think to have influential people on your side…and informally, or dropping something out and saying "I've done this. I'll send you a copy" – if the person's fairly important, you know.'

The notion of 'investing', of calculating the risks of any adopted line of strategy also emerges as a feature of this orientation.

> 'I probably haven't taken enormous risks. I don't normally involve us in things which are doomed to failure – only things that have a reasonably good chance.'

3 Entrepreneurial

Certain developers tend to have a particularly outward-focused orientation which might be described as 'entrepreneurial'. Interestingly several of the respondents indicating such an orientation tended to have moved into educational development through previous involvement in Enterprise in Higher Education

(EHE) funded projects within their institution. Many of the values and *modi operandi* of entrepreneurial developers appear to have been carried over into their subsequent educational development roles. The development orientation they exemplify is characterised by a number of related qualities including: a strong focus on incorporating graduate employability factors within the higher education curriculum, such as transferable skills and involvement in the development of partnerships with external agencies both locally and internationally; concern with access and equity issues, particularly in relation to the needs of mature students and involvement in community development.

'Its culture is really geared towards employability in all shapes and forms and goes beyond the idea that we're going to produce business studies graduates. So even with the media, arts, communication type approaches there is still an eye on graduate employment. There's a culture that is geared towards friendliness and high quality teaching provision. There isn't so much of a research culture.'

The preferred operational approaches of these developers appear to be strongly project-driven, both internally and externally, and they are frequently active and often successful in pursuing opportunities to acquire funding for policy-related projects.

'I think that the focal point for project work is important, I mean we've been fairly successful over the years in utilising externally funded projects to initiate change by bringing money and support from elsewhere but very rarely or never really doing it to do something that we wouldn't want to do anyway.

4   Romantic (Ecological Humanist)

A quite different orientation is one which is directed principally towards the academic as an *individual practitioner*, towards his or her personal development, growth and well-being. Some developers see the most effective aspect of their practice, and their major contribution and skill, being at the personal level.

'It really is important to go home at night with that feeling inside that you have been effective, and the most important way that I know that I get that feeling is when I work effectively and see an individual, see change or enabling change with someone, in a context which is concrete, and where someone is going to try something that you have hoped to lead them towards or support. Or even better, when you get feedback from it and someone has been successful. I think that is just *rich*. It is terribly important.'

The influence of a counselling approach is strong within this orientation.

'If I work with an individual I never represent myself as an expert; it is always the *enabling*. If you like, the

counselling, rapport, enablement of other people, to find within themselves…It's heavily influenced ultimately by Carl Rogers…to provide freedom in structures and, in the case of counselling theory, freedom of space for individuals to explore their concerns and their resources in their own way.'

5   Vigilant Opportunist

There was a clear orientation arising from many of the interviews undertaken with practitioners towards the need to remain vigilant for opportunities, either within the institution or within the wider higher educational environment. One educational developer uses a metaphor of predation to describe this tendency:

'I think it's like most things in educational development. You alight on some shiny substance, raven-like, and if it's really nice you kind of fly off with it and show it to as many people as you think might be interested or something.'

A Head of Educational Development talks of hitching the Unit's activities to promising passing juggernauts, such as Subject Review, but emphasises the importance of timing in such opportunistic incursions.

'One of the things I have learned in doing the job over the years is that timing is everything. And I think now lots of people do realise just exactly that…if your timing is wrong and people don't see the need to do it there and then, even though you might be right and you've diagnosed it absolutely 100%, it'll not happen. They're busy, they've got a lot to do, and if they don't think it needs to happen tomorrow, basically they're not going to do it. You'll get enthusiasts doing it but you'll not get widespread change. You can get them to address it when they all kind of recognise it's now becoming an imperative.'

Developers quite openly admit the fashionable appeal of certain topical developments (again drawing attention implicitly to the appropriacy of timing). One experienced developer uses the metaphor of flotsam to describe this tendency.

'Well you focus, you focus on the issues of the day, don't you? Five years ago I was mostly talking to people about teaching large groups. They haven't gone away but now the heat's off and now we're talking more about ways in which we can support learning through learning resources and particularly IT. So it's with the fashion, you kind of float (if we're using the watery metaphor) you hang on to the bit of old door that you can and try not to get too swept away and actually what surfaces is what you work with. …And that's not to say the other stuff isn't all there underneath and isn't going to pop up any minute, but we can't do the whole thing all the time.'

However, not all the effort invested in opportunistic

excursions is rewarded.

> 'In this line of business you have to cast an awful lot of bread on an awful lot of water. And sometimes what you end up with is just a lot of soggy bread.'

6 Researcher

There is an assumption amongst certain educational developers that the use of educational research findings is what influences research-minded academic colleagues.

> 'The thing is I think the power of ideas as a change mechanism. I think that's the thing that is critical to the development process, that academics will respond to the power of ideas.'

The same respondent also finds the distinction between theory and practice unhelpful. It is a question of enabling colleagues in other research disciplines to have ownership of educational research.

> 'I see my role really has a lot to do with the interface between theory and practice and trying to apply the research to pragmatic problems, but then using that application and going back and looking at theoretical models. I can't see these as being separate. They are just so intimately related together. I go into a department like Marketing and they have their set of problems but I'm looking at the research and I'm coming back with some solutions but I'm trying to push the boundaries of what they're doing outwards and I'm trying to make the research something that they have ownership of in some way. And I try to make them realise that there is research out there all the time.'

7 Professional Competence

Other developers appear to focus more on the achievement of technical and professional *competence*. In this orientation developers' seek to build academics' confidence by enabling them to demonstrate achievement of a prescribed set of learning outcomes for professional practice. The emphasis lies predominantly on 'classroom' expertise, the technical aspects of practice, and competent performance in other predominantly teaching and learning-related professional settings.

> 'And what they're saying is "We want a qualification". They don't give a damn about us, initially. I mean we are the route whereby they can gain a qualification. And when we show them the materials and talk to them about the course and talk to them about how it works, and talk to them about how it's 100% routed in their *practice*, and they don't have to write essays on educational theory - all they get to do is teach, think about teaching, use the

literature to develop ideas for teaching better. In other words as long as we bang on about it being a totally *practice-based* course – informed by theory, but practice-based – then the enthusiasm grows, and they get quite keen, because they know it will help them in the rest of their lives.'

Within the Professional Competence orientation the role of theory is subjugated firmly to being the handmaiden of practice.

> 'And it ties…it gets the theory in its place. Practice first. I guess we're eclectic, but I think that model [Kolb's experiential learning cycle] is probably the most powerful and important one for us. Because it says things about appropriate uses of theory. Because you can use theory to test and evaluate practice. And of course you can use practice to test and evaluate theory. I'm not saying theory's always right. It provides a way in which they can make useful sense of theory. It provides a way in which they can see it as tools for thinking and doing rather than as boring old stuff to be learned, and I'd rather be getting on with my teaching thank you very much.'

As Gosling (1997) has pointed out, a further salient characteristic of this orientation is its strong sense of obligation towards the student body as primary stakeholders in the higher education enterprise.

8 Reflective Practitioner

There is a degree of complexity within professional practice that is not easily susceptible to a direct technical-rational treatment. Many educational developers engage in the plan- fling of initiatives or the introduction of innovations in their organisations and clearly such measures cannot be undertaken without systematic planning. Yet however meticulously they might seek to design and implement their projects they find them influenced by unpredictable and often unique factors. The experience of respondents suggests that the process of development tends to be altogether less systematic and logically coherent than rational accounts would indicate. It is often messy, disorganised, iterative and conflicted. It often leads to uncertainty, anxiety, ambivalence and doubt, particularly when there is no explicit system of values to guide the planning. Developers of this orientation problematise their own practice. Emphasis is placed on the ability to 'read the situation in development settings.

> 'I suppose you could say the skill, the *expertise* of academic developers rests very much on their capacity to analyse the situation, make judgements about it and come to a decision concerning what will be the most appropriate action. We rarely have any firm and agreed guidelines. We're usually in uncertain situations (every situation's more or less new, a one-off), sometimes scared stiff, and I suppose

we test the *validity* of our decisions by… through critical reflection, you know, Schön and company, Kolb, the old reflective practice bit, and by reference to and consultation with our peers. And it's in this way, I suppose, that we become self-evaluating practitioners and learn to have confidence in our own professional judgements and values.'

9 Internal Consultant

Certain developers see themselves operating more as internal consultants in their organisations and here the predominant operational focus is with specific departments or course teams (or individuals within those departments and teams). Such developers stress that effective internal consultancy is not a reactive process but essentially a *proactive* strategy of making things happen. It can be a useful means of infiltrating departments.

'Effective consultancy usually comes about through the contacts, the networking you do. You've got to put yourself about a bit, get known, seed some interesting ideas around the place to get others interested. You have to let them know who you are, of course, and what you can do, what you can offer. Got to drum up a bit of business. You have to be a bit promiscuous I suppose.' *(laughs).*

Another developer emphasises the need for credibility and for offering practical solutions.

'An educational developer has got to have good consultancy skills of being able to listen and identify the needs. But a consultant wouldn't be employed if all they do is listen. You would have to come up with solutions – credible, *workable* solutions – based on experience. That may be a risk at times, but you know from working with those particular people they are prepared to take the risk.'

However this is not a question of going in telling people what to do. It is a much more tentative process of collaborative discussion and 'reflecting back.' The emergent understandings are then fed back through a process of 'mirroring'. The consultant's expertise stems from familiarity with a knowledge base of relevant research.

'But you try to make something and then when you run the workshop that they've asked you to run you just feed back what's happening in their environment. You hold a mirror up and you say "This is what is happening and this is what the research says. Is there anything there that you think you could use?" You have to not be judgemental…you have to kind of reflect back what's happening from their point of view and maybe that's why often a stimulus for change in this institution is an evaluation of a course. I do a lot of evaluations where I go in and I just work with the students on a kind of pyramid discussion type of procedure where I then write a report which is student perceptions of, say, electrical engineering.'

10 Modeller-broker

Whilst some developers, as we have seen, are hesitant to be seen as overly directive in their relations with colleagues, others feel it is appropriate to direct colleagues to exemplars of effective teaching and learning.

'Doing work with particular people who are interested .. you know, departments who are interested, and just trying to drive that forward because they've become exemplars that you can attract other people to, and doing these sorts of things, and that's a deliberate strategy.'

We recall our predatory opportunist mentioned earlier, alighting 'raven-like' on shiny substances, but we note, too, that what was seized upon was then modelled for the benefit of others:

'…and if it's really nice you kind of fly off with it and show it to as many people *as you think might be interested or something.*'

As well as exploiting the use of exemplars, developers of this orientation often model their own practice directly to colleagues. The emphasis is on active involvement, rolling the educational sleeves up and getting developmental hands dirty, 'doing as I do' rather than 'doing as I say'.

'I think we actually are the "brown knees brigade", i.e. we put our shorts on and we get out there and we go in and we do things. That's obviously limited by how few we are, and what we can do, but we do actually go in and support and encourage and work with people. And I think it's true to say – and I don't think this is vanity – that our reputation is such that people trust us. So we can press for change on that level.'

For many developers, most of whom, of course, have been mainstream teachers earlier in their careers, this is an attractive way of working:

'I adore actually doing it. I love getting into a workshop environment with people and helping them to think about how they might develop their practice. So whatever the topic is, I love working with people in that sort of way. I like the individual consultations as well but not as much, I have to say, as working in groups.'

A belief in the efficacy of modelling and brokerage is seen by some experienced practitioners as ultimately a more effective operational approach than the patient development and implementation of policy.

'I think probably in my first couple of years here I was a bit too confident about the value of policies and guidelines and putting them through committees and then somehow thinking that would influence people. I've become much more sceptical about those although that's not to say occasionally we

don't still do that. I mean our student feedback policy was an example; we did that last year. But I think we work much more effectively by working with departments we know are active, then try to get some examples out to other people. They see that it works and then we try to bring them on board.'

11 Interpretive-hermeneutic

Perhaps the most sophisticated and radical orientation of educational development practice is that associated with the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics. The hermeneutical tradition of understanding *(Verstehen)* can be characterised, in its simplest form, as 'a conversational kind of process in which the interpreter learns by adjusting his or her perspective. It necessitates entry to the inner world of the thing or person to be understood – the 'other'. (Webb, 1996:66).

Hermeneutics is the branch of knowledge concerned with attempts to interpret human activities, to reach an *understanding* of them. Its application to educational development has been most closely associated with the work of Graham Webb. (Webb, 1993, 1996). He takes issue with the 'bipolar', 'hierarchical, linear and causal' nature of much educational theorising, citing such hierarchical knowledge constructions as Bloom's taxonomy, or procedural linearities within staff development such as teaching observation⟶ diagnosis ⟶formulation of new strategy. The insights gained from the moving back and forth between part and whole that are characteristic of the hermeneutical circle allow 'a somewhat different view'.

As learners we may be both one thing and another, constantly moving between positions. In order to gain a global understanding of a concept, we may have to reduce it to its elements, label it, take it apart, and analyse it. As we do this we learn more about the element, but also gain a new perspective on the whole concept. Alternatively we might make a single intuitive leap to a grasp of the concept as a whole, perhaps through the application of a metaphor or analogy from elsewhere. We are then better able to locate and appreciate a particular element within the overall concept. (Webb, 1996:66)

It does not matter, suggests Webb, when or where one enters a 'circle of understanding'. What is paramount is 'the subtlety of the relationship and the constant shifting of position between part and whole'. This kind of conceptual and emotional 'shifting' is a recurrent feature within the relationships in which educational developers engage. It is a feature of the way they translate theory into practice and vice-versa and of the dialogues which they enter with colleagues. This approach is reflected in the experience of certain respondents in this study.

'For me the key issue is about how educators come

to judgements. The key function is the socio-cultural process by which they come to - or fail to come to! – working agreements on judgements. This is not a matter of simply "applying" pre-defined criteria and "scientific" procedures. We need to try and understand what shared judgemental processes might involve – positively involve – in academic life.'

This respondent argues that there needs to be 'a reconceptualisation of academic practices'.

'I mean look at assessment practices. We can all troop out marking schemes and lists of grade-related criteria, credit ratings, all that stuff managers like. But we all know, as well, that, when implemented, these things are much more qualitatively derived. We need to know more about the ways in which qualitative criteria are articulated and used within communities of practice. I think we get a better understanding of these things through intelligent conversations here and there between interested and well-disposed colleagues. I think good educational development is more a mutually developmental process.'

Such views are predicated on the notion that multiple criteria can never be mechanically 'applied' in complex real world situations, and rather that in such situations the interpretive and/or negotiated nature of their use is crucial. This implies inter-subjectivity and shared values. In terms of institutional implications the strength of this orientation, like the romantic orientation, lies more in terms of its impact at local level than any presence. In terms of its operational aspects it requires particular interpersonal skills and a high degree of communicative competence. It is essentially unscripted', though not unplanned, and relies on intuitive understandings and 'thinking on one's feet. Another respondent, using a chess analogy, sees the skills required in this dialogic process as being to 'unblock', to 'open up spaces' and use resources to the maximum.

'The role certainly does involve developing people, really, but development is strange. Do you play chess? You know that "development" in chess involves arranging your pieces so that the big pieces can use their resources to the maximum. So your bishop isn't blocked on this diagonal. So you open things up really. So I see development as "opening up" so that people's potential could be fully realised. You haven't got this powerful queen…you don't want to move really. Open spaces really. Of course the point is when you've opened it up the queen can go straight, left, all sorts of places. It just doesn't open up one single channel which is pre-determined as the queen's route. It means that the queen is able then to go in five different directions, backwards even. It's an unbiocking. Yes, well not a bad analogy …A lot of people are actually just blocked really, and for various reasons, and if you can open it up, open the spaces…'

12 Discipline-specific

The final orientation to emerge from the research data is a somewhat different and more recent category. This relates to practitioners working within specific subjects or disciplines to develop practices of teaching and learning related to that discipline. One head of an EDU has a specific managerial remit to run a 'task force' to foster discipline-specific development within departments:

> 'I have 26 half-time seconded people. They're seconded for two or three years so they're a big substantial project. They are change agents inside the subject area. They are the spokes. I manage that project. My job really is to make more out of that than just a series of projects. They've all got individual projects which are subject-based. I'm increasingly trying to push them towards staff development inside the subject area and working together on thematic issues. They are quite a powerful group.'

Recent developments at national level in UK higher education have attempted to translate discipline-specific educational development into tangible realities. The substantial Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) was established by HEFCE and DENI to promote and disseminate projects based on aspects of good practice recognised within specific disciplinary areas during the TQA exercise. Project funding was made available to departments gaining excellence ratings in the TQA. More recently the Subject Centres of the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) have been established. A developer involved in the management of one such large national project describes these national drives towards discipline-specific development as 'more needs-pulled" rather than "good idea-pushed". She describes the new kind of practitioner becoming involved in discipline-specific development:

> 'They are enthusiastic teachers who run the projects but that doesn't necessarily mean that the whole culture of that department is interested in educational development. It certainly doesn't mean the subject is. So they've got quite a big job to do. They could be some of the next generation of educational developers.'

This developer is committed to the notion of discipline-specific development, but is also conscious of the need to avoid 'ghettoisation':

> 'We believe that it's really important that development is owned within the disciplines. And that's been a really important strand of our project. However we also know that if you just, as it were, "ghettoised" it, we'd lose a lot of the benefit. So we have a difficult balance between saying to the *Music* projects "Yes, this is a Music project; it's about

learning in Music" and 'Hang on a minute, a lot of those things you do with one-to-one instrumental teaching might be very similar to the stuff that people do in Art and Design by doing one-to-one studio work." It's not making them all go generic because what would happen then is we would lose that ownership that people need. So it's not *invention* but it's innovation – taking ideas and adapting them and working with them in your own sector.'

A fuller account of this study of orientations to educational development will be forthcoming later in the year in which a model will be presented mapping the orientations against organisational forms and cultures (eg. hierarchical, collegial, anarchic, political), against perceptions and metaphors of organisational change and against the various stake- holder groups which educational development serves.

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4 Strengthening Action-Research for Educational Development

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At a recent national meeting conducted by members of the panel for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in education, a participant referred to action-research as less worthy of a quality rating than other forms of research. This panelist's comments are not unusual and doubtless I could find similar ones down any academic corridor. To be fair, the panelist went on to agree with the objection that action-research can be as robust and scientific as any other form of research; it is also fair to accept that action-research has earned a poor reputation in some quarters because, like any other research method, it has weaknesses. I think that we must also accept that such weaknesses may be on display rather more than those committed to the value of action-research would want. Rather than ignore this problem, educational developers involved in action-research need to accept that it has acquired a certain flabbiness because it 'is being used to legitimate any form of methodological deviance from the traditional paradigm' (CARN, 2000: 1). In my view, part of the excess fat here is in what Swepson (1998) calls the 'idealist trap' of conflating values about action-research with its methodology. If action-research is to gain credibility as a research framework for higher education development, it needs to confront issues like these and the purpose of this paper is to offer some research strategy suggestions with which to do so.

Action-Research as Collaborative Research

Definitions and practical guides to action-research abound and to frame my discussion about the collaborative content of action-research, I shall use Rapoport's much quoted definition of its aims:

Action-research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework (in Susman and Evered, 1978:587).

and Susman and Evered's (1978: 587,588) additional aim:

…to develop the self-help competencies of people facing problems.

From these definitions it is clear that centrality is given to user involvement in the research activity. Action-research was formulated in the aftermath of World War II and in the light of failures of other forms of research to get to the bottom of critical social problems like that of antisemitism (Lewin, 1946). It was felt by the proponents of action-research that bringing scientists closer to the problems and the people who had to endure them would yield better knowledge and better solutions.

Thus an important principle of action-research is in the refusal of a subject/object dichotomy within its design. The epistemological premise is that distancing the researcher from the researched, as in much conventional social scientific research, risks generating knowledge restricted to the researcher's world and prejudices. What is often paraded as 'objective' research from a distance can be merely objectifying of the human subjects and activities under scrutiny. Despite the strength of the critique of positivist science (Susman and Evered, 1978) and interpretivist methods (Carr and Kemmis, 1983) against action-research, it is easy to see how proposals to involve subjects as co-researchers had popularity problems in academe. Just a reading of Becher's (1989) account of the corporatist mentality of academic tribes suggests that a proposed partnership between lay and professional researchers might not be well received by a gatekeeping disciplinary community. While this protectionist view of research needs to be challenged, I think that we have to meet it half-way by moderating the claims sometimes made for the collaborative research framework of action-research.

As Webb (1996) has argued, some of the defences for action-research (e.g. McNiff (1988), Carr and Kemmis (1983), Zuber-Skerritt (1992)) appear to be erected on moral high ground. Action-research, it is frequently claimed, is more ethical and democratic than other research methods because it positions researchers as co-workers with the client group. To quote passages from Carr and Kemmis (1983) cited approvingly in Zuber-Skerritt's book on action-research in higher education (1992: 12, 13):

[Action-research] is participative and collaborative. The researcher is not considered to be an outside expert conducting an inquiry with 'subjects' but a co-worker doing research with and for the people concerned with the practical problem and its actual improvement

And

[Action-research] is emancipatory. The approach is not hierarchical: rather all people concerned are equal 'participants' contributing to the enquiry.

The risks inherent in these claims for action-research are twofold. Firstly, the view that there is no principal research team, hierarchy or 'outside expert' has to be tempered with realism. There are likely to be substantive inequalities within most collaborative research projects whatever their formal democratic structures. Client groups are often socio-economically or educationally positioned at a disadvantage with respect to professional researchers. The best remedy for a sound action-research model is to engage with these inequalities rather than

minimise their existence in a rhetoric about group unity of purpose, as Webb (1966: 67) writes in his discussion of action-research:

It has always been a myth that those with common interests start with common abilities or a common desire to contribute to a project group.

Even in the case of educational developers and academic colleagues where collegiality marks the relationships, there will be measures of inequality in terms of the expertise each brings to a teaching and learning intervention. Again to quote Webb (1996: 67):

Often the staff developer has greater general experience of pedagogy and a far better sense of the epistemology and methodology of research projects. The staff developer will be able to interpret a project more generally than other participants, to explain where it fits, point to useful literature and use previous experience to guide the development of the project.

Another source of inequality will lie in differentiated investment and yield from the action-research. Those initiating (and often paid to do so) the research and perhaps aiming for publication will often put more into the research activity than those less centrally involved (such as students). A good action-research model will both value and problematise expert contributions and leadership in the light of diverse levels of preparation and experience among the researcher group (Reason and Heron, 2000:7). Generally, action-researchers need to heed Swepson's (1998) advice about working with the difference between what is materially and humanly possible and the ideal goals of action-research. In this sense, the ideal of transformative research through collaboration informs the journey, not a state of arrival.

The Limits and Scope of Experience

The second connected problem concerns the notion of generating knowledge from the experience of those involved in the research. The idea that people experiencing a problem can see its nature better than others has strong affinities with the radical concept of the privileged standpoint of the oppressed (e.g. Freire, 1990). There is no clear evidence that experiencing a problem equips you with special glasses with which to see it. Indeed experience can be so near to the experiencer that they can be barely aware of its shape and presence (Geertz, 1983). Action-researchers often challenge positivist research methods as having a naive view of sense data as 'facts' yet they can run a similar interpretative risk with respect to assumptions about the prima facie value of experience. Valuing the subjective in rejection of notions of the objective should not include an assumption that the former is always reliable. In Webb's (1996) view, the danger here is that the group dynamics of action-research can produce partisan readings of experience which slide easily into dogma.

Local knowledge must not become localised knowledge. In this respect, Winter's (1998: 66) concept of 'dialectical' analysis offers an important interplay between individual experience and propositional knowledge (ideas, theory) because it involves:

placing data from a specific situation in a wider social context, looking for tensions and contradictions in the data and considering how these contradictions may both reflect the history of the situation and may also be symptomatic of possible changes in the future.

This kind of analysis, argues Winter, is a way of 'being theoretical' and he further argues for a shift in how we talk about the relation between theory and practice in action-research. 'What I want to suggest' writes Winter (1998: 66):

is that the phrase 'developing a theoretical interpretation' is a better indication of what we need to do within an action-research inquiry than, for example, the phrase 'linking practice to theory' I think there is a danger in the latter phrase in that it makes the term 'theory' sound as though it could be simply a body of existing published literature which provides us with an external interpretative framework.

Winter's emphasis is important in that it implicitly addresses the prejudice that action-research is atheoretical because it adheres to a notion of 'praxis' that is more ideological than scientific.

Action-Research and Praxis

In its Guide for Applicants (99-00: 4) the Leverhulme Trust states that its priority is to 'support excellence, novelty and significance' in British university research; it also states that it does not support 'social policy and welfare (especially action-research)' *(their brackets)*. It is hard to resist the conclusion from these statements that action-research is not seen as supportive of excellence, novelty and significance, a conclusion that fits with the informal comments I have already mentioned in terms of RAE ratings. My guess is that this view has something to do with a scepticism about the theorising abilities of action-research and a suspicion that this issue is fudged in the notion of praxis.

A conventional scientific paradigm sees practice as flowing from theory whereas action-research posits a dialectical relationship between theory and practice in which the one is constantly influencing the shape of the other. According to this relationship, theorising proceeds through practice and the Aristotelian concept of praxis (which is counterposed to pure theory) is mobilised to capture this dynamic. Such a view of praxis should not mean, however, that action-researchers enter the research process theory-free in the expectation that practice will beget theory as its natural offspring or can be added on in the manner Winter describes in the

quote above. A theoretical underpinning to any action-research design requires the researchers to have a provisional theoretical perspective which will be tested, disputed, modified, etc. through the challenges of practice and engagement with alternative theoretical explanations. The reflective principles of action-research do not simply refer to reflection on the human actions under study but must incorporate an interrogation of the relevant theoretical field (for a full discussion of this question see Susman and Evered (1978) and for some creative ways of theorising in action-research, see Winter (1998)).

Case Study or Action-Research?

The case study approach to writing up action-research can bring with it an under-theorised discussion that treads an unclear path between educational research and good practice reporting. Action-research like any research needs a research question. Reduced to its essentials, theory can be defined as an attempt to answer questions. From this definition, it follows that an absence of research questions brings with it an absence of theory. Where action-research veers towards best practice reporting, as I think it does in some cases, it tends to be answer-driven rather than question-driven, thereby betraying a weak theoretical basis. This problem is compounded when the 'answer' is value laden with the assumption that the change intervention to be researched is a 'good thing' which the action-research process will 'prove'.

According to McNiff (1988), the difference between making a change and researching a change in professional practice lies in turning the latter into a field of public inquiry. By this criterion simply making a change and writing up a report of its effects is not research even if the discussion is theoretically informed by research elsewhere. Sometimes, we are offered an evaluation of teaching interventions which are represented as action- research. What is needed to lift a case study squarely into an action-research field is the presentation of evidence in relation to a clear research question upon which public inquiry can feed. Because all action-research centres on a change intervention as a proposed solution, it is important to locate the research question in this intervention and to be open to testing it fully by gathering rich data.

The Importance of Evidence

Of course any research method can be applied poorly and there is truth to the view that the value of any piece of research rests at least as much upon the quality of the researcher as it does on the appropriateness of the method. There are, however, a number of burdens of proof of quality specific to action-research centred particularly around data gathering. Many models of

research rely on straightforward procedures for data gathering especially if there is a clear hypothesis to be tested, e.g. a hypothesis that academic performance will be deleteriously affected by students undertaking paid work might suggest that the results of a relatively simple questionnaire to students about paid work be correlated with student achievement levels. While this kind of research might feed into an action-research design, it can never be its entirety because action-research proceeds through a cycle of research activities that are not sequentially ordered. Action-researchers may discover underlying regularities in their data but they do not assume their presence in the messy world of human activity. Action-researchers seek to grapple with the complexity of experiences and the research questions by avoiding premature closure of the research activity through a model of inquiry and discovery that is cyclic.

There is no shortage of graphic models of an action-research cycle (or spiral) but most will be a variation of Lewin (1946) to include the phases of reconnaissance, planning, acting, reflecting and observing. The acting phase is the planned intervention and the heart of the research is to watch the impact of this intervention and to be open to revising it in the light of data being gathered. The nature of this data varies but it is likely to include reflective diaries, comments from the research participants, notes of relevant discussions and observations, decisions to modify the intervention, etc. along with more familiar fruits of research such as questionnaire findings. Winter (1998) presents a rich discussion on yielding data through action-research in which he insists that generating and interpreting this data requires a procedural framework if it is to be regarded as rigorous. Clearly, the more open its procedures and the more evidence action-research can present, the more credibility it will have and the more able it will be able to offer theoretical advances to its field as well as practical solutions to the issues it addresses. This is not to suggest that action-research should be rehabilitated as science in the conventional sense of the term.

Research Validity

Action-researchers do not aspire to produce value-free 'objective' research and indeed hold the view that this is impossible particularly where human activity is a feature of the research. In opposition to logical positivist research methods which rely on a deduction of truth from 'facts', action-researchers check the validity of their findings by submitting them to the scrutiny of others. In McNiff's (1988) model, the scientific rigour of action-research is ensured by checking findings and interpretations to a point of 'saturation'. If enough co-researchers and critical friends agree with the interpretations, the more sound the data analysis becomes. Crudely put, whereas traditional researchers keep checking their facts, action-researchers keep

checking their people. But this is half the story, because it is also important to understand that action-research is a framework that can house a range of other research methods both qualitative and quantitative, and perhaps in this light, it would be more accurate to say that in action-research, the 'facts' are checked with the 'people'. This combination introduces a reflexive dimension to the analysis and in many ways, this is the distinctive feature of action-research. Ironically, however, in making excessive claims about the uniqueness of action-research, its supporters could be contributing to the prejudice that it lacks some of the accepted features of rigorous research methods.

Action-Research and Educational Development

With the increased attention being placed on practice-led research and evidence-based policy, the signs are for a revival of action-research methods and a growth in legitimacy for its procedures. Arguably, educational developers can contribute much to this revival and growth because action-research often fits their needs very well. By virtue of its collaborative and developmental nature, action-research lends itself to the research partnerships of educational developers and academic colleagues (though care should be taken not to avoid objectifying students in such a partnership!); its practice-based emphasis offers obvious advantages for the change agency role of educational development. In summarising my discussion about the development of credible models of action-research, I suggest the following issues be incorporated into them to avoid the kind of weaknesses and prejudices I have discussed:

1 Collaborative action-research involves decisions about leadership, ownership and responsibility for the research phases and dissemination; these decisions will be partly based on the spread of expertise, time available for participation and power relations among co-researchers.

2 Practice and experience must be interconnected with outsider expertise/ experience, developments and research to avoid limiting the research design and interpretation of evidence gathered.

3 The research design needs to ensure that the proposed solution is the product of an interrogation of both theory and practice and that it drives the research as a question rather than as an answer.

4 The research design needs to include a procedure for data gathering which can be transparently reported and evidenced both for data analysis and for dissemination.

5 Report of the research needs to include a section dealing with the implications for the theorising of the issue in hand in the light of the evidence yielded. Validity of the findings needs to be claimed against a presentation of the evidence.

Postscript 2007:

Glynis Cousin adds:

Action Research tends to be framed within the interpretivist tradition and, as such, abandons the positivist quest for objectivity, replacing it with the principle of researcher reflexivity. From this position, objectivity is a constructed position rather than a reality and that whatever researchers conclude from their research findings, this will offer provisional, contextualised understandings rather than clear truths. I suggest readers accommodate this perspective more in the general call I make for credible forms of action-research.

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5 Quality Assurance through Quality Enhancement
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"There is a real danger to the educational developers – we are often seen as only a part of the qualitocracy."

James Wisdom

Thank you, dear Editor, for the warning which you gave me when you invited me to write this article, for if we educational developers should ever be seen as part of the qualitocracy, we are doomed. So this article is in part an explanation as to what our task should be.

Historical background and personal history

My interest in quality matters goes back to my response (Elton 1986) to Christopher Ball's question 'What the hell is quality?' (Ball 1985), namely that quality for a professional consists of the duty to maintain one's own standards and that of one's profession. This conviction that the basis of quality and its assurance had to lie in professional integrity served me well when in about 1992 I took part in the training of the assessors for the Academic Audit Unit (AAU), which had been set up by Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP). The scheme produced by the Director, Peter Williams, was very promising, which was probably why it was treated with suspicion by both the universities and the Funding Council. Peter Williams, consummate diplomat that he is, would never admit to this, yet the fact that he is now again in charge, even if at present only temporarily, gives hope.

The same conviction guided me four years later, when I was asked to evaluate quality assessment in Wales (Elton 1996). There was real cooperation there between the universities and the Head of the Quality Assessment Division of the Welsh Funding Council, Mike Laugharne, in a common aim to move towards making quality a matter of institutional self-assessment with external audit. I pointed out at the time that this was a dialectical development that was not easy but also not impossible to bring to fruition, but the opposition of the English Funding Council was too strong and my proposals were quietly scuppered. Instead, the AAU was sidelined into a new organisation without real power, the Higher Education Quality Council, and a powerful Teaching Quality Assessment Unit was established within the Higher Education Funding Council for England. An enormous growth of bureaucracy followed and when in due course the two units were amalgamated into the Quality Assurance Agency, it led one Vice Chancellor to remark that that would save no more than one postage stamp, since the two units now worked from the same address. That power and influence can diverge is illustrated by the fact that the current plans of the QAA have been strongly influenced by lessons learned from the HEQC.

Recent history of quality assurance

It is important to understand past history in order to avoid repeating it, this time as farce. However, the Consultation Paper (Higher Education Funding Council in England et al 2001) which invited comments on a new audit proposal was not encouraging, for what has remained unchanged is the adversarial attitude and the paper work, which were the proud achievement of QAA. The problem with the paper mountain was not so much that it was excessive – the Director John Randall may have been quite right when he said that the universities would have to evolve a similar, although surely significantly smaller, mountain if they were to assess themselves – but that it was ineffective, as it led to a compliance culture, which in fact failed to assure quality. And the QAA, in contrast to the TQA which was evaluated and found wanting, has not so far been independently evaluated. What is sauce for the goose…

So now, according to the recent Consultation Paper, we are back with audit, but what has not changed is the adversarial attitude to the relationship between universities and the QAA, which led to the developing compliance culture in the first place. This was not spelt out in detail in the Paper, but was implicit in its total lack of discussion of fundamental principles. Although the first two questions asked for responses on 'the objectives and principles' of quality assurance (paras 7-11) and the audit model (para 12), these paragraphs tacitly assumed an agreement on fundamentals which formed the basis for the rest of the questions and so made radically different approaches impossible within the framework of the questions. If instead one ignored the advice that 'it would be helpful if [the responses] could be structured to address the listed questions', then one was of course the odd person out and easily ignored in what was sure to be a statistical summary of the responses received. A typical Civil Service way of avoiding dissent.

A modest proposal

So let me give here my response, which starts with the following assumptions:

1 Quality assurance should follow from quality enhancement, as has been outlined by Biggs (2001). Assurance in itself is a negative concept which can at best ensure that things are done well, but it can never ensure that things are done better or better things done.

2 An institution dedicated to quality enhancement will provide quality assurance as a by-product; one dedicated to quality assurance has no incentive to extend this to quality enhancement.

3 Quality enhancement can only happen if it is a credibly declared part of the mission of an institution. (If this should not be the case, then the institution would *ipso facto* not be pursuing quality enhancement.)

4 It is therefore at the mission and management levels that an audit must take place in the first instance.

5 Only if this audit throws up doubts should there be audit trails into how the mission works out in practice.

Underlying these assumptions lies the principle of a collegial, as opposed to the current adversarial approach, which in the first place trusts an institution staffed by professionals to want to carry out its work professionally. However, such trust cannot and therefore never should be absolute, as we are all weak vessels and might be tempted to abuse it, and it is for that reason that Yorke (1994) introduced the felicitous idea of a 'modified' trust, i.e. a trust monitored by audit. This audit must in the first place be built into the internal management of an institution, which thereby can verify whether practices are in agreement with the declared mission. Similarly, the external audit must start at the level of mission (see 4 above).

Professionalism

What then are the conditions that have to be satisfied for quality enhancement to be a normal feature within a given institution? They arise from the demand for professionalism which, while normal in the research function of a university cannot be taken for granted in its teaching function. In fact (Elton 1993), the very opposite is the case; traditionally, university teaching is at best a craft, where novice teachers benefit from the experience of their elders, who of course themselves have to rely on the experience of *their* elders, all the way back to the first universities in the middle ages. (This undoubtedly accounts for the continuation of out-dated practices.) Often, university teaching is not even a craft, because – once past the probationary stage – university teachers rarely if ever receive evaluative feedback on their practices. So the prime and crucially important task for educational developers is – and here I am responding to the Editor's concern – to provide not only initial *formation*[1] for new staff, but continuing professional development throughout an academic's career. To fulfil this task, they must be proactive and not merely reactive to needs as expressed by management, although naturally in such a way as to gain the latter's support. The guiding principle for it – and it is this which is an appropriate matter for audit – is that university teaching is as problematic an activity as university research and

requires very similar fostering, through a basis of research, a knowledge of research outcomes and their relevance to practice and the development of good practice. This task has been made easier, at least in theory, by the work of the Institute for Teaching and Learning which in turn was based on the earlier work of the Staff and Educational Development Association, although the present ILT membership regulations still fall somewhat short of the above guiding principle.

Another aspect of professionalism is a regular and effective scheme of staff appraisal, where appraisal is both from above and below in the institutional hierarchy, and affects all staff from the newest lecturer to the Vice Chancellor, as well as all academic related and non-academic staff. Such a scheme must not be punitive, i.e. the outcome of an appraisal must, in the first place, be formative and lead to appropriate staff development activities in connection with quality maintenance. Since neither appraising nor being appraised has ever been a normal professional activity in universities, the training of both appraisers and appraisees is another necessary staff development activity. Incidentally, such appraisals should provide evidence also for lack of teaching quality control, i.e. the present almost universal variability of the kind of teaching which students receive (see e.g. Tobin 1996)

To go beyond quality maintenance to quality enhancement requires two further areas of institutional development, i.e. the encouragement of innovations and effective change management. But perhaps the most important indicator of institutional commitment will arise from the recognition of the importance of the teaching function and the reward schemes and promotions for teaching excellence.

All this will cost money, but it may be hoped that the sums which in the past few years have been spent so unprofitably on paper mountains would go a long way towards financing the proposed changes. If universities should attempt to retreat into a supposedly golden past, where such matters as I have outlined were not considered necessary and where academics were largely left to their own devices, they would have to learn differently. My proposal does not constitute the kind of easy way out that universities, and in particular the Russell group, are apparently now demanding (Baty 2001).

Genuine Self-assessment

The scheme which I am proposing consists of a self-assessment, in which an institution declares and evaluates its own practices, followed by an internal and then an external audit. All of these processes should be

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[1] The French 'formation', as well as the German 'Ausbildung' have aspects of both training and education, thereby demonstrating that these two concepts are not in opposition but support each other.

carried out collegially, with the internal processes greatly strengthened through the appointment of external consultants and external auditors acting as consultants and not as judges, as is the case in the Netherlands (Vroeijenstijn 1995, p.58):

> The task of the review committee is to form an opinion on the basis of information supplied by the faculty and by means of discussions held on the spot…The concept 'forming an opinion' should not be interpreted as 'sitting in judgment and handing down a verdict good or bad'… The aim of external quality assessment is to detect, in a dialogue with the faculty, strong points and areas for concern.

Powers of universities and Funding Agencies – Need for trust as well as independent agency.

How might a scheme of this nature meet the needs of appropriate stake holders? The question of stake holders was raised quite rightly in the Consultation Paper, para 9a:

Meeting public information needs, so that stakeholders – and above all students – have information which is up-to-date, consistent and reliable about the quality and standards of teaching and learning at different HEIs and in different subjects.

Employers were not mentioned explicitly, but clearly they and students are the stakeholders most in need of such information. Funding Councils require this information only indirectly, i.e. they must ensure that the information satisfies students and employers, not that it satisfies them independently. So clearly, the first step to be taken is to find out what information these two direct stakeholder groups really want in order to influence their actions. Roizen and Jepson (1985) showed just how varied employers' demands are – although 'a large number of employers mentioned [certain] general skills' (p.154) – and more recent simplistic conclusions as to 'what employers want' would do well to revisit that research. That these general skills seemed in part at least to correlate with middle class values is indicated by the conclusion that 'Oxbridge graduates and those from other leading universities have a very much better chance at "top jobs" than others' (p.168). This tendency to recruit from the 'best' universities for the 'best' jobs seems in line with the Government's attitude to 'best' universities, which might be called the Laura Spence principle, after the student who, when rejected by Oxford, went to Harvard. Such an approach completely contradicts any considerations of fitness for purpose and while it is true that the Consumer Association at times identifies 'best buys', it generally describes products in terms of a variety of features and leaves it to consumers to make their choice in the light of this more detailed information. Are students and employers really less sophisticated than the average buyer of, say, a toaster, and if that is so, what does that say about higher education, which is supposed to have as one of its functions the development of the critical appraisal of evidence? One outcome of this critical appraisal is surely the opposition of universities to being assessed in terms of an overall numerical grade, an opposition that would be more credible if universities did not apply exactly that approach to the reporting of student performance in terms of degree grades. This is another case of 'What's sauce for the goose…'

What the scheme proposed in this paper suggests is that if, and only if, universities are, and are allowed to be, genuinely professional, then this would be the best guarantee for students to receive an excellent education. The provision of information, which can never be more than a minor part of that guarantee, would then at least be produced in a balanced fashion, an approach their staff at present are likely to follow when writing a research article.

Conclusion

The present entrenched position of universities and of the QAA indicate that we have here a conflict situation. So far, the QAA has appeared to be on top, but the universities' defence via compliance has been remarkably successful. If in the future, the universities should come out on top, there is a serious danger of their reverting to a less than glorious past. Both sides will have to accommodate, if there is to be a resolution of this conflict, and only if that resolution can be achieved can real quality improvement be obtained.

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6 The impact of institutional learning and teaching strategies on the nature of educational development

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Background

This paper takes as its starting point some predictions made in 1999 about the way the use by institutions of learning and teaching strategies might change educational development as an activity (Gibbs, 2000). Since then:

- the English funding council has allocated £50m to support institutions to implement strategies and all 134 English institutions now have such a strategy;

- the Welsh funding council has undertaken a similar initiative, though without guidance, support or adequate funding;

- the Scottish Funding council has stated a requirement (linked to funding) that institutions have a 'quality enhancement strategy'.

I and Trevor Habeshaw undertook an analysis of the nature of learning and teaching strategies in 1998, before these initiatives were started, published in the form of a guide to good practice (HEFCE, 1999) and a more analytic article (Gibbs, Habeshaw and Yorke, 2000). I and Sally Harmsworth then undertook a second analysis, of all 134 English strategies, in 2000 in order to understand what progress had been made, and this was published in the form of a second guide to good practice, containing 30 or so case studies illustrating new patterns of activity (HEFCE, 2001a) and a research report (HEFCE, 2001b) quantifying some of what was changing. I have also undertaken visits and consultancies with a wide range of institutions, from Russell Group Universities to FE Colleges with large HE components, and been involved in national meetings in Wales and in Scotland. I seems clear that educational development is indeed changing, and extraordinarily rapidly.

The aim of this paper is to explore what has actually happened as the improvement of teaching has become more strategic in nature, and whether the predictions made in 1999 bear any resemblance to how things have actually worked out. Much of the evidence I have used comes from documentation and this may exaggerate or hide what takes place on the ground. It also represents an 'average' picture and underestimates the sheer variety of approach across institutions. In addition each institution started out on this shift to strategic change at a different point, and even for those that all started together when they were offered funding, the rate of progress has varied and so the past two years represents a different point in the journey for different institutions. Some of the gap between rhetoric and reality, and some of the variation between institutions, was discussed at a session devoted to this topic at the SEDA staff development conference in November 2001.

Predictions

Educational developers would be involved in analysing the context institutions found themselves in and the implications for teaching, learning and assessment, and would provide sound educational rationales for strategies so that they didn't look like 'management speak' hanging unsupported in mid air.

In 1999 very few strategies had a clear and justified rationale and most looked as though they were written by people who knew little or nothing about teaching and learning. It was hard to imagine experienced teachers being convinced. Unfortunately little has changed. Even though educational developers have sometimes reported that they were involved in writing strategies, or in some cases wrote the whole thing on their own, most strategies still lack any kind of coherent and convincing rational that would justify the proposed goals or actions. In contrast the University of Trondheim has published and debated a book which provides the underlying rationale for radical changes in their pedagogy, and is now moving on to working out how to implement it. Educational developers may have missed an important opportunity here and institutions may pay the price of trying to implement unconvincing and poorly argued strategies.

Educational developers would progressively find themselves concentrating more on strategy and less on tactics

In 1999 'strategies' were often little more than loose bundles of policies, and educational developers were free to spend a lot of their time working at the level of detail of individual teachers' practice or of details of course design, unencumbered by institutional priorities or managed change processes. By 2001 more than two thirds of all learning and teaching strategies were genuinely strategic and with a greatly reduced emphasis on tactics.

Educational developers would be more proactive (and less reactive)

In 1999 institutions seemed unaware that for anything to actually happen you needed to enlist change mechanisms and take the initiative rather than rely on individual teachers or course teams to come forward and ask for support. Only 10% of strategies mentioned

any change mechanisms at all and in these were mentioned an average of 1.5 mechanisms each. By 2001 76% of strategies listed change mechanisms, with an average of six change mechanisms each. Educational developers are being expected to go out proactively and do things listed in the strategy (and to do more of them of a wider variety of kinds) rather than wait in their offices for enthusiasts to turn up. While this may be an unfair picture of the contrast, and in practice educational developers have always been somewhat proactive, the difference in institutional awareness of how to bring about focussed change is very striking.

Educational developers would re-orient themselves to new goals and targets

The proportion of institutions with clear goals (such as improving retention or employability) has doubled (to 50%) and the proportion setting explicit quantitative targets against which progress could be gauged has also doubled – but only to 20%. However many goals are still couched in such general terms (such as 'student centred learning' or 'flexible learning') that it would be difficult without further thinking and analysis to operationalise these goals into targets (such as a change in the in- to out-of-class hours ratio from an average of 1:2 to 1:3 by 2005 while improving retention and student satisfaction ratings). This has left educational developers with the problem of interpreting what is meant and working to poorly articulated goals and has allowed teachers and departments to claim that they are already doing it anyway or that it is so poorly articulated that they don't know what to do.

Educational developers would be involved in evaluating the impact of the strategy

Educational developers have always been involved in evaluation of teaching and usually of courses and sometimes of programmes. I assumed that they would become involved in summative evaluation of the entire institutional shift taking place and undertaking and formative evaluation of the change process, so as to feed back into the development of implementation of the strategy. While the proportion of strategies mentioning evaluation has doubled (to 46%) only 3% of strategies had a well developed evaluation component that could have guided educational developers, or where you could see what the evaluation activity might consist of. There are a very small number of well developed exceptions, such as the University of Coventry, and I suspect we have a lot to learn from them.

There would be re-organisation of support functions

Some early learning and teaching strategies focussed on the 'joined up thinking' involved in rationalising student services, educational development, the computer

service, the library, the widening access unit, and so on, into a more coherent infrastructure pulling in the same direction. In fact very little of this has happened ... so far. Perhaps the HEFCE's 'Strategy of the Week' approach to initiatives has simply left people struggling to keep up with incompatible and poorly scheduled external demands.

Educational developers would find themselves managing larger budgets

In England at least there has been a very significant investment in educational development. The proportion of institutions that now have 'innovation funds', for example, has increased from 9% to 49% in only two years, and many institutions have added funding of their own (though a few have cynically stopped internal funding now that they have external funds). There has never been such a rapid rate of change in investment. However while some educational development units are having the time of their life, not all of this funding is being channelled through them. Some is being managed by new committees or groups and much is being devolved straight to departments. While total funding has increased markedly the locus of control has clearly shifted.

New types of educational development staff would be appointed

This is perhaps the most significant change of all for educational development. A third of all institutions have made new types of salaried appointments (such as e-learning co-ordinators) and many more have established new roles for existing staff – such as departmental teaching co-ordinators. This recent change is not confined to England – in Scotland a SHEFCE funded project (PROMOTE) has explored the proliferation of these roles and how effective they are. At the SEDA staff development conference about a half of all participants were new to SEDA – an astonishing proportion. These staff undertake different and more narrowly focussed roles to 'traditional' educational developers (with expertise in a discipline or a technology, for example, rather than being general purpose developers), and have extensive personal and professional development needs which must be met if they are to perform these new roles effectively. Educational developers are finding themselves at the heart of a network of these new staff they are now responsible for supporting, and the role of front line support for teachers is now being performed by these new staff.

Emphasising Institute for Learning and Teaching membership to a greater extent

81% of institutions' learning and teaching strategies now commit themselves to supporting ILT membership –

often through dramatic policy shifts (such as requiring ILT membership for every level of promotion, right up to Professor). In some institutions, such as the University of Leeds, this has involved a major re-orientation of effort from educational developers. If the ILT's CPD requirements emerge involving any rigour then educational developers will have another big job on their hands.

Educational developers would be involved in developing and implementing new mechanisms for the recognition and reward of teaching

Five times as many institutions have committed themselves to rewarding excellent teaching as two years previously and only a third of institutions have now not built such mechanisms into their learning and teaching strategy. In many cases this is still an aspiration rather than a full working system. Many of the schemes being developed and implemented involve recognising willingness to lead change in strategic directions rather than reward for past teaching of a personally oriented kind. A project being undertaken by the National Co-ordination Team at the Open University is currently collating and disseminating case material on the wide range of new mechanisms being developed.

Educational developers would become involved in spotting and addressing infrastructure blocks that prevent innovation at the margins from being mainstreamed

Almost no progress has been made in terms of learning and teaching strategies recognising and addressing what stops change from happening so, at present, there is very little for educational developers to become involved in. However some institution-wide 'teaching groups' and 'change teams' involve close working relationships with senior management (e.g. the PVC Teaching) and this passes up though the system the frustrations and blocks of teachers which senior management need to tackle. There is little evidence that educational developers are playing a significant role in this.

Educational development would be seen as mainstream rather than as a peripheral service

Evidence about this is hard to glean from learning and teaching strategies, though the proportion of institutions seeing staff development and CPD as a central plank of strategic change has increased from 6% to 91%. Some educational development Heads have been moved into central committees and groups, working alongside senior management. In other contexts educational development has effectively been by-passed and new frameworks put in place to co-ordinate and manage change. This may depend as much on the standing of key individuals as on models of organisational change.

Educational development would become more accountable, with targets and formal reporting

In the past educational development has sometimes had the image of a nebulous process of unclear and unmeasurable impact which is probably a good thing but which could not be expected to work to performance indicators in the way others have to. Weakly focussed reviews took place after about five years if there were general doubts about the value of the exercise but these managed to draw on little evidence. No more. Every English institution has to report to the HEFCE annually on the delivery of its operational plan, usually listing targets for activities (inputs), sometimes listing outputs and very occasionally listing outcomes. Reporting to the PVC Teaching or to new institutional groups has become much more formal and more frequent. This has probably sharpened planning but may have fostered an obsession with volume of delivery over substance of impact. Only when we have some smart targets that reflect important goals and values will educational development be able to report in more worthwhile ways on progress.

Educational developers will work less often with mavericks and will have less autonomy

Funds for innovation are now clearly targeted on institutional goals. Educational development units are signing contracts with departments to deliver support work targeted at departmental priorities. Workshop programmes are designed around the mission and strategy priorities. Some of the teaching enthusiasts have now crossed the table and are now part time developers. When individual teachers turn up asking for help educational developers may have to turn them away. Evidence about this is largely anecdotal but developers appear to have traded autonomy for influence, and those that have not done this deal have been by-passed.

Conclusions

Some of my predictions were optimistic or just plain wrong. Some of the changes I anticipated are just too difficult and simply take longer. But many have already happened – astonishingly quickly and to an extraordinary extent. The documentation may be a little ahead of practice, but it is clear what is going on. The challenge for educational development as a profession is to be fully aware of the scale and nature of these changes and to drive them or at least keep up with them, rather than be left behind. We have special expertise that is desperately needed. We must engage with the new types of staff adopting new development roles and learn how to engage effectively with middle and senior management in their strategic planning.

Much of this will be uncomfortable and few of us actually know how to tackle these new tasks yet. But we are clearly crucial to the large scale changes going on. Institutions are relying on us to deliver. This is a step change in our profession and an 'organisational crack' within our institutions of a kind we have rarely seen before. Lets get it right!

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7 How do representations of our practice enable change to happen?

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It is a commonplace of educational development that learning and teaching tends to happen behind closed doors. Although teaching observations are becoming more widespread, much of what we know about how other people teach and about what works in other people's teaching comes to us indirectly. Traditional, text-based representations of learning and teaching practice include case studies, guidelines, workshop materials and articles such as those found in *Educational Developments*. Portfolios constitute another, particularly motivated, kind of representation of practice. With increasing technological sophistication we could use video recordings or web-based multimedia materials. We could see educational software as a particular kind of representation of practice, embodying as it does certain assumptions about what makes for effective learning and how learning interactions 'ought' to be structured.

There is surprisingly little research on whether, and how, representations of practice are actually useful in supporting change. Learning and teaching development projects are invariably asked to 'disseminate' their outcomes, often as case studies, guidelines, web sites, software etc. While dissemination is undoubtedly a powerful means of sharing expertise across the academic community – in a way that would not be possible through local staff development programmes, or even through national conferences and face to face events – the notion implies that information alone is sufficient to motivate changes in practice: once staff are aware of the latest innovations they will naturally embrace them with open arms. Educational developers have no excuse for buying in to this myth. After all, we devote much of our professional life to persuading lecturers that students need more than access to information if they are to learn.

The study reported here had two starting points. First, evaluation of the EFFECTS project (Beetham et al 1999; Beetham et al 2000; Harvey and Oliver 2001) found that although staff benefited most from structured programmes of development and support, the documentation developed around those programmes could be independently useful. This included a development cycle, a series of seven learning outcomes with sample evidence, interactive documents to scaffold various learning tasks, and a case study framework. In some cases individuals had used these to support their personal development goals; in others, learning technology teams used them to structure the support they offered to staff with small-scale development projects. The final evaluation report noted that partner institutions were eager to adopt the EFFECTS framework because '*In addition to providing a structure for staff development and assessment, it enabled support to be allocated to each step in the embedding process in a far more systematic way than was previously possible. Moreover, such a structure can be viewed as a 'road map', helping practitioners to embed C&IT more effectively and appropriately, with sensitivity to issues such as student learning...*' (Harvey and Oliver 2001). Staff development materials intended for use in EFFECTS programmes were also widely adopted by SEDA/ILT initial accreditation programmes to introduce staff to working with learning technologies.

This suggests that the EFFECTs framework functioned as a 'shareable representation of practice' (Goodyear and Steeples 1997), which was useful both for peer collaborators, in more formal programmes or between mentors and mentees. What features of this framework made it so useful?

A second starting point was a separately funded study (Beetham et al 2001) which found that people already proficient in the skills of embedding learning technologies had rarely acquired those skills through formal development. The typical learning technology specialist or enthusiast was highly information literate, had a range of strategies for locating online and offline resources, and engaged in collaborative or peer-supported 'experimentation' with new techniques. This suggests that as individuals become proficient in some aspect of learning and teaching practice, they become less dependent on structured interactions with more experienced others (mentors, colleagues, developers) and more self-sufficient in their reading of representations of practice. It is clear that less proficient or confident individuals require much more scaffolding if they are to make sense of the practice of others.

This article reports a study into different representations, their potential uses in the learning technology community, and other factors influencing the degree to which such representations can be used to support changes in practice. The research was carried out by the author on behalf of the SoURCE and RESULTs projects in the period April-July 2001. The aim was to decide on the feasibility of a national resource of case studies, staff development materials and other documents relating to learning technology practice. Full findings have been reported elsewhere along with the theoretical background to the study (ISL 2001). This article focuses instead on some implications for educational developers.

What representations of practice are useful?

A starting point for the study was a taxonomy or structured list of different kinds of artefact currently used to share knowledge about learning technology practice. In describing these artefacts, a distinction was made between 'texts about' practice, which tend to be descriptive and relatively open-ended (e.g. case studies, portfolios, action research reports), and 'frameworks for' practice, which tend to be prescriptive and more or less constraining (e.g. guidelines, toolkits, interactive documents). Educational software tools were treated as a separate category, in which representation was incidental and application to future practice was highly constraining. A small number of commonly-used resource types were selected from the taxonomy for further study. They were:

a	**Review**	overview/evaluation of a specific technology or technology-based resource from a practitioner perspective
b	**Guidelines**	'how-to' advice relating to a specific learning technology, a specific practice or approach
c	**Staff development material**	hand-outs, exercises or tutorials relating to specific uses of learning technology (more reflective than guidelines)
d	**Case study (curriculum)**	account of the use of ICT in a specific curriculum (i.e. learning and teaching) context
e	**Case study (strategic)**	account of supporting/embedding learning technology in a dept. or institutional context – focusing on staff or organisational development
f	**Framework/toolkit (curriculum)**	model, template, interactive document etc to aid learning technology use in the curriculum e.g. student needs analysis, decision-making tool
g	**Framework/toolkit (strategic)**	model, template etc to aid development of learning technology strategy or support e.g. audit tool, staff skills matrix
h	**Article/report**	any structured account of learning technology use, e.g. chapter, conference paper, journal article, project report, strategy document
i	**Software – learning tool**	generic application e.g. assessment software, communications tool, authoring tool, VLE, specifically for use in learning and teaching
j	**Software**	activity shell: structured courseware or courseware component which may be customised by adding new content
k	**Software**	learning object: multimedia content for re-use in new contexts e.g. text, image, animation, simulation, a/v clip, dataset
l	**Information resource**	annotated link to alternative learning technology resource e.g. database, portal, journal, image bank or web site
m	**Project/service**	annotated link to learning technology project, service or contact

A second task was to classify the impact which these resources might have on their users. For example, it was important to distinguish between simple access to a resource and the kind of deep engagement which led to radical changes in the user's own professional practice. The six interaction types used in the study were as follows:

I would use this to **inform** myself about learning and teaching practice	I would **adopt** (ideas from) this for use in my own practice	I would **adapt** or customise this to suit my own needs	I would **create** my own resources of this type	I would **guide** or facilitate others' use of this to support their practice	I would **comment** on or evaluate this in light of my own experience

An online questionnaire was used to discover how academic and learning technology specialist staff saw themselves interacting with the various different resource types. The questionnaire was available over a period of 6 weeks in June-July 2001, and was returned by over 120 respondents. As anticipated from the sampling strategy this was a relatively experienced group (mode and median = 'proficient' users of educational software), with 28% describing themselves as academics, 22% as educational developers, 18% as learning technologists, and 32% belonging to another category. A series of structured interviews and four focus groups were also carried out during this period.

Among these relatively proficient users, the most *informative* resources were found to be (in descending order): articles, reviews, curriculum case studies and information from projects. The resources most ***adopted*** in practice were found to be (in descending order): software learning environments and tools, staff development materials, guidelines and curriculum frameworks. Overall, therefore, the relationship between the *inform* and adopt responses seemed to reflect the distinction between texts about and frameworks for practice offered earlier, with articles, reviews, case studies and information resources being closer to the text end of the spectrum (highly informative but difficult to adopt directly into practice). Software tools were at the opposite end of the same spectrum, being highly adoptable but less informative, with frameworks coming somewhere in the middle. Chi square tests found that these correlations were significant at p < 0.001. Therefore, while all resource types were significantly more likely to be used for information than actually adopted in practice, the gap between encountering an idea and making practical use of it seemed to be much smaller in the case of interactive representations such as frameworks, guidelines, and of course software tools.

When focus groups were asked to analyse these findings they came up with several interesting interpretations. Users who were already knowledgeable about the area of practice involved, and who had the time and intellectual resources available for reflection, preferred texts about practice such as articles and case studies over the more prescriptive guidelines and toolkits. These people were also resistant to the use of software tools that they felt constrained their own learning and teaching practice. Users with less expertise or less time, however, wanted faster solutions. Their preferred representations were short guidelines, tips and tricks, snippets of advice and rubrics for 'making things work'. They were critical of the *quality* of much educational software but were happy to use applications that offered a 'solution' to current learning and teaching needs, even if that meant changing their practice to fit with the pedagogy implied by the software.

When asked to express a preference, academic teachers wanted access to (in descending order): staff development materials (usually for self study), software tools/environments, and case studies in curriculum development. Educational developers and learning technology specialists, on the other hand, wanted access to: staff development materials (usually for supporting other staff), information resources, reviews and guidelines. As compared with academic staff, who wanted materials with an exact fit to their own needs, developers were more concerned with finding adaptable resources that could be re-developed and re-used to guide the practice of a range of other staff, in a range of different learning and teaching contexts.

What representations of practice are actually available?

Respondents in the study reported that they were actually involved in creating staff development materials and guidelines (around 40%); and to a lesser extent curriculum development frameworks, articles and information resources (around 30%). Very few were creating software environments or tools, strategic frameworks for practice, or project-based resources, all of which were regarded as very useful. There were fewer contributors than users in every category of resource, though the greatest differential came with the 'text' type resources: reviews, articles and case studies. Although they were regarded as the most informative (ca. 90%) there were relatively far fewer people actually creating and sharing them (ca. 30%).

There were few significant differences among types of respondent in their use and creation of objects, except in the important category of staff development materials which were both created *and used* significantly more by educational developers and learning technology support staff. This finding suggests that staff development materials are rarely accessed directly by academic staff, but rather that access is mediated through developers and development contexts of various kinds. Focus groups confirmed that this was generally the case. Anecdotally, staff development materials rarely seem to take a linear trajectory from author to end-user, but exist rather in a complex economy, circulating among developers who adapt and amend them for their own purposes, and being inserted into other, structured contexts (workshops, programmes, institutional web sites, learning packs) before they reach the academics who are their target audience. Effective staff development materials may turn out to be those that are most readily adaptable and usable by other staff and educational developers, rather than those which are most directly accessible to academics.

Overall these findings indicate that adaptable frameworks such as EFFECTS, accompanied by interactive documents, matrices, toolkits, guidelines and other representations that can be applied directly in practice, are regarded as highly usable both by specialist

learning technology staff and by academics with an interest in learning technologies. Case studies are also an important resource but these are less widely available: targeted effort will be needed to make these available on a national basis in sufficient volume to constitute a searchable resource. The SoURCE project has already begun work on a library of this kind. Over time, however, better incentives need to be put in place for staff to invest the time in reflecting on and writing about their learning and teaching experience in ways that are accessible to other professionals.

Staff development materials in general make excellent candidates for sharing representations of practice as they are both readily available and highly usable. Developers are already willing and in many cases actively working to share materials across institutions: the SeSDL project in Scotland, for example, has developed a database of staff development 'granules' which are freely available for re-combination and re-use. It should be noted, however, that the 'stock' of circulating resources needs regular updating, particularly in the area of learning technologies, where new opportunities emerge all the time. The most useful new materials arise from innovative development projects such as those funded by TLTP and FDTL and to a lesser extent the JISC and the EU. These are also the materials which are most likely to present a challenge to existing modes of academic practice. Unfortunately, funded projects are rarely well integrated into the development practices of institutions (workshops, professional development programmes, mentoring schemes, institutional initiatives), which is where our study found that everyday practice was open to being challenged and changed. The quality requirements of 'dissemination' also push projects towards producing highly finished materials that are self-contained, of a large granular size, and difficult to adapt or integrate. The assumption seems to be that staff will access these materials from their own desktops. Our study shows that this is very rarely the case, and the self-contained nature of these materials makes it difficult for them to be integrated into the development practices which offer the real opportunities for intervention.

Interviews and focus groups also identified problems with the way in which different kinds of representation are valued in the academic community. Academic articles and scholarly accounts of educational research are fairly widely produced as they have their own intrinsic rewards in a research-led culture. Unfortunately they are not widely shared because of the associated copyright issues; nor are they necessarily the most useful forms of representation for practitioners. Flexible frame-works and staff development guidelines are far more readily adopted into practice, but attract little academic credibility to their creators and are therefore only produced where individuals are specifically funded to do so. As top-sliced initiatives such as TLTP3 and the Scottish ScotCIT projects come to an end, there is likely to be a gap in production of innovative resources of this kind.

A similar tension was found between users' demand for representations of a low granular size ('tips and tricks', 'words of advice' etc) and producers' habit of creating large-scale, integrated resources around a specific project or to meet the needs of a specific programme. Flexibility, adaptability and reusability are fostered when resources are created to a standard size and format. Unfortunately this does not fit well with the professional values and practices of resource creators. Nor should users' demands for a searchable database of magic 'answers' necessarily be taken at face value. There was very little evidence of participants making use of resources that are already available, such as the excellent Brite Ideas Live from LTDI (www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/ltdi/briteideas/) or the theory into practice database (tip.psychology.org/). In fact when pressed about the kinds of representation that had actually had an impact on their own practice, academics were much more likely to cite narratives from colleagues about *'what they did, what went wrong, and how they survived'*.

How are representations of practice actually used in practice?

Most academic staff interviewed in this study had become proficient in the use of learning technologies with the support of specialist staff from a learning technologies unit, educational development unit or similar. Particularly as less enthusiastic and technically confident members of staff become involved with learning technology use, it must be anticipated that demand for structured support will increase. This makes it all the more important that representations of practice for dissemination should be capable of adaptation and adoption into new development programmes.

Once staff were relatively proficient in the use of learning technologies, the most effective ways of developing their practice were through peer support, particularly dialogues around collaborative projects where a document, software system or other artefact was being worked on in real time *('the real thing, in the real context, with the real person')*. New kinds of dialogical forum were evolving: institutional learning and teaching forums, 'change agent' networks, research seminars or reading groups in which practitioner-researchers talked with educational developers and academics in educational studies. Participants were often members of regional forums *('it's the ability to physically network as well as conduct things virtually')*, professional networks and 'self help groups', or had strong personal links with people in similar positions at nearby institutions. These forums provided opportunities to share representations of practice.

Among educational developers, collaborative development and delivery of materials across institutions

was also surprisingly common. '*Each institution would host [a workshop] once or twice a year. Whoever was coordinating would collect all the materials together from the presenters and that material was given out to all the staff developers at all the participating universities'.* It is interesting to note that the funding model as well as the ethos of educational development promotes a sharing of ideas and materials across institutions, while the funding model for student learning tends to encourage competition. Developers and learning technology staff have at least this advantage over the LTSN (Subject Centre) networks: that they already come from a centrally-funded and collaboratively-minded sector of HE. This suggests that one powerful way of developing learning and teaching practice may be to focus on shared materials and representations at the level of educational development itself. In other words, a shared culture and a set of shared resources may be most readily developed among those people who are already instrumental in developing learning and teaching in their own institutional contexts.

This in fact is the approach taken by the NetCulture project in Scotland which has supported regional networks of developers to articulate their own understanding of their development practice ('frameworks for practice') which can then be shared nationally. The process of developing these representations is understood to be as at least as valuable as the end product. The expectation is that an economy of representations will emerge which is highly re-usable and develops dynamically within a community of peers, rather than being designed to travel from expert contributors to non-expert users in producer-consumer mode. In an ideal world the subject-specialist networks will also come to operate in this way. It seems likely that this will require a greater cultural shift, however, and the LTSN networks will remain to some extent at least dependent on the developer networks to support a robust economy of shared representations that can be applied across subject areas.

Among academics there was strong support for the idea of a national network to share representations of practice:

> *There are people like me at every university in the country and we could all be working separately to get this kind of information together.*

> *You need information from outside the system. You can't work in a closed system*

At the same time, there was resistance to having multiple points of access, all of which might need to be monitored for new ideas. Academic staff generally regarded their subject-specific LTSN as the network they were most likely to encounter in the course of everyday reflection on their practice, but to date their use of this network was relatively passive. For confident and expert

users the LTSN network will certainly grow in significance. Other academic staff, however, will continue to rely on face-to-face contact with local learning and teaching specialists. This suggests that Subject Centres need to cultivate a close relationship with the network of educational developers and should ensure that their representations of subject-specific practice are capable of being integrated into other, more generic, development opportunities.

No significant differences were detected across the different roles in the kinds of practice engaged in, including the practice of 'guiding' other staff in their use of resources. This suggests that participants who identified themselves as academics were nevertheless taking considerable responsibility for the development of others, a finding borne out in interviews.

Implications for educational developers

Most academic staff will not make radical changes to their understanding or practice of learning and teaching without some face to face encounter, whether this is with a mentor, a learning set, a workshop leader or their colleagues. Within these contexts, flexible representations of learning and teaching practice can be enormously useful at scaffolding change and developing a shared understanding of what is involved. Staff development materials are among the most familiar examples here, but interactive documents, structured frameworks, toolkits and guidelines all have an important role to play. 'Texts about' learning and teaching, including case studies, articles, reviews, action research reports and evidence from video recordings or teaching observations are extremely powerful sources of information, especially for more confident and proficient practitioners. They are less likely to be adopted directly into practice, however, and novices will need some contextualising framework of explanation if they are to make good sense of them.

Nationally, there are far more users than creators of staff development resources. The aim should therefore be to develop a system of mutually beneficial exchange among those staff (especially educational developers) who are already adapting or creating materials of their own. This economy will flourish if representations are open-ended and flexible enough to be inserted into different local contexts, and if all staff involved perceive a benefit from the collaboration. Even so, there are likely to be categories of material, including in this study strategic frameworks, case studies and project outcomes, which will not be created and shared without specific investment. This will probably always be the case with particularly innovative examples of practice.

The EFFECTS and SoURCE projects are now working to develop a network of regional learning technology

groups, alongside a shared national resource of case studies, staff development materials and evaluation reports to support new practices in learning and teaching. The aim is for the networks and resources to become mutually supporting over time, with materials being adapted, inserted into programmes of staff development, commented upon and collaboratively re-developed. The literature on networks of practice [see for example Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998), McConnell (2000), Kollock and Smith (2000), Foster *et al* (2001)] suggests that collaborative development of this kind both strengthens the network and allows more useful representations and artefacts to emerge.

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8 A Developmental Framework for Evaluating Institutional Change

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Introduction

In this article we present our developmental framework for an institutional evaluation of a major change, namely the introduction of a VLE (virtual learning environment) across Coventry University. This framework serves the dual purpose of capturing the complexity of such an implementation and of assisting in its development. It represents a combination of insights we have gleaned from Stake's (1967) 'Countenance Model of Evaluation' and from Rothman and Friedman's (1999) concept of 'Action-Evaluation'. We present an outline of some of the things we have taken from each of these two evaluation approaches to fit with our local context. We conclude with suggested guidelines based on these in the hope that other educational developers can benefit from our recent experience.

Defining the what, why and how of our evaluation

What
We are evaluating the implementation of a single VLE across a university from an institutional perspective.

Why
The purpose of the evaluation is threefold: Firstly, to inform and advise the rolling implementation itself; secondly, to inform and advise changes in University processes and procedures; thirdly, to inform the wider academic community.

How
Many evaluations are undertaken by an external researcher at the final phase of a project, often with fund-holders as the key audience in mind. Such evaluations have limited value because, as summative documents, they primarily make judgements about the value of a project once it has finished. More productive in our case, however, would be an evaluation that is participatory and developmental; one that can inform the drive for improvement beyond the bounds of the project itself. Moreover, because the intervention affects the whole institution its success depends on the change process being inclusive. The spectrum of stakeholders is large: students, tutors, managers, technical and administrative units, external adopters and educational developers. We have therefore formulated an evaluation framework capable of handling the high degree of complexity involved in enabling institutional change; reflexive enough to respond to developments over time

(attitude shifts, growth in expertise, student access, upgrades to software etc) and inclusive in the light of contributions and feedback from stakeholders.

The framework: the countenance model

The framework we have adopted comes partly from Robert Stake's (1967) countenance model of evaluation but the spirit with which we apply the research is more akin to Friedman and Rothman's (1999) descriptions of action evaluation.

A strength of Stake's countenance model is in its accommodation and structuring of different levels of data. In our evaluation we have gathered data of variable status: some lecturers and students offer their own evaluations of online learning in modules with which they have been involved; computing services give us statistical records of user-patterns; some data comes from online surveys; some data is generated within robust research frameworks while other data is more informal and anecdotal. In sum, we have a mix of qualitative and quantitative, formal and informal, primary and secondary data. Within Stake's model, all of this data can be managed in sets according to the categories it serves within a matrix. Stake's matrix allows an analysis of this data in relational terms as shown in Figure 1 and described below.
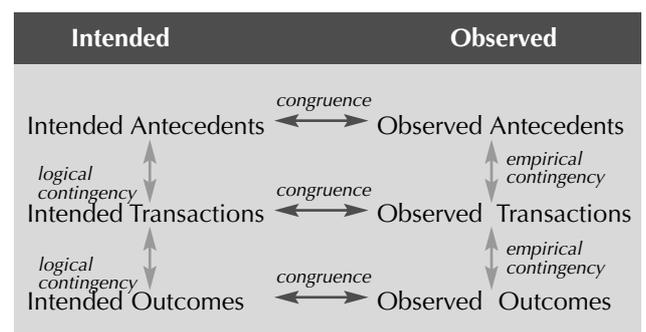

Figure 1 Stake's matrix for processing descriptive data

The matrix offers six boxes for the processing of descriptive data and it dictates the relationships that can be expected between them. Stake defines three levels in the process, namely Antecedents (conditions existing prior to the intervention), Transactions (encounters and negotiations of the intervention itself) and Outcomes (outcomes arising during the intervention). Whatever data we have concerning institutional readiness for a

University-wide VLE, for an example, is therefore encapsulated within the antecedent phase.

Within each phase there arises a degree of congruence between what was intended during that stage and what is observed. As shown in the matrix, each of these levels is contingent on the previous one and an internal logic between intentions at each of the levels is sought. Similarly, some observed antecedents will impinge on observed transactions and both may affect observed outcomes.

At this stage of the evaluation research, we are not concerned with the disparate nature of our data because a) we want to encourage all stakeholders to present their views, impressions, analysis and experience; and b) whatever judgements we make on the basis of this will be presented back to key stakeholders for their views and for a refined analysis. This iterative phase has close affinities with action-evaluation.

Action-evaluation

While we found Stake's matrix an invaluable aid for the collection and management of our data, the overall model is formulated for an external evaluator. Although there are procedural similarities between Stake's and Friedman and Rothman's model of action-evaluation, the latter gives greater emphasis on continual stake-holder participation for the developmental process. We share this emphasis in that we explore goals and issues with colleagues who are experimenting with online learning (often with internal funding to do so) and feed their views back into the evaluation process. Briefly, action-evaluation which is a close sibling of action research is structured around three key phases, namely:

> **The baseline phase**: in this phase the focus is on clarifying definitions of success. In our case this meant presenting our own analysis of intentions and their congruence with what is observed according to Stake's definition of these. The next stage of this

phase would involve clarifying future strategies and goals for the future. A further feature of this phase in action-evaluation consists in the online presentation of findings for discussion and again, this is something that we have made use of from year 0 of our evaluation. See for instance our discussion of virtual focus group research we established to assist in the choosing of a VLE for Coventry University (Deepwell and Cousin, 1998).

> **The formative phase:** in this phase the online data and analysis forms the basis for a face to face meeting to "ensure that key project leaders, participants and others are 'on the same' page about their goals as they move ahead" (Rothman and Friedman, 1999, p.4)

This face to face meeting is following by the development of a customised web-based discussion forum in order that stakeholders can monitor and revise their goals and action plans as they seek to implement them. In the case of Coventry, we have moved beyond the facility of an intranet for the purposes of data management and discussion in that we have a public evaluation website linked to CHED's homepage at www.coventry.ac.uk/ched.

> **The summative phase:** this is the final stage in which "participants take stock of their progress using their evolved goals to establish criteria for retrospective assessment" (p.5). We at Coventry are approaching this phase, since we are now in year 4 of a five year implementation cycle.

We now describe how we have applied our framework based on the two approaches above mentioned. Below is a snapshot from our evaluation website, which shows how broad issues arising from the data are classified into the respective boxes of the matrix – drawn from Stake's – for the transaction phase of the Coventry implementation.

The judgements made under 'observed transactions' are in the light of data emerging from a number of sources.

Intended transactions	Observed transactions
institutional change	institutional change
10+% active use	20+% uptake
full and equitable access	partial access, unreliability of systems (registrations)
ease of adoption	ease of adoption
provision of adequate training and support	variable support
motivation	individual effort, time investment and perseverance
any-time any-place learning	any-time any-place module resources
student-centred approach	new communication channels

Table 1 A snapshot from Coventry University's evaluation website

The above structure allows us to interrogate this data for degrees of correspondence and degrees of variance between the two aspects (intended and observed) as well as a progression from the previous phase (antecedent) towards the subsequent phase (outcome). A discussion of one of these issues, namely provision for training and support, should serve to show how the countenance evaluator can provide a narrative around this data and how some of the principles of action-evaluation come into play.

Provision of training and support

- Intended: the provision of adequate training and support, both technical and pedagogical

Local support was deemed an essential part of the rolling out of the VLE. To this end, there was a 10-week familiarisation programme for a group of technical support staff who assessed themselves against a competence list of tasks associated with supporting the VLE, including skills in general software used by colleagues. In each School there were also academic colleagues charged as local educational developers to support the adoption process. Additionally, a team of three people in the Centre for Higher Education Development took on the role of a central support team for WebCT. The computing services general helpdesk supported student users. In a couple of instances, extra, short-term appointments were made to produce teaching materials in a format suitable for the VLE.

- Observed: variable support

Data and feedback concerning the effectiveness of the VLE support showed that the technical experts were rarely able to perform in this role because they had not been given remission from other tasks. In most cases, they did not promote their support role and soon lost the knowledge they had acquired during the training programme through disuse. The temporary appointments were effective for the jobs they were appointed to do, although there appeared to be little evidence that they have encouraged adoption beyond the close circle of colleagues who were able to draw on their services. Local academic support on the other hand has developed more successfully, both through the Taskforce members and independently of them (e.g. buddy systems). The team in CHED has continued to provide central support through online information, training sessions and a busy telephone and email hotline.

- Action resulting from formative evaluation

The main thrust of the support provided both centrally and locally continues to encourage and empower colleagues to work directly with the VLE to enhance their teaching and learning. Localised and often informal academic support is recognised as a key to VLE support and training. The few short-term appointments which were made to "pump prime" the implementation have now come to an end. The nature of academic development in the institution is also responding in the light of this and becoming more of a consultancy, with responses tailored to individual teaching and learning requirements.

Conclusion and guidelines

We hope we have offered enough explanation and example to support an introduction to our framework and to some of the strengths of two complementary approaches to evaluation. Further examples can be found on our website. We conclude by suggesting a set of guidelines based on our evaluation research for colleagues interested in adapting our framework to their own context.

- Offer a draft evaluation strategy for comment and refinement with stakeholders

- Set up a shared resource base, e.g. Intranet or web site – allow range of stakeholders/ evaluators to contribute

- Encourage devolved ownership of the evaluation

- Invite feedback and discussion (online and face to face) regularly

- Include differing perspectives and voices

- Propose dates for the different phases of the evaluation and convene feedback and discussion meetings

- State the expected results of each phase of the intervention and the data needed to support them

- Provide all stakeholders with access to the ongoing evaluation research

- Allow for a mix of quantitative and qualitative data

- Develop a structure for the collection, management and analysis of data

- Look beyond goal fulfilment for unexpected outcomes and their implications.

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9 Reflection or evidence?

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'Reality is seen through a lens, and the lens distorts'
(Atwood, 2002: 106).

This looks like a dichotomy – it's apparently either reflection or evidence and not reflection and evidence or even reflection on evidence. I prefer the latter myself.

The putative reflection/evidence dichotomy also seems to have something to do with what Richard Pring (2000) sees as an *apartheid* between positivism and constructivism. It's the positivists who boldly collect the evidence and it's the constructivists who, first of all, challenge the data and then reflect on what has been collected from their own idiosyncratic points of view. And never the twain shall meet.

Pring argues that there is a *false dualism* which divides the positivist or scientific paradigm from the constructivist paradigm. Admittedly the two paradigms have contrasting conceptions of truth, reality and objectivity. Scientists/positivists claim that their evidence shows the world *actually as it is.* Constructivists alternatively see *reality* as *socially-constructed*, indeed that there are multiple realities resulting from our various ways of reflecting on the evidence. Or as William Blake more succinctly put it: *as a man is, so he sees.* Pring's solution to what he sees as a false dualism is that we all – researchers, teachers, managers – should be *eclectic* in our search for truth and should see the benefits of both science (evidence-based) and constructivism (reflection) as strategies of inquiry. However it's also worth noting that constructivists also see themselves not just as reflecting on evidence but also as providing evidence themselves from their own qualitative inquiries.

Martyn Hammersley (2002) has a different stance towards the evidence/reflection argument. For him much of the crisis in educational research stems from the *false expectations* raised by government bodies and positivist researchers who peddle the idea that scientific evidence-based methods of research can solve our main educational problems. They do so by promoting and funding large-scale quantitative studies and by denigrating what they see as the ideologically-based research favoured by liberal academics. He argues that the evidence-based model of research applies an inappropriate, technical approach to what is, in education, a judgement-based and reflective set of activities. Hammersley's solution is that we should adopt what he calls a moderate *enlightenment model* that only offers a limited role for evidence-based research in helping to improve practice since *'practice cannot be founded on what research produces'.* Hammersley, therefore, is only *partially eclectic* (forgive the oxymoron) compared to Pring and favours a judgement-based and reflective approach to education.

Another recent examination of academic inquiry by Angela Brew (2001) suggests that there is a *false primacy* of positivist, evidence-based approaches to educational research resulting from the domination of research by economic or performative agendas. Like Hammersley she sees central policies and funders favouring objectivist, evidence-based approaches which, she believes, limit and impoverish research and lead to a premature closure of inquiry. She also sees this closed positivist view of research as dominated by masculine and colonialist discourses. Her solution to this problem is to call for a move away from positivist, evidence-based approaches towards 'critically reflective research' where personal and social learning, *the journey*, should be seen as more important than discovering the truth as such.

My pragmatic take on the evidence/reflection debate inclines me towards the latter but does not totally reject the former. We pragmatists, whilst agreeing with Barnett (2000) that the *false certainty* of traditional positivist research needs to be weakened, nevertheless now see science or evidence-based research adopting a post-positivist and *useful* (a good pragmatic word) role of inquiring into certain aspects of the world. The pragmatist Richard Rorty, for example, sees modern science as 'a gloriously imaginative way of describing things' and as a 'brilliantly successful' way of predicting and controlling physical phenomena but he rejects the claim that science provides 'redemptive truth' (see Rorty, 2000). Science cannot, he argues, supply us with a set of beliefs that would end, once and for all, *the process of reflection* on what we should do with ourselves. It cannot present us with the reality behind the appearance, the one true description of what is out there, of what is going on, of the final secret (Rorty, 2000). Rorty commends John Dewey's suggestion that we should abandon the idea that we can (as the positivists previously claimed) say *how things really are* and should content ourselves with *how they might best be described* in order to meet our particular human needs and purposes (see Rorty, 1999). Indeed Rorty abandons the search for truth (like Brew) as such, especially where this is claimed as 'corresponding to reality', and inclines instead towards a notion of 'intersubjective agreement'.

So pragmatists (and postmodernists?) see a role for evidence-based research but only so far as it moderates its claims away from 'authoritative pronouncements' and towards the more modest 'tentative responses, possible readings and suggested ideas for action' identified by Barnett as the role for the renewed postmodern university (Barnett, 2000).

Reflection is the main game in the postmodern world since the evidence we are now offered is no longer certain and is no more than tentative. All we can do

when we have seen the evidence, and when we have brought our beliefs and values and experience to bear upon that evidence, is to enter into scholarly and indeed learning *conversations* with our colleagues until we have reached some kind of consensus. Rorty calls this a dialectical process of *reflective equilibrium* and believes it to be the most appropriate approach for a liberal, democratic society:

Such a society will become accustomed to the thought that *social policy needs no more authority than successful accommodation among individuals,* individuals who find themselves heir to the same historical traditions and faced with the same problems. It will be a society that encourages 'the end of ideology', that takes *reflective equilibrium* as the only method needed in discussing social policy (Rorty, 1991:184) – my italics).

We pragmatists agree, however, that any consensus reached, any equilibrium achieved, can only be provisional and temporary. We can lay a current consensus on the table but we cannot preclude *dissensus.* Consequently critical discourse or the process of looking for reflective equilibrium condemns us to endless continuing dialogue because we are robbed of ultimate correctness or certainty. As Rorty puts it the point of edifying philosophy is to *keep the conversation going* rather than to find objective truth. Indeed all post-positivist science can offer in its conversations is what Rorty calls 'a new fuzziness' (Rorty, 1991: 64).

I do, however, have a problem with 'reflection'. It is a somewhat misleading term. Biggs argues that what we do in professional practice is not to look for what is in the mirror but what *might be*; that is, we look for or seek an improvement on practice (see Biggs, 1999: 6).

I would much rather call this process 'refraction' since what we actually do is to see and judge and construct and re-construct our practice through our own distorting prism of beliefs (including, for humble teachers such as us, our implicit or explicit theory of teaching) and desires. 'Refraction' suggests, quite appropriately, that when we look at our professional educational practice we see it from our own idiosyncratic 'angle', we see it through a prismatic lens made up of who we are. What we see and judge is not so much a truth about our teaching but a distortion based on our knowledge, experience and understanding of what, for example, we have become as a teacher. This distortion may well be shared with others as part of a continuing conversation we might have about what we think, for example, good teaching or good educational practice is or should be. Our collective set of distortions will become part of our learning conversations and may lead to Rorty's reflective equilibrium.

Perhaps, though, by using the term 'refraction' we would more explicitly acknowledge or even celebrate that what we see when we examine our academic practice is education through a (prismatic) glass darkly rather than education clearly evidenced. We should declare that what see is refracted through the lens of our beliefs and values. What I see from my pragmatic angle is also how I judge: my critical refractive lens is a set of fuzzy (and distorting and contentious) pragmatic concepts – autonomy, conversation, democracy, freedom, growth, hope, justice, variety – I refract therefore I am.

Rorty – my pragmatic hero – believes that beyond reflective equilibrium (beyond my refractive equilibrium) lies hope for something better. For him *hope* is 'the ability to believe that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and freer than, the past' and as such is 'the condition of *growth*'.

Reflection/refraction is the way we distort and twist and spin the evidence/experience to suit our purposes for a better future. I'm comfortable with that. Are you?

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10 Putting the 'E' into 'QA'

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Introduction

In *Educational Developments* Issue 3.1 (2002), Norman Jackson presented a thorough and thought-provoking analysis of the challenges of engaging staff and institutions in quality enhancement (QE) within the context of Quality Assurance (QA) processes. He argued that the potential benefits of QE would only be achieved if the QA process engages people about thinking hard about what they are doing and why they are doing it. He cautioned that once QA becomes routinised it loses its potency as an aid to self-review and development, and admitted that a significant gap still existed between enhancement and compliance. He presented us with a set of general principles as a guide to how that gap might be closed.

This article provides some additional perspectives on Norman Jackson's analysis by drawing upon work on educational innovation. It offers insights into how we can provide the conditions to engage staff in QE within institutional environments where QA, like RAE, has almost become a mini-industry in the quest to achieve good results. I am aware that since Norman's article a lot has happened in terms of national policy initiatives but my concern here is how we can achieve real change within institutions.

Context

We know that assessment has a significant influence on student learning. The parallels with institutional assessment and behaviour are striking. The focus on QA for reward tends to push QE to the icing on the cake. The behaviour is almost Pavlovian and one is reminded of the classic behaviourist statement that 'behaviour is determined by its consequences'. Pursuing this behaviourist analogy suggests that the current QA regime needs to be changed to engage and reward greater QE behaviour. In terms of Biggs' (1999) constructive alignment model, we need to be assessing higher-order learning outcomes and generating appropriate learning activity and behaviour. We are yet to see whether the new QA regime is able to do this.

This may be too simplistic an analysis as universities are complex organisations with multiple goals and ways of working. We know that facilitating change within universities is notoriously difficult (e.g. Becher and Kogan, 1992). Behaviourally-driven change management models have limitations in such environments and we need to look at change models which take into account the human and social dimensions of institutional activity. Put another way, how are we going to engage hearts and minds, and facilitate a deep approach to the teaching role, rather than a more compliant and minimalist surface approach?

In my experience, new academic staff coming to the usual learning and teaching introductory course are generally keen and motivated to become good teachers. They want to do a good job. Even though one gets a range of reactions to such courses (e.g. those who want the basic survival kit and those who want some underlying theory or rationale for their teaching), most appear committed to continue to develop their teaching. However, as the process of socialisation into their own departmental cultures occurs these good intentions give way to other priorities. In a research-led university, the RAE is a priority and competes heavily for time. The demands of teaching are also such that development can get edged out to a survival approach.

All the usual suspects are present, e.g. lack of priority given to teaching, rewards systems which do not value teaching as much as research, little time or recognition for teaching development activities. In spite of the higher profile of QA and its impact on institutions, and of institutional learning and teaching strategies, the management of disciplinary groups, especially in a research-led environment, feel that that they have to favour the reputational activities of scholarship and research, and to protect time for them. Under these circumstances engaging people in QE through QA is challenging.

The reality at the chalk face does not give one grounds for optimism. Awareness of quality policies and issues tends not to be all that high except for those involved in relevant quality committees. The vast volume of QA procedural and related documentation is off-putting and is written in a style which is far from clear and engaging, and appears to have low face validity for many as far as academic practice is concerned. This is possibly unsurprising as it tends to be written by those not directly engaged in teaching and learning. Anyway, universities have various people and units who can answer quality questions related to procedures, so academic staff need not engage with the material directly.

QA 'Speak' a Barrier to QE?

The volume, clarity and style of much QA material are a concern. For example, take the development of assessment strategies. The QAA Code of Practice (2000) document lacks a sense of theoretical and practical coherence to those charged with writing an assessment strategy. The LTSN Generic Learning and Teaching Centre (Mutch and Brown, 2001) attempted to produce

a more coherent guide. It is a better written document but becomes overwhelmed by numerous checklist points in its quest to convey clarity and practical guidance.

Writing credible and clear QA procedural guides is a craft. They need to possess a convincing rationale which articulates with the reality of academic practice and to offer practical examples. If they do not, disengagement is likely to follow with the adoption of surface learning behaviour and a tick-box mentality.

The development of programme specifications perhaps provided an ideal opportunity to link QA to QE by stimulating fundamental reviews of curricula along the lines of the principles of constructive alignment. However, the rationale and guidance provided left many staff unsure and sceptical of why and how they should be proceeding in this way. There are also many real and unresolved issues regarding, say, the use of learning outcomes which many teachers feel require further debate (e.g. Hussey and Smith, 2002). Typically quality units issue instructions and highlight the importance of meeting deadlines for the production of programme specifications. While educational developers might offer workshops on the principles of programme specifications, I suspect that in many cases they do not form part of a coherent institutional strategy for quality enhancement. Heads of department and other institutional managers tend to think primarily of meeting deadlines rather than engaging staff in enhancement debates. Programme specifications simply need to be produced to satisfy an external agency's requirements.

Perhaps this is an exaggerated view of reality but it does highlight worrying trends towards teaching staff disengagement with QA matters and the lack of strategic leadership exhibited by academic mangers in the quest to meet short-term political objectives. Possibly a redeeming feature for QA and QE is the development of SEDA- and ILT-accredited programmes in many institutions for new teaching staff. Such courses provide an opportunity for long-term engagement in initial professional development which can lead to a deeper understanding of the educational issues and a genuine stimulus for taking a more professional and informed view of teaching and learning. Some departments view the products of such courses as the new 'experts' in learning and teaching, and as people they can rely upon to translate the jargon of QA and provide guidance and consultancy on local teaching policy and practice.

An Innovation Perspective

In their study of radical innovations in Swedish universities, Berg and Ostergren (1977) employed Lewin's (1951) systems perspective as an analytical framework. They postulated four decisive factors which were likely to explain the relative success or failure of such innovations: power, gain/loss, ownership and leadership. Using their framework can provide useful insights into both the problems and opportunities associated with getting higher education teachers engaged in QE.

In terms of power, the QA regime represents a driver towards compliance in terms of departmental and institutional reward (i.e. favourable ratings which find their way into league tables). QE drivers are difficult to locate. Innovatory teaching is recognised but not necessarily rewarded. If it is too innovatory, it is perhaps even frowned upon in case it falls outside QA expectations. What should be primarily developmental activities, such as staff appraisal, observation of teaching and student feedback, are increasingly used as crude performance measures of individual teachers in the quest to assure quality and standards by managers. This can weaken trust, collegiality, openness and risk-taking.

In terms of gains and losses for the individual, there are personal gains of professional satisfaction, improved efficiency and improved student learning which are more widespread than the small bands of usual enthusiasts might indicate. Many staff work on their teaching relatively quietly, possibly because they do not wish to be identified as teaching enthusiasts! Some institutions have teaching award schemes which recognise excellence and perhaps reward it with money and development time. But on the downside, there is rarely time formally recognised for teaching development, let alone teaching preparation. The allowance for preparation in workload management schemes tends to be minimal. New staff in particular can feel vulnerable under these regimes. In workshops I run on lecture preparation, many new teachers report that they typically spend two days for every hour of lecture preparation. To admit this in a department can suggest lack of competence. Spending time on developing quality teaching and learning, especially in a research-intensive environment, does not get one promotion.

In terms of ownership, QA can bring a sense of disenfranchisement over academic experience and judgement in teaching matters. A well-meaning bureaucratic QA industry has gradually evolved which appears to many teachers to issue guidelines on policy and practice with little by way of real consultation with practitioners and the reality of their experience, and by being not particularly informed by academic scholarship and research into higher education teaching. Local managers may fume at more impositions but life is too short to create a fuss and so they unconsciously collude to disengage academic practitioners from challenging QA demands and engaging in the QA debate.

Educational developers to the rescue? Possibly, but in some institutions their status has been eroded in favour of strengthening QA units to ensure that external requirements are met. Professional administrators rather

than academic practitioners or educational developers increasingly advise institutional learning and teaching policy bodies perhaps because they are felt to be a safer pair of hands politically in QA terms. Even QE support functions (e.g. professional development) have become increasingly subsumed within the professional administrative sector, which arguably removes them from their roots and ownership in academic practice. Implicitly, this can send a message that QA and QE are things that are done to academics rather than with them or by them.

Institutional and local leadership should ideally be able to stand back from the detail, see the bigger picture and inspire a way forward towards strategically and credibly coherent outcomes. With the pressures many universities are under, high quality leadership and management would seem vital in terms of creating a vision, signing people up to it and constructing a practical and effective strategy for achieving agreed goals. The politicised environment in which universities operate has led to a more political style of leadership and management in many institutions. The rhetoric of goals, targets and strategies often gives way to the quick fix. Maybe this is understandable in response to changing external demands and the survival instinct, but it undermines deep thought and reflection, and the achievement of long-term meaningful goals.

As well as the head of department, there is now an infrastructure of leaders and management co-ordinators for learning and teaching in most institutions. My observation is that many are part-time, are mostly occupied with dealing with the demands of QA and have little by way of recognition or status. At the institutional level we still have some way to go in conceptualising and implementing effective strategies for learning and teaching in a co-ordinated way and linking these holistically to other institutional strategies.

The above analysis suggests that the long-standing issues of recognition and reward for teaching, and time for development remain in a system where there are increasing demands on an academic's time. QA demands have failed to engage practitioners in a deep sense and there are increasing tensions as traditional development activities are increasingly used as evidence of performance. Institutional investment in QE has tended to migrate towards strengthening QA systems which are often managed centrally. At the same time, academic ownership of QA, and increasingly of QE, support processes has been weakened.

The one optimistic QE development is that of SEDA – and ILT– accredited programmes for new lecturers which are typically run by educational developers or education academics, and which are underpinned by scholarship and research, and encourage a critical, reflective and questioning attitude. Such programmes could well be a Trojan Horse in providing well-informed university teachers with the understanding and confidence to

influence the QA and QE debates. We should not forget SEDA's pioneering work in this area and the impetus it is continuing to provide in the whole area of accredited professional development. This is a good example of practitioners taking control of the agenda.

Possible Ways Forward

Against this reality, Norman Jackson's analysis and recommendations appear idealistic. However, it is easier to provide a critique than it is to offer positive solutions. The solutions are not quick or easy as they tend to be systemic and reflect how perceptions of environments within which people work can influence their approach to what they do and how they do it, e.g. compare the research on students' experiences of their course environments and their approaches to learning (Ramsden, 1992).

I have selected three key solutions to engage staff positively in QE. The first involves simply dealing with the long-overdue problem of providing recognition and reward for teaching in promotions criteria, coupled with providing genuine time for teaching development. The Government's recent White Paper on The Future of Higher Education (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) identifies this as a priority, which may drive some institutions to giving it a sense of urgency.

The second involves building positively on the success of the SEDA - and ILT-accredited programmes for new lecturers, influenced by SEDA's innovatory work, initiated by the Dearing Report (1997) in the context of professionalising teaching and recognising it as a scholarly activity. We need to place a greater emphasis on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and one way of elevating its importance is through some form of accreditation scheme. Such a scheme needs to be simple to operate and not unduly burdensome. SEDA has already initiated work in this are but credit-bearing CPD provision through institutional validation may prove an attractive option for some staff who want the value and currency of credit to contribute towards a recognised qualification.

There are issues to resolve, however, if staff are to feel a sense of ownership over their own CPD. There are tensions between institutional human resources and learning and teaching strategies. While the human resources function needs to concern itself with the delivery of its corresponding institutional strategy, institutional restructuring has tended to bring the educational development function within a human resources operation and removed it from an academic and scholarship base. If CPD is to articulate genuinely with academic practice, feel collegial and credible, and be informed by scholarship and research, educational development needs to be relocated where it has always

belonged – within an academic rather than an administrative environment.

Finally, we need to professionalise the management of teaching and learning so that those responsible for key areas of educational strategy and delivery, whether it be the course co-ordinator, faculty leader or pro-vice-chancellor, can exercise informed and strategic leadership. Educational management in higher education seems to me to be a neglected area and typically has low status and recognition. Yet, potentially, it can have considerable systemic impact in promoting innovation and development, and enabling people to work together more effectively in a joined-up way. More importantly, many of these positions are held by academics who should be able to make that vital connection with academic practice and facilitate linkages between QA and QE.

Ramsden's study (1998) of leadership in higher education offers some useful links between research on the impact of departmental environments on students' approaches to learning, and the wider impact organisational environments have on teachers' approaches to teaching and how these impact on students. As he observes: 'Good academic leadership should help create an environment for academics to learn how to teach better: an environment where interest in teaching is nurtured, and where solving educational problems collaboratively is routine' (p64). But this can only happen if there is clear leadership from the very top of the institution – and maybe performance-related pay to go with it!

End Note

As I completed this piece, the Cooke Report (2003) was published which proposed, among other things, the establishment of a new Academy for Advancement of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. No doubt there will be much debate about its implications but for the purposes of this article, it is interesting simply to compare the above analysis with some of the Report's observations:

'the arrangements for QE are complex and fragmented'

'QE…flourishes in an environment which allows space for staff and students to generate enthusiasm and commitment'

'QE is primarily an academic issue'

'QE… involves innovation and risk'

'One of the notable weaknesses of …QE in HE is that policies and strategies tend to be largely reactive…'

'QE is fundamentally a responsibility of management in institutions, and of the busy individual professionals in higher education'

'the management of learning and teaching should be within the remit of the Academy proposed'.

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11 Is There an Ideal Method for Evaluating New Lecturer Development?

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Abstract

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

Introduction

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

> 'Yes, though no formal systematic evidence has been collected'

> 'Yes, better QAA scores and generally a more positive attitude towards HE teaching as a profession'

> 'I have observed the 'ah-hah' experience in several of the participants, and many have striven to improve the manner in which they facilitate interaction between students'

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

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

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

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

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

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels

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

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

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

3 Behaviour:
To measure behavioural change, evidence is sought in the workplace: how well have the knowledge and skills from the course been transferred into what the person does when back at work? (Boyle & Crosby, 1997: 3) Four conditions are necessary. The person must
a have a desire to change
b know what to do and how to do it
c work in the right climate
d be rewarded for changing (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 23).

4 Results:
The most important and difficult measure is impact of

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

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

The Training Approach to Evaluation: A Critique

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

- Analysis of what does or does not work needs to examine the **values and view of knowledge** which underpin the course, and which are held by stakeholders, since these will define what is valued and what is seen to 'work'.

- If we are to gain credibility through theorizing, we need to acknowledge, in a theorized approach, firstly, the power and influence of these different **stakeholders**,

- Secondly, the **context** for evaluation and policy-making within which these stakeholders operate, and

- Thirdly, the best **methods** to use for our purposes.

- The approach must, however, be **practical** and offer a workable model.

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

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

Kirkpatrick's values seem rooted in a functional, commercial relationship, on a straightforward input–output model: 'If my customers are unhappy, it is my fault, and my challenge is to please them' (Kirkpatrick, 1994: 72), while writers in the evaluation literature start evaluation with an investigation of the values and world view which underpin the programme and the evaluation. We need, for example, to decide if, philosophicallly, we support the quantitative paradigm or the qualitative paradigm, and we need to question the

assumptions about truth and knowledge which underpin these different approaches. This is an especially thorny issue in my own university, where great value is placed on 'scientific knowledge' (usually associated with the quantitative paradigm), and an evaluation may not be valued unless it follows one of two strategies:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For Kirkpatrick, the context does not go much further than the participant's immediate supervisor. Five kinds of climate affect learning effectiveness, all referring to degrees of support from the supervisor: preventing,

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

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

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

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

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

Factor 4: What about Kirkpatrick and **methods**?

One major methodological decision is whether to use quantitative or qualitative methods. While evaluators appreciate the apparent objectivity of quantitative

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

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

Factor 5: Does Kirkpatrick offer a practical model?

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

The Alternatives

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

Alternative 1: Realistic Evaluation
Realistic Evaluation (RE) is theory-driven, so evaluation starts by hypothesizing the links between three key

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

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

Factor 1: The importance of values and views of knowledge

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

Factor 2: Stakeholder involvement.

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

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

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

Factor 3: Context

Effective RE means obtaining a better understanding of the contextual factors which affect outcomes (Pawson and Tilley 1997: 114), and which explain the successes and failures of programmes (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 70).

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

Factor 4: Methods in RE start with theorizing, for example, about what it is about the LDP which works. Any evaluative tools can be used, so long as the evaluation is theory-, not data-driven (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 155), and so long as the methods reveal the programme CMO (Pawson & Tilley, 1997: 114).

Factor 5: Practical model?

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

Concluding our assessment of Realistic Evaluation as a tool for educational developers, this approach has many attractive aspects - it allows an eclectic range of methods; it recognises contextual factors; it aids policy-making; it encourages sub-group analysis; it involves stake-holders in hypothesis formulation; it embraces a semi-scientific approach; the 'Context + Mechanism leads to Outcome' principle is simple but sufficiently complex for most situations; it looks at the world through a social window, but does not sound too 'sociological'. However, the advantages of Realistic Evaluation are outweighed by the important

disadvantage of time commitment, so as a practical model Realistic Evaluation may not be practical enough for educational development. As one educational developer told me 'I can carry out substantial evaluation, or I can deliver the programme – not both.'

Alternative 2: RUFDATA

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

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

Reasons and purposes
Uses
Focus
Data and evidence
Audience
Timing
Agency.

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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12 Some Thoughts on Scholarship

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In the Editorial for *Educational Developments* 4.3, Brand (2003) gave a run down on present ideas of 'Scholarship', starting with Boyer (1990). However, since until quite recently one meaning of this word was (Collins 1979) "financial aid provided for a scholar because of academic merit", one should dig perhaps a little deeper in searching for the current meaning of the word and the concept it represents. When I did this, some years before Boyer (Elton 1986), I quoted Schwartzman, in Clark (1983), who traced it back to the Humboldtian concept of Wissenschaft, which as a concept is somewhat strange to the Anglo-Saxon mind and the importance of which was consequently undervalued at the time. I defined it in terms of a new and/or deeper understanding of what is already known and concluded that

- universities should be active in three fields – teaching, scholarship and research;

- scholarship should influence both teaching and research;

- work in either teaching or research which is not influenced by scholarship is not fit to be university work.

This last point is most important; acceptance of it would change much teaching and question the appropriateness of some research.

My main concern at the time was to establish the essential conditions for a symbiotic relationship between teaching and research and this remains an important issue. It was re-affirmed by Boyer (1987) when he wrote that 'Scholarship is not an esoteric appendage; it is at the heart of what the profession is all about'. I enlarged on this in a second article (1992), by which time Boyer's ideas had become known, largely through the work of Rice (1991) who systematised Boyer's four forms of scholarship in terms of different ways of knowing, based on two polarities: concrete/abstract and reflective/active, which he linked to the Kolb cycle of learning (Kolb 1984). By an – I feel sure – unintended slight of hand, Rice had moved the discussion from 'scholarship' to 'scholarships' and that is where it has been ever since. Unfortunately, this has led to a confusion between 'scholarship' as an academic practice and 'scholarship' as a means of categorising academic activities. At the same time – and this was a stroke of genius on the part of Boyer – the latter meaning has been used to make certain academic activities academically more respectable than they had been before.

Boyer's and Rice's important contributions were to affirm that scholarship should underlie not only disciplinary research (the scholarship of discovery), but also interdisciplinary work which requires a radically different approach from disciplinary research (the scholarship of integration), the applications of knowledge (the scholarship of practice) and finally the scholarship of teaching. It is fascinating that Rice found this the most difficult form of scholarship to characterise:

> "This is the most difficult form of scholarship to discuss because we do not have the appropriate language. In the working lives of individual faculty, scholarship and teaching are often seen as antithetical – competing for one's time and attention. We want to challenge this understanding and argue that quality teaching requires substantial scholarship that builds on, but is distinct from original research, and that this scholarly effort needs to be recognised and rewarded."

This understanding goes beyond the Humboldtian concept of Wissenschaft – incidentally, German academics would not have found the Rice quotation incomprehensible, since they do have the appropriate language – but opens the possibility that the scholarship of teaching should be concerned not only with the what of teaching, but also the how. It is this realisation which has driven much of the recent work of the Carnegie Foundation in the USA and of the Heads of Educational Development Group in this country. And to anyone who doubts that this discussion has a linguistic component I recommend the splendid article by the great Dutch physicist and engineer Casimir (1973).

The next question that arises is whether there are really only four scholarships, or whether this is a consequence of constructing them in terms of the two dichotomies. Is there not for instance a scholarship of assessment and evaluation, which stems from all four branches of the two dichotomies and challenges the very idea of dichotomies? Are we here in another area of not purely linguistic differences between languages? The English tend to be confrontational – between thesis and antithesis, as is epitomised by the form of the House of Commons where government and opposition face each other with a distance just exceeding two sword lengths between them, in contrast to the semicircular debating chambers common on the continent. For instance, we think of education and training as opposites and pass value judgments on them; on the continent they lead to a synthesis, known as Ausbildung in German and formation in French, but for which English has no word.

But we must go further than that. Ashby criticised academics for too rarely applying the kind of thought processes which they normally apply to their research to their teaching (Ashby 1969), as well as to their administrative tasks where committee decisions are made 'on the basis of dubious assumptions, scrappy data and mere hunch' (Ashby 1963). Should there be a scholarship of management and administration'? Vice-Chancellors please take note. I would go further

and ask, whether there is any activity in universities which cannot or should not be treated in a scholarly manner? A good example arose at the University of Surrey when David Canter used his knowledge of psychology to make for the first time the sign posting system comprehensible. After he had left, further changes to it, which lacked scholarship, restored its earlier incomprehensibility.

Finally, I want to take issue with recent suggestions, quoted in the Editorial, for possible changes to Boyer's four scholarships. A division into research, knowledge and teaching would be quite wrong, since knowledge – which is presumably what is more usually called scholarship or Wissenschaft – is not separate from research and teaching, but an essential part of both; and to separate teaching from learning is akin to separating the two sides of one coin. Rather than modifying Boyer, let us extend his ideas as I have indicated. I would be prepared to offer a small price to anyone who can find an activity carried out in a university which would not benefit from a scholarly component in its treatment but is at present not getting it.

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13 It ain't what you say, it's the way that you say it: an analysis of the language of educational development

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If you had to identify the single most important thing that educational developers do, would communication with the wider community of higher education staff be a contender? My guess is most people would say 'yes'.

Half-joking comments made by colleagues about the jargon in educational development encouraged me to delve a little further into what kinds of language are associated with educational development. I presented a small group of volunteers with two texts. One text was an extract from a university learning and teaching strategy, printed off the web. The other was an extract from an article published in the ILTHE's journal *Active Learning in Higher Education*. I used texts rather than spoken language for practical purposes, but the differences between speech and writing (as discussed by Biber 1988 and Hughes 1996, amongst others) mean that my conclusions can only partially be applied to spoken language. The eleven volunteers were drawn from across the science/arts/humanities range, and included a postgraduate student, newly appointed and established lecturing staff, a professor, and one member of academic related and one member of student support staff. I choose the texts as ones which communicate about educational development issues, and whose target audiences could be assumed to include those in an academic community with an interest in learning and teaching, a description which covered my group of respondents. (I'll consider later whether institutional learning and teaching strategies are supposed to be read by the academic community). I asked my readers to mark the texts for words and phrases which they didn't understand, which they found confusing, or which they didn't like. I also asked them whether they considered the texts were typical of their expectations of an educational development text.

Their responses suggested what many of us must suspect from experience, that language which is widely used in the texts associated with educational development does not communicate well with the academic community. My texts used expressions which were not understood, and a discourse which was disliked. If expressions which are commonplace in the discourse of educational development are not consistently understood in the academic community, then communication simply does not take place. There is no exchange of information, or at least, of the information which it was the writer's intention to communicate. That the discourse is disliked may be a more serious matter than that it is not understood. How do readers respond to a discourse they dislike? Often by ceasing to read, or by projecting their dislike of the discourse onto the concepts and intention of the writing. In the production of educational development texts, we may be actively building barriers between ourselves and the community which it is our job to influence.

From my respondents' comments, the aspects of the texts which they identified as difficult to understand, or as features they disliked were:

1 Use of specialist terms without appropriate explanation; *e.g. experiential learning; reflective activities, learning strategies; reusable learning resources.*

2 Abstraction; that is, describing learning and teaching as processes and products in which teachers and students aren't mentioned. For example, "checklists and questioning approaches […] can foster mere compliance with externally set demands [rather] than genuine self-questioning and appraisal"; "new developments and staff training will be introduced to support the adoption of new web tools to support e-Learning and the creation and capture of content to allow re-use within a virtual learning environment". Arguably, abstraction is a requirement for the discussion of complex phenomena, and is a characteristic of academic language. However, this doesn't mean people who teach like to read about teaching and learning as abstract processes which they have been written out of.

3 The discourse of marketing and management; for example, terms such as *new knowledge economy, stakeholders, monitoring learning,* and descriptions of learning and teaching as processes and products. The discourse associated with educational development is partly disliked because it locates higher education in an environment driven by the concerns of management and marketing (i.e. concerns for profit, for efficiency, for results identified because they can be measured rather than because they are valued). Even when there are no explicit indicators of this discourse in a text, there are what are interpreted as indirect markers, such as a focus on processes and results, abstracted from the direct experiences of teachers and students; see *abstraction* above.

4 Implicit assumptions not shared by the readers. Texts depend on shared implicit assumptions for coherence. Where these are not shared, the text seems illogical or incoherent to the reader, as explored by Christie (2000) in terms of cross-gender misunderstandings.

5 Habitual collocations, referred to by one of my respondents as 'formulae' and by another as 'mantras'; that is, words that are often used together,

so that a writer will use one automatically if they have already used the other. Examples include *checks and balances, robust mechanisms, skills framework, knowledge economy, content capture and maintaining excellence.*

6 Low editorial standards; these included long sentences, poor grammar and punctuation, lack of coherence between subheadings, lack of relationship between sub-headings and the main text, ambiguity, and what might be termed 'poor rhetoric', where the features of language which can be used for emphasis (such as repetition) are used randomly, with no care given to the aesthetic dimension of the writing.

My colleagues viewed these texts as having been written without the intention to communicate with them as readers. They deduced from this that they were not the intended audience, and my interpretation of their reactions is that the texts made them feel as if there was an attempt to diminish their experience and their worldview.

The experience of asking colleagues to consider these texts was salutary. If this is the way the wider academic community feels about educational development texts, then we are failing to communicate, and in fact, are driving a wedge between educational developers and the academic community through using our language. Instead of progressively informing colleagues of the values and evidence of educational development, and encouraging engagement with its principles, we may be having the opposite effect each time we speak, or press 'print'.

However, perhaps these texts were not in fact typical educational development texts, in which case, the community of educational development might be innocent of the worst of these charges. The learning and teaching strategy certainly may have been the output of some corporate committee with its focus on the requirements of the Funding Council, without an educational developer ever going near it. The journal article was from the first issue of *Active Learning,* and perhaps as such not representative of later papers. However, even making this allowance, educational development is not absolved. My readers were almost entirely in consensus that the texts were representative of educational development texts. None said, 'Wait a moment, educational development texts are much more accessible and 'simpatico' than this'. So even if to the eye of another educational developer these texts were a-typical in some respects, my respondents associated texts like these with educational development.

One reader did not think the learning and teaching strategy was a typical educational development text, but a 'management-strategy-jargon thing', and educational developers may agree. But I don't think this lets us off the hook either. Shouldn't learning and teaching strategies be educational development texts

and reflect those values? And shouldn't they be documents which have the academic community as a significant target readership? After all, who does the teaching in our universities? Shouldn't academic staff want to read learning and teaching strategies? Shouldn't their departments want to discuss them? What's gone wrong if this isn't the case? Even if the Funding Council needs documents written in the discourse of corporate management, isn't the learning and teaching strategy important enough to be edited for internal communication and discussion?

What are the implications for our practice? It's my view that communication is a core element of the work of educational development. The evidence of this small study has reinforced my intuition that our communication practices are problematic. Indeed, texts of which I was previously tolerant, because I understood them and because the ideology was acceptable or invisible to me, I now find troubling. Are there different ways of writing, and indeed talking, about educational development which we should cultivate and promote? Certainly, I am now more critical of texts that I encounter in the course of my work, and more aware of the need to examine my own language as I prepare course handbooks and papers for circulation amongst colleagues.

Communication is not a transparent process; there is not a one-to-one relationship between words and concepts as there would be if each time you used a word, it directed the listener or reader unambiguously to the concept you had in mind (see Singh 2004 for a straightforward discussion of this fundamental linguistic principle). Language is inherently ambiguous and, once written or uttered, communicates information other than then originator intended. And it is far from easy to find out from our readers and listeners what has been understood from our attempts at communication. Furtherore, words and phrases cannot escape the associations of where they have been used before and who has used them. Their effect on the reader relates to the identity and politics of the speakers and writers who have used them in the past (Birch 1996).

Academic disciplines have their own codes as we know (Becher and Trowler 2001), designed to enable communication which deals with abstract concepts, to allow a level of precision in the discussion of shared concepts, and to permits fine grading of attitude towards the relative strength of a claim. Academic codes also ID speakers and writers, allowing insiders to detect the exact branch of a discipline or school of thought the speaker belongs to, and have a gatekeeper function, intentionally or unintentionally keeping the uninitiated out (discussed in Becher and Trowler 2001 pp104-130).

The educational development community is currently engaged in a debate about whether educational development is a discipline in its own right (Macdonald

2002, 2003, Stefani 2003, Rowland 2004). The arguments for a discipline of educational development include the existence of an extensive and growing literature, of peer-reviewed journals, of networks of people engaged in conferences, seminars and other activities, and of the learning and teaching programmes throughout the UK, validated within academic frameworks and developed and delivered by educational developers. The arguments against include that educational developers come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, and do not necessarily share methodological approaches, or refer to the same texts as intrinsic to their practice. This debate still has its course to run. However, the argument 'for' might unfortunately include the perception by those in the wider academic community that our use of language is both distinctive (i.e. allowing readers to say 'that looks like an educational development text') and opaque. This surely is a feature of an academic discipline we do not wish to share (at least not in texts such as the ones discussed here, which are apparently aimed at the community of academic staff, rather than at the specialist community of educational developers). Our role is arguably different from that of staff in other academic disciplines; it is not just to talk to one another, but to talk across disciplines to all staff engaged in teaching and supporting learning. As members of a discipline in the process of defining itself, perhaps we as educational developers need to particularly consider our communication practices.

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14 Active artefacts: representing our knowledge of learning and teaching

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Introduction

As teaching in higher education becomes more evidence based, there is a drive to integrate research with practice, leaving developers with the challenge of how to support staff to make greater use of available theoretical concepts and research evidence. Bridging this gap between research, theory and practice is now an issue for educational developers in areas, such as:

- Postgraduate accredited programmes in teaching in higher education require that participants demonstrate their understanding of relevant theory and adopt a scholarly approach to their teaching. How can we ensure that this process supports the development of effective practice (e.g. Sharpe, 2004)?

- Funded programmes of innovation, dissemination and change have highlighted the need to produce deliverables which translate the knowledge acquired during the life of the project into a shareable and useable form (e.g. Beetham, 2001).

- In our eagerness to be academically credible, and to more thoroughly understand our own work, educational developers are becoming more scholarly (e.g. Eggins & Macdonald, 2003). How can we ensure that our developing understanding of teaching, learning and assessment is made available in a form which can be used by practitioners?

In the field of e-learning where there is pressure for rapid changes in response to emerging research, there is discussion on how we develop a more suitable and sophisticated discourse that is shared by researchers and practitioners, and which supports and promotes educational change (e.g. Ravenscroft, 2004).

The focus of this discussion then is on how research and practice can be represented in such a way that is useful to practitioners in changing their practice. This seems to be especially important for new areas of research where it is important for results to be published quickly or where practitioners are being asked to make changes based on established research or theory. We ask if there are ways we can create more sophisticated representations of knowledge which will be useful to practitioners or indeed whether representations will ever be adequate on their own to elicit change. As a contribution to this discussion, this paper reports on data collected from a workshop at the 8th Annual SEDA conference (Sharpe, Beetham & Ravenscroft, 2003). In this workshop practitioners generated and shared ideas for creating representations of knowledge and a possible framework was presented for using these to support practitioners to change their practice.

Examples of representations of knowledge

"It is a tragedy that so much of the energy on learning research in universities has had so little influence on the practitioner. With some powerful exceptions the two communities seem to work in isolation. This is no longer good enough. A much greater sharing of information and ideas is essential if the research is to be of practical value and practitioner behaviour is to be better informed." (Sloman, 2002, p. viii)

The problem Martyn Sloman presents so forcefully in the preface to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's publication 'How do people learn?' has largely been brought about because the representations of knowledge used in academia have tended to be difficult for practitioners to access. The ones we are probably most familiar with are text based representations presented as scholarly papers in journals, books and conferences. It may be that these have little impact because the terms used by educational researchers may be unfamiliar to practitioners – and in any case are often contradictory and contested – while the ways in which practitioners discuss their own work may be context dependent and untheorised. This problem has been recognised and educational developers have been busily interpreting much of the educational literature into more useable formats or devising dissemination strategies for funded projects which emphasise use as well as awareness (see for example TQEF Project Briefing on Dissemination). Table 1 (p64) lists some examples of text based representations from the teaching and learning in higher education field.

Type of representation	Example (available on the web)
Books, papers and articles	Published in journals such as Active Learning in Higher Education or Teaching in Higher Education.[1]
Case studies	ASTER (assisting small group teaching through electronic resources) published 33 case studies from their TLTP project.[2]
Guides	e-Learning series of booklets produced by LTSN Generic Centre comprises guides for senior managers, heads of department, teachers, learning technologists and support staff.[3]
Principles	Seven principles of effective teaching: a practical lens for evaluating online courses.[4] (Graham *et al*, 2001)
Tools and toolkits	Evaluation Cookbook produced for the Learning and Teaching Dissemination Initiative.[5] (Harvey, 1998)
Summaries	ERIC digests[6] are short reports on topics of current interest in education providing both an overview and links to more detail.
Databases	The 'No Significant Difference Phenomenon'[7] provides links to research studies investigating technology based education.
Bibliographies	Annotated bibliography of research into the teaching and learning of the physical sciences at the higher education level provided by the LTSN Physical Sciences subject centre.[8]

Table 1: Examples of text based representations of knowledge.

Visual & imagery	Dialogues & stories	Presentational
Diagrams Charts Timelines Film, video & DVD Posters Images & photographs Pictures, drawings & paintings Visual maps, mind maps & spider diagrams T-shirts 3-D models Storyboards Displays	Discussions Electronic conversations Mentoring conversations Observation of classes Groupings of experts and learners Expert witness Expert panels Peer discussion Stories Narratives Discipline based case studies Pen portraits Action research project	Seminar presentations Workshop outlines and materials Groups' explanations OHP inventively used Audio Lecture
Interactive	**Informational**	**Performance**
Self-guided field trail Play, puzzles & games Websites CD-ROMs Quizzes Computer models Experiments Tasks Simulations Expert systems	Database Notice boards Summaries Guide – essential 10 points Hypertext guide Advance organiser Patterns and pattern languages	Role play Street theatre Game shows Improvisation Dramatic scenario Puppets Poems Song

Table 2: Further examples of representations generated by workshop participants

In the examples in Table 1, the aim has been to represent knowledge in an accessible and useable way. Accessibility has been improved for instance by removing the use of specialist jargon, e.g. the publisher's web pages for the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education's own journal *Active Learning in Higher Education* quotes a reader as saying 'It is refreshing to see both a high practically orientated content in an educational journal, and material that can be easily understood by those of without training in Eduspeak.'[1] In addition, resources might be made accessible by appealing directly to different audiences such as the LTSN e-Learning Guides which have been written for different groups of higher education staff. Of course the resources are also made more accessible by being freely available at the click of a button.

To move the discussion beyond text based representations and accepted formats such as case studies or guides, the 27 workshop participants at the SEDA conference were encouraged to think of other forms by which knowledge and practice can be shared. They generated a wide range of examples of representations including imagery, narrative, face to face discussions, multimedia and performance. Their full responses have been loosely collected into similar types in Table 2 (p64).

With such a broad range of representations to choose from, the obvious question for developers is whether some forms are more effective than others in promoting change. There has certainly been a move towards using representations that are drawn from the real life experiences of other practitioners, and emphasising the context within which these stories where created. Ottewill, Shepherd and Fill (2002) noted the proliferation in the number of case studies being collected and conducted a comprehensive survey of the case studies available at the time. The collection of cases studies from the ASTER project, explains that 'each case study report contains information on the teaching context, motivations for change, and the C&IT introduced and their effects on both teaching and learning'[2]. Similarly the Evaluation Cookbook includes not just the information on evaluation methodologies, but also 'serving suggestions' of evaluation methods demonstrated in practice alongside guidance for the practitioner on conducting their own evaluation study[5]. So what seems to be important in these representations is that they are credible, true to life and context specific.

Enhancing representations of knowledge to support changing practice

Even with such a full and creative list of representations, and the moves to contextualise knowledge for specific groups or situations, it is still a big jump from knowledge (however represented) to changed or improved practice. Studies which have investigated how practitioners actually adopt new approaches show that the picture is more complex than making a choice between available types of representations. Beetham (2002) found that people who had actually changed their practice reported that a crucial turning point was often the opportunity to witness *the real thing, in the real context, with the real people*, in other words, to actually watch a new approach or tool in action. This might be in the context of a teaching observation or a lunchtime workshop in which a colleague described and illustrated what they had done. When pressed about the kinds of *representation* that had actually had an impact on their own practice, participants in this study were most likely to cite narratives from colleagues about *what they did, what went wrong, and how they survived*. There was also a strong tendency for these practitioners' use of knowledge resources to be mediated by another person, such as a mentor, staff developer or learning technology specialist. This study then, found that, at least in the early stages of adopting a new approach, practice is most effectively supported by richly contextualised representations, mediated by expert users. As practitioners become more expert themselves, their focus changes to one of 'peer supported experimentation'. In both cases, however, effective use of representations was mediated by collaborative activities, whether between a mentor and mentee or between mutually-supporting colleagues. Other studies which have asked academic staff what they found useful in professional development, have confirmed the importance of colleagues and collaborative strategies (Ballantyne, Bain & Packer, 1999; Ferman, 2002).

This suggests that representations of practice need to become 'living' artefacts, enhanced by their participation in collaborative activities. For example, expert practitioners in Beetham's (2002) study expressed a preference for representations they could interact with – comment on, adapt, annotate, use in their own work, or contribute to. Some examples of active representations, in which elements of the development process are captured, are given in Table 3 (p66).

Just as representations can be enhanced by activities of this kind, we also know that communities themselves need collaborative tasks and goals if they are to develop. This suggests that collaborative resource development can be a highly effective way of developing shared practice. Another way of expressing this is through the observation that projects have to have outcomes (concrete representations), but that it is often the process that is most valuable. In attempting to assess the value of collections of case studies to changing practice, Ottewill, Shepherd and Fill (2002) confirmed that it was relatively easy to identify the benefits for the creators, but more problematic to evaluate their worth to their intended audience.

Type of representation	Example
Papers + responses	The Journal of Interactive Media in Education (JIME)ix adopts an open peer review process with papers linked to online discussion forums. Final papers are published with summaries of their review comments. www-jime.open.ac.uk/
Case studies + discussion	The Online Tutoring Skills (OTiS) Project hosted an online conference in May 2000 where case studies were presented in advance and delegates had the opportunity to discuss them with authors. The papers and transcripts of discussions were edited into an e-book. http://otis.scotcit.ac.uk/
Editable resources	The Scottish electronic Staff Development Library (SeSDL) hosts a library of digital staff development resources to which users can both submit their own and download other's granules. ww.sesdl.scotcit.ac.uk/
Interactive toolkits	The Evaluation of Learning and Media Toolkit is an interactive system for lecturers to analyse their teaching methods and mediums for course delivery. www.ltss.bris.ac.uk/jcalt/
Group created bibliographies	In the Oxford Brookes Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education, the first online activity asks participants to post a review of a single educational publication which has influenced their practice. The postings are edited into a series of linked web pages creating a bibliography for the course.
Activities using databases	In the UKeU/OU course Learning in the Connected Economy, participants submit completed 'companion' activities to a course database as well as select and analyse other activities retrieved from the database.

Table 3: Examples of active representations of knowledge

Using a combination of workshop responses and the authors' own research experience, we argue that these active representations bring knowledge alive by mediating social and cultural communicative practice. The examples in Table 3 illustrate how they do this through a number of their features that help practitioners to bridge the theory-practice gap:

Ownership Most of us follow constructivist principles that we need to create our own knowledge representations, or at least to create our own interpretations or personal meaning of the knowledge base. The enhanced representations allow for such personal contributions such as questioning presenters at the OTiS conference, contributing to course bibliographies or databases. The Learning in the Connected Economy course has used the idea of 'companion' activities in response to the intensiveness of running collaborative, constructivist tasks with online groups of learners. The companion activities use electronic databases to support learners to exchange information, and contribute to and develop ownership of a resource (Weller, Pegler & Mason, 2003).

Reflection and review Representations need to be available when practitioners have time and opportunity to think about their own practice. For novice practitioners this will often mean structured time,

perhaps in staff development sessions, workshops and appraisals. However, even highly motivated and expert practitioners need time to engage with representations, prompts to review and reflect on their own practice, and help in translating between the theoretical and practical aspects of the situation.

Contingency Representations that offer themselves as 'complete', for example reports, case studies, theoretical articles, are inherently less usable than representations that offer 'room' for the practitioner. Examples of this would be toolkits, reflective pro-formas, or real-life dialogues with other practitioners, which support practice through a form of structured dialogue.

Dynamism Enhanced representations are dynamic and frequently changing rather than static and fixed. This is because they are constantly being added to by new users, by peer review etc. The value of dynamism is particularly relevant to practice areas such as e-learning where new tools and approaches are constantly available and representations need to adapt quickly to remain useful. Examples of dynamic representations include the draft documents in JIME, collaborative resources, evolving ontologies and knowledge trees.

Support for peer learning The importance of networks for sharing information cannot be over-stated.

Representations of practice do not just encode 'what to do' in a particular situation but are important repositories for the community's values and culture. If our conclusions about enhanced representations are correct, the need is not simply to distil 'the best examples' of represented practice for future use, but to establish peer processes whereby representations are constantly created, shared and tested.

Effective active representations therefore not only help individual practitioners to bridge the theory-practice gap but also support processes of peer learning. What is most noticeable about these examples is that they blur the distinction between creation and use. Traditional representations of knowledge are created by the author(s) or designer(s) and then published in a final and fixed state, to be accessed by readers and users. Active representations allow for the possibility of collaborative creation and use, offering facilities for commentary and feedback, peer review and refinement in the light of experience.

However, there are challenges in establishing and sustaining these processes. In the academic community it is authorship that is valued and rewarded, while in the commercial community it is product design. Peer review, collaborative projects and open source software are examples of movements that undercut these prevailing values. However, with time at an absolute premium, it is often difficult to identify the pay-off for individuals who undertake the work of annotating, collating, synthesising, commenting, evaluating, re-contextualising, and re-developing.

We can make use of external incentives such as professional accreditation, teaching promotions and small-scale project funding. There are also intrinsic incentives such as the provision of easy-to-use pro-formas as a trade-off against provision of feedback and comment. The JIME journal uses is an excellent example of peer review which gives intrinsic reward for participation: commentators are willing to devote time to considering another author's work in the belief that not only will this enhance their own understanding (and prestige), but that they will benefit from the same peer feedback system in their turn. Even without peer review, an organic relationship can be facilitated between authors, developers, users and the artefacts themselves, as in annotated collations of materials such as SeSDL, the Learning in the Connected Economy database or the PCTHE course bibliography.

A framework to support the process of learning from representations of knowledge

Traditionally the types of process outlined above have been possible only by inserting representations into training and development programmes, facilitated by specialist staff. Many of the representations in Table 2 reflect this. However, we believe that new information and communication technologies make it possible to develop and use representations in new ways, which blur the distinction between representations as finished artefacts, and representing as a collaborative activity. Active representations of the kind outlined in Table 3 can support a process of peer supported experimentation within the context of online communities of practice. It is important to say that in focussing on representations within this framework, we do not wish to deny the continuing importance of specialist staff to the process of development, especially for novices to a particular approach, but rather to note the power of well designed representations to fulfil many of the requirements of effective professional development in a fast-changing context.
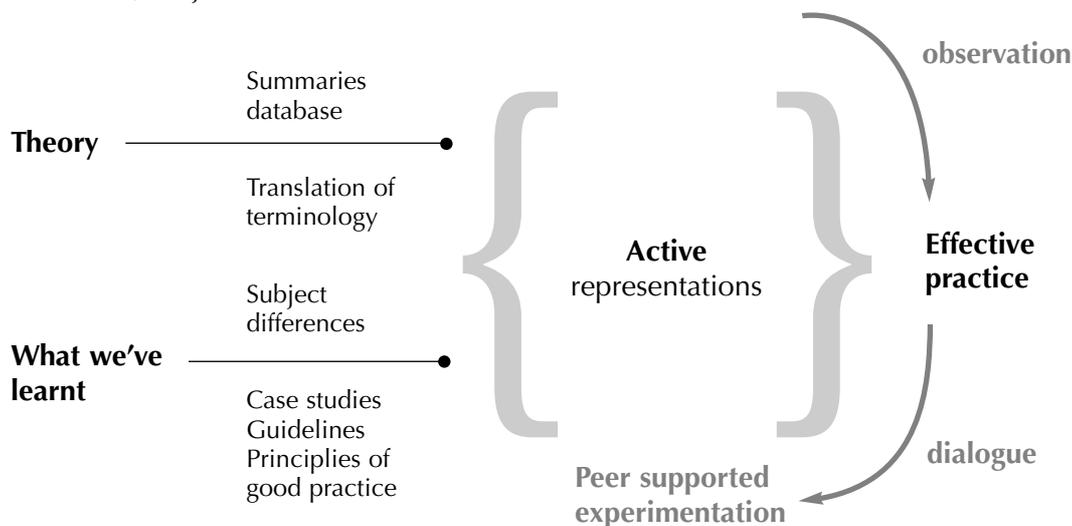

Fig 3: A framework to support the process of learning from representations of knowledge

Conclusions

We have argued that representations of knowledge need to be accessible, credible and contextualised if they are to be used by practitioners. We have also argued that in order for knowledge to have impact on practice, practitioners need to engage with it through a process of peer- or mentor- supported experimentation. And finally we have argued that this should lead to practitioners feeding back into the representations themselves through active enhancements such as comment, peer review and collaborative development. We have offered some instances of new information and communication technologies being used to support enhanced representations, coupled with communities of shared practice. At present the opportunities and incentives to engage in this kind of representational community are limited. We look forward to a time when they will be more widespread among learning practitioners.

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Acknowledgments

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[1]   Details of the journal *Active Learning in Higher Education* are available from the Sage Publications site at www.sagepub.co.uk/journal.aspx?pid=105463&sc=1

[2]   The ASTER case studies are available on the project's website at http://cti-psy.york.ac.uk/aster/resources/case_studies/case_studies.html

[3]   The e-Learning series of booklets are available to download from the Generic Centre's site at www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/index.asp?id=19519

[4]   This often cited paper was first published in The Technology Source and is available from http://ts.mivu.org/default.asp?show=article&id=839

[5]   *The Evaluation Cookbook* can be viewed online or downloaded in full from www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/ltdi/cookbook/contents.html

[6]   The ERIC digests are available from www.ericdigests.org/

[7]   The No Significant Difference Database can be searched at http://teleeducation.nb.ca/nosignificantdifference/index.cfm

[8]   The annotated bibliography of research into the teaching and learning of the physical sciences provided by the LTSN Physical Sciences subject centre is available from http://dbweb.liv.ac.uk/ltsnpsc/AB/AB-html.html

[9]   *The Journal of Interactive Media in Education* available from www.jime-open.ac.uk

15 Continuing Professional Development in Higher Education: what do academics do?

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Introduction

Continuing professional development is currently high on the agenda for UK Higher Education. Further to proposals put forward in the Government's 2003 White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education', a consultation process is currently underway to support "the development of professional standards for academic practice and continuing professional development (CPU) that will support teaching and learning in higher education (HE)." (Universities UK *et al*, 2004). At the same time, institutions funded by HEFCE are being required to develop their Human Resource and Teaching & Learning strategies to include provision for rewarding excellent teaching and supporting CPD. In addition to these policy developments at Governmental and institutional level, changes are underway with respect to UK-wide support for academic practice. In May 2004, the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE) joined forces with the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) and National Co-ordination Team (NCT) to form the basis of the new Higher Education Academy.

It is timely, therefore, to reflect on the nature of professional development in higher education and to acquire a better understanding of what academics currently do to develop their teaching practice. This understanding of current attitudes and behaviours with respect to CPD will then provide a good basis on which to build support for the imminent changes in policy.

This article outlines a small-scale research project, funded through a SEDA award, to look at the CPD activities of one discipline in UK HE: Earth Sciences. The results are summarised and collated with other similar research in order to develop some broad guidelines and recommendations for the future support of academic CPD.

What constitutes CPD in higher education?

For many higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK, CPD is synonymous with formal courses or events that provide some form of 'training'. Such training is often provided as CPD for external professions such as law, business and finance, medicine and so on. However, there is some evidence to suggest that although HEIs have a "tendency to regard formal courses as the most appropriate mode of teaching provision,…practitioners in general take a different view" (Becher, 1996, pg 54). Becher's research into the CPD activities undertaken by practitioners in medicine, pharmacy, law, accountancy, architecture and structural engineering indicated that professional learning takes many forms. He identified seven categories or modes of learning:

- Courses and conferences;
- Professional interactions;
- Networking;
- Consulting experts;
- Personal research;
- Learning by doing; and
- Learning by teaching.

and suggested that "a clear awareness of the large part played by other forms of interaction might perhaps encourage professional schools [in HEIs] to adjust their own priorities: for example in helping to set up professional interactions, to promote and underpin specialist networks and to support personal research."

As well as supporting the CPU of external practitioners, HEIs are of course also concerned with the development of their own staff and, in general, formal workshops and seminars again seem to be the dominant model. Interestingly, although many other forms of learning are recognised for initial HE lecturer training courses e.g. action learning sets, projects, peer observation, reflection, these seem to be much less of a feature of CPU provision. There is, of course, an important place for formal 'off-the-peg' activities but these should be considered as part of a broader spectrum of learning opportunities.

What do academics actually do to develop their teaching practice? A small number of studies have been undertaken with mixed disciplinary groups of academic and other HE staff (e.g. Ferman, 2002; Dunne; LTSN Generic Centre, 2002; Luedekke, 2003) to ascertain the different activities undertaken to develop teaching practice. The aim of the small-scale research project reported here was to complement these studies by looking at the experiences within a large number of academics from a single discipline (Earth Science) across 31 different institutions in the UK, and to draw together some common concepts and conclusions.

Earth Science was chosen for the study as it is my own discipline in which I have established credibility as an educational developer. Although a well-established and 'traditional' discipline, the study of Earth Science involves many different learning environments that require innovative thinking in terms of supporting learning. The discipline is relatively small in terms of number of institutions and hence it was possible to target named academics through a search of departmental web-sites.

A short questionnaire was posted to 475 named academics. The questionnaire listed a variety of different possible CPU activities (see Table 1 p70) and asked respondents to tick those they had done within the last 12 months. Respondents were also asked to state

Type of CPD Activity (in order of preference)	No. of Responses	
Discussions with colleagues in your department	180	(94%)
Supported colleagues to develop their teaching	88	46%)
Networked with colleagues from other institutions	76	(40%)
Read books/articles on learning & teaching	72	(38%)
Read web-based information on learning & teaching	60	(31%)
Participated in a learning & teaching workshop	52	(27%)
Discussions with staff in your institutional EDU	47	(24%)
Attended a learning & teaching conference	21	(11%)
Applied for teaching development funding	17	(9%)
Undertook research into learning & teaching	11	(6%)
Member of Earth Science Teachers' Association or National Association of Geoscience Teachers	8	(4%)
Studied for/hold a L&T qualification (inc ILT)	31	(16%)

Table 1: Responses to CPU activities questionnaire

whether or not they had any formal obligations to undertake CPD for teaching, and to identify the main barriers to such professional development. Basic demographic data was also collected including gender and number of years teaching. 192 responses were received and general knowledge of the Earth Science community in the UK suggests that the gender and age profiles of the sample were a reasonable representation of the population.

The distribution of the age groups (number of years teaching) was analysed for each activity using the X-squared test for independent samples. Only two of the activities showed a statistically significant difference between the age groups:

- L&T qualification: 5-10 and 21+ years significantly lower than expected than from random distribution (p=0.003)

- Participated in a workshop: 1-4 and 5-10 years significantly higher, 11-20 and 21+ years significantly lower than expected from a random distribution (p=0.04)

Respondents were also asked to note any other activity they had undertaken, these included responding to student feedback, reflecting on their experiences, peer review, external examining, achieving learning and teaching awards, looking at objects in other disciplines, and hosting a learning and teaching conference. In addition to enhancing teaching practice, 11 respondents indicated that their professional development for teaching was related to ensuring that the subject content of their courses was up-to-date.

Barrier (in order of preference	No. of Responses	
Time	180	(94%)
Emphasis on research	88	(46%)
Funding (e.g. To attend events)	76	(40%)
Lack of personal interest	72	(38%)
Lack of encouragement	60	(31%)
None	52	(27%)

Table 2: Barriers to Undertaking CPD for Teaching

The questionnaire asked respondents to select the main barriers to their undertaking CPD for teaching (table 2). Within each category, there was no significant difference between the spread of responses by age group than would be expected from a random distribution.

For many academics, lack of time and pressures from other priorities (i.e. research) seem to be related to the culture of the department as exemplified by this comment from one respondent. "Academic promotion solely relies on one's international research reputation. Time spent on teaching and teaching-related activities (such as CPD) is applauded but it is weighted close to zero by promotion panels."

It can be inferred from additional comments provided by the respondents that the main other reason for not undertaking CPD was due to bad experiences of formal courses in the past (or perhaps personality clashes with educational developers and other colleagues!). It seemed that these respondents had such strong views (perhaps coloured by these bad experiences) that they assumed 'educationalists' define CPD as only about formal courses and events. For example, despite the fact that the questionnaire listed 'discussions with colleagues, networking and reading' as the first few possible CPD activities, the following types of comment were still made:

"As usual, the educationalist view is that CPD requires a course or equivalent teaching us how to teach."

"I value teaching quality very highly, and am constantly striving to do it better. I have just found the formal routes to CPD you emphasise here to be much less helpful than talking to others, emulating those I think are effective etc."

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were formally required to undertake CPD (e.g. through membership of a professional body or by their institution). Respondents from 18 departments indicated that they were formally required by their institution to undertake CPD. However, there were several cases of discrepancies between individuals from the same institution as to whether CPD was required or not. Of these 18 institutions:

9 require new staff to take a formal course
8 have some form of internal or peer review
(2 have both of the above)
4 use peer observation
1 has CPD as school policy for both new staff and experienced staff.

Interestingly, there was virtually no reference to appraisal as a mechanism to support CPD, with only one person mentioning appraising colleagues as a means of professional development.

Summary and Conclusions/Implications

The results of this small-scale study suggest that, despite pressures of time and other priorities such as research, the vast majority of Earth Science academics do consider the development of their teaching practice to be important. Although only 16 out of the 192 respondents were members of the ILTHE (and, therefore, had formal requirements to 'remain in good standing') only 4 respondents out of the remaining 176 implied that they did not engage in any CPD for teaching. Additionally, the research indicated that professional development for teaching in higher education takes a large variety of forms including discussions with colleagues, responding to student feedback and peer review, as well as more formal activities such as qualifications, workshops and conferences. Such a variety is to be expected from a large sample of individuals in which there are likely to be several different learning styles.

These findings echo those by previous researchers who have undertaken more in-depth studies of smaller samples of mixed disciplinary groups of academics. For example, Ferman (2002) identified a wide range of collaborative and individual activities including working with an educational designer, attending workshops, discussions with peers, presenting at conferences, being mentored and undertaking professional reading. Such variation of activities is also recognised by those offering guidelines and recommendations for professional development in higher education. Baume (1999) suggests that "choosing or making the right developmental opportunities involves first knowing something about the way you prefer to learn about teaching." She then details a range of such opportunities including 'off-the-peg' courses and workshops, conferences, mentoring, action learning sets, reading, discussions with colleagues, learning by doing and reflection, and development through committees, working groups, professional work, job shadowing and exchange.

My research has led me to consider that there are two ways of looking at CPD. Firstly, it might be considered as an explicit part of professional practice, linked to the requirements of membership of a professional body, whereby practitioners are required to demonstrate that they have engaged in CPD in order to 'remain in good standing'. In my experience, this seems to be the default definition of CPD in most professions (including HE). Secondly, the concept of ongoing development or learning is part of all our working lives, whether or not we are formally required to evidence it. This latter perspective is one that lies behind much of the work of educational development in HE to date (including that of institutional units and national organisations such as the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres): opportunities for developing or learning are provided to all those who teach or support learning not just those who are members of a professional body.

Challenges

Higher Education in the UK has reached a pivotal time with respect to professional development. My research and my review of other's work in this area suggests four main challenges for HEIs:

• Ongoing development should be a key feature of all professional's work, not just those who are formally required to evidence it. With the introduction of professional standards for teaching in higher education the challenge for HEIs will be to ensure that their CPD support is fully inclusive and not just targeted at 'registered practitioners' who are required to 'remain in good standing'. This is linked to the need to develop a culture where CPD for teaching is valued and rewarded in the same way as CPD for research, and that ongoing professional learning is something that everyone should be engaged in (Johnston, 1998; Norris, 2003).

• Different people have different learning styles and evidence shows that academics learn about and develop their teaching in many different ways. The challenge for the Higher Education Academy as it develops a professional standards framework and for educational developers who are required to support it, is how to acknowledge, value, provide support for and enable the recording/monitoring of this multiplicity of formal and informal activities. As Sue Johnston (1998) noted in her overview of professional learning, "Formal courses and similar activities need to comprise part of an integrated and coherent program of professional learning undertaken by the academic and they need to take place in an environment in which such learning is expected and valued."

• As well as developing teaching practice, ensuring the subject content is up-to-date is also an important feature of CPD. In Earth Science, education sessions have been a feature of major international conferences for several years (including the Geological Society of America's annual conference and the quadrennial International Geological Congress) thus allowing participants to engage in professional development related to both their research (subject content) and teaching. The challenge for the Higher Education Academy's Subject Centres is to explore the synergies between professional development for teaching and for research.

• All the literature on professional development in higher education emphasises collaboration as a key component. Academics collaborate with their colleagues through curriculum development, peer review, formal and informal networking, research and so on. Collaboration may occur within a department, across different faculties and disciplines, between different institutions, regionally, nationally and internationally. Collaboration and communication should also be the key to the relationship between educational developers and academic staff (Wareing, 2004). This relationship is analogous to and as important as that between academics and their students (Cowan, 2001). Rather than using a transmission model of teaching, educational developers work with academic staff to support their curriculum and professional development – CPD should not be something that is 'done' to one group of HE staff by another. Perhaps part of the success of the Subject Centres is not just that they 'speak the same language' as the disciplinary communities but that they work with them to help them support themselves.

Recommendations: a possible framework for CPD

The above four 'challenges' are relevant to all those who support CPD in higher education, including institutional educational developers, national Subject Centres and professional bodies and associations. Recommendations for supporting CPD have also been made by other authors. Eraut (1994) suggested that support for professional development requires a suitable combination of learning environments; appropriate time and space; availability of both learning resources and people able to offer support; and the capacity of the professional to learn and to make the most of available development opportunities. Similarly, Johnston (1998) identified four ways of thinking about professional learning such that professional learning should be evidenced at all stages of every academic's career; professional learning should be related to institutional contexts, and supported by institutional structures and rewards; any programme of professional learning should be self-directed and related to the needs of the individual; and there need to be opportunities for collaboration.

To conclude, comparison of these two recommendations with the findings from the research reported here shows four common elements that might be highlighted in a framework for CPD in higher education:

1 Professional development for all elements of the academic role (including teaching and research) should be considered as a normal part of professional life for all academic staff and, as such, professional development for teaching should be part of institutional structures and reward policies in parity with that for research;

2 Professional development should be self-directed and planned within the relevant context, and staff should be supported in enhancing their understanding of their own preferred learning styles and needs in order to make the

most of available opportunities for developing their practice;

3 There should be recognition of and support for the complex nature of professional development which occurs in a variety of learning settings involving many different formal and informal activities;

4 The collaborative nature of professional development should be enhanced, allowing for and supporting interactions between academics within departments, between different disciplines, and across different institutions, and between all those who teach and support learning.

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