



*The Research  
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Development  
Bulletin*

Edited by Roz Mazey

**The Research Centre**  
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## *Contents*

<b>Editors comments</b>	2
<i>Roz Mazey</i>	
<hr/>	
<b>Educational &amp; Social Inclusivity</b>	
Young mothers' lives: The wider benefits of community-based learning <i>Charlotte Desira</i>	5
Working towards an inclusive education for adults of all races in the Norwich and Norfolk area <i>Antonella Parker-Hall</i>	11
<hr/>	
<b>Enhancing Learner Progression</b>	
Student and employer perceptions of Higher Education at City College Norwich <i>Kate Paine</i>	15
Using ICTL for teaching and learning: An emerging curricular model <i>Tina Yates</i>	19
Towards a shared ethos: Setting out on a voyage of discovery <i>Ruth Webb</i>	23
<hr/>	
<b>Professional Development</b>	
An examination of the performance enhancement programme (PEP) as a management tool to motivate the faculty at a Middle Eastern FE <i>Diane Evans</i>	27
Implementing the vision: The role of senior lecturers as first-line managers in a mixed economy college <i>Anne Aves</i>	31
Developing a typology: A response to analysing disparate qualitative data <i>Angela Steward</i>	37
Case study of a PGCE student: A personal account of professional development <i>Claire Mathews</i>	41
<hr/>	
<b>The Research Centre</b>	
Work in Progress <i>Roz Mazey</i>	44

## Editors Comments

By **Roz Mazey**, Research and Development Co-ordinator, The Research Centre, City College Norwich



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the fifth edition of the City College Norwich Research and Development Bulletin, with a new person in the editor's chair. Although new to the position of Research and Development Co-ordinator, I have been delighted by the support and good will from the staff at City College and would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of the Research Bulletin.

Contributions for the Bulletin are always appreciated from both staff and students alike, so if you have an interesting piece of research in which yourself, or one of your students, are or have been involved, I would like to hear from you. I would encourage anyone who wishes to disseminate research findings to put forward an article for a future issue of the Research Bulletin as it is distributed to FE/HE Colleges and Universities throughout the UK. If you would like to recommend work or submit an article to the next, or future, editions please e-mail [rmazey@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:rmazey@ccn.ac.uk) to give an indication that an article is forthcoming, and then e-mail the work to me by 26<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

In the last issue of the Research Bulletin, volume: 2, issue: 1, Sandra Rowney, published a paper titled:

"Full-time students and part-time paid employment in South Essex: Learners' views". March 2003, a qualitative study.

In the week of the 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> December 2003, Sandra presented this paper at the National Conference of the Learning Skills Development Agency. The presentation was well received and congratulations are in order as Sandra's paper, see abstract below, was included in the short-list for the LSDA Annual National Research Paper Award.

Research Paper Abstract:

Full-time students and part-time paid employment in South Essex: a learner's views.

Terence Doherty, Manager, South Essex Learning Partnership (SELP)

Sandra Rowney, Researcher, The Research Centre, City College Norwich.

This study samples the opinions of full-time students at colleges and schools in South Essex concerning part-time employment whilst studying. It was commissioned by the South Essex Learning Partnership (SELP) 14 to 19 Advisory Group. Prior research began in 2001/2 with a quantitative study of 1400 student questionnaires. Results showed that the majority (85%) were juggling complex lifestyles that included 10 hours, or more, of paid work every week alongside full-time student timetables. Impetus for these studies has come from the local schools and colleges in the South Essex Learning Partnership (SELP) who are concerned that retention problems might be attributed, in part, to the hours spent in paid employment during course programmes. It is appropriate to consider this research in the light of government targets for Higher Education, student funding measures and the policy for widening participation in both Further and Higher Education. An initial set of focus groups with students in local schools and colleges were recorded in December 2002. Interviews also took place with teachers, lecturers, careers officers and student support personnel. One hundred students took part in the initial interviews.

Findings complement recent regional, national and international research work. The report is divided into sections that examine student perceptions. The sections explore who is working, why they are working, how they are working and their perceptions of paid work and education. Particular areas of interest include: the polarisation of staff and students views on paid employment and the resulting air of secrecy fostered by students; the extent of disposable incomes for students and the resulting changes in perception of 'want' and 'need', and the pragmatic and dynamic choices made by students in their area of paid work.

If interested in seeing more, a full report is available in The Research Centre.

The articles published in this issue of the Research Bulletin can be divided into three central themes; Educational and Social Inclusivity, Enhancing Learner Progression and Professional Development.

The first theme, “Educational and Social Inclusivity”, contains two articles, the first of which was submitted by Charlotte Desira, one of the previous editors. Charlotte’s article is a fascinating look at the wider benefits of community-based learning, concentrating on the experiences and lives of young mothers’ education and sexual health peer education. Other sections of society are explored in an article by Antonella Parker-Hall which describes research undertaken to look at the social and educational inclusion of people of different races and cultures in Norfolk.

The second theme, “Enhancing Learner Progression”, contains three articles which look at different aspects of learner teaching and progression. Kate Paine investigates the relationship between student and employer perceptions of Higher Education within City College Norwich. This research explores the perceptions of HE within the college by FE students, young people in the community and local employers.

In recent history, computers have played an important role in the advancement of teaching and learning techniques, Tina Yates has submitted an interesting article aiming to discover how teachers and learners feel about using technology to support their learning and teaching practices. The final article in this section, by Ruth Webb, uses ‘action research’ to examine our values in relation to teaching and learning. The article describes the first part of a long-term project trying to answer the questions: “How do I improve what I am doing? And “How do I live my values more fully?” in respect to teaching practice.

And finally, the theme of “Professional Development” under which four articles have been placed. The first of four in this final and most diverse section was submitted by Diane Evans and reports the findings of an examination of the Performance Enhancement Programme (PEP) as a management tool to motivate faculty staff at a FE college in the Middle East. Closer to home, the second article, by Anne Aves, looks at how senior lecturers feel about their new role as first line managers in a mixed economy college. Anne’s work was embarked on as a means of gaining a better understanding of the changes that have occurred in the role of senior lecturer since 1998. The rationale for the research discussed in the third article, submitted by Angela Steward, was to develop understandings of how lecturers reconcile the potentially conflicting demands of external policies and organisational practices with their own continuing professional development. And finally, we have a fascinating, upbeat account of a PGCE student’s personal account of their own professional development during their studies as a PGCE student.

The ‘Work in Progress’ section defines the aims and objectives of the current research projects being undertaken by The Research Centre. If anyone has an

interest in getting involved in research, as part of their staff development practices, or has an idea for a research proposal, whether an expert researcher or a keen individual with no working knowledge of research, please do not hesitate to contact me at The Research Centre for a chat on 01603 773478.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to once again thank our readership for their continued interest and support.

Yours sincerely



Roz Mazey

Research and Development Co-ordinator



## *Young mothers' lives: The wider benefits of community-based learning*

By **Charlotte Desira**, APU MPhil student, City College Norwich

### **Aims and background to the research**

This paper explores young mothers' lives and experiences of education and sexual health peer education at a community-based project. Through this it investigates the wider benefits of community-based learning.

Because of the need to protect the identity of the participants it was decided to make the name and location of the community-based project anonymous; it will be referred to as the 'Project'. The area of study is a seaside town, with urban and rural wards, which are considerably deprived. This may be due to the fact that most employment in the area is low paid and seasonal, with a consequent high dependency on benefits, high crime rates and poor quality housing. The rate of teenage conceptions below age 16 in 1994-96 (per 1000 girls aged 13-15) is higher than both county and national average. There has also been a rise in the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STI's) in the last six years in the area, particularly in the rates of Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia, of which young people account for a significant proportion.

The Project was established by a national charity to support young women in the area of study between the age of 14 and 25 who were either pregnant or had children. The Project grew in response to local needs and currently offers a multitude of services: Antenatal, Post-natal and Outreach programmes, Education (from Basic skills to Access courses), a 38-place day Nursery, a Shared Supported Housing Scheme and a Sexual Health Team (SHT). These activities are delivered at the Project, in the community and in the home. The Project has a supportive, non-judgemental approach which aims to raise young women's self-esteem as well as tackle one of the Government's goals of reducing social exclusion. The Project works in partnership with a number of local agencies including education providers, the NSPCC and health professionals. The considerable demand for the Project is illustrated by the fact that in the year 2000 approximately 174 young women were Project users (Cawthorne and Hughes, 2000). Despite this demand the Project has experienced problems attaining sufficient funding to sustain current activities and expand services where required.

### **The Sexual Health Team**

The term 'Sexual Health Team' (SHT) refers to both paid Project Sexual Health Staff and unpaid volunteers who

are also Project users. The SHT have a framework of good practice and a mission statement that underpins the training programme and delivery in schools. This focuses on empowering young people, including volunteers and pupils. This is in keeping with the Department for Education and Employment (2000) Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) Guidance framework for schools, and works within the Project's ethos of building self-esteem. Training for volunteers in the SHT involves an initial six-week intensive programme followed by weekly sessions. It offers a broad coverage of the areas related to sexual health. Experiential and interactive teaching methods are used in training and the content is designed to enhance the volunteers' understanding of issues related to sexual health education. The training gives the volunteers the opportunity to share their experiences and feelings with the group in a safe environment. Professionals from external agencies such as the Family Planning Clinic deliver sessions to the volunteers on child protection, contraception, HIV and homosexuality.

The SHT deliver sessions to eleven schools in the area on the realities of teenage pregnancy and general sexual health issues such as contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). School sessions usually consist of three one-hour weekly visits that are age appropriate. Training takes place with mixed gender groups, with a maximum of thirty pupils, aged between 13 and 16. Volunteers support Project staff in assisting with games and sharing their experiences of being a parent, but are not responsible for delivering information. The young women in the SHT are monitored by Project and teaching staff to ensure their language is age-appropriate. Teachers are given the option of whether they want to be present during the sessions. The SHT's sessions are interactive and experiential, one example being the use of games about sexual health. The volunteers are encouraged to use their creative skills, as some of the games are adaptations or inventions by the volunteers.

The SHT delivered sessions to 4000 young people in the county between 1997 and 1999. The work also includes delivering sessions to outside agencies and groups in the Project and they have developed a Pregnancy Testing service and a young persons' drop-in service at the local Family Planning Clinic. The age range of volunteers is generally between 18 and 25, although it is possible for them to be 16 or 17 if they have the necessary skills. The work of the SHT seeks to address the Government's goal of reducing the rate of teenage conceptions (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). The SHT

was founded on theories of peer education, which often focuses on developing young people's skills, social competence and self-esteem to enable them to make and act on informed choices, and acknowledges that young people can support and positively influence each other (Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2002).

## Research Methodology

This paper is based on semi-structured interviews with twenty-four young mothers who had engaged in community-based learning either as SHT volunteers and/or had participated in education at the Project. The sample group for this study was selected from the main database of a larger commissioned evaluation undertaken by The Research Centre, City College Norwich, which consisted of semi-structured interviews with fifty-six Project users on sixty-seven occasions, and sixty-one Project staff, education and health professionals in partnership with the Project. The original evaluation explored all of the services of the Project, whereas this research focuses only on women engaged in sexual health peer education and/or education at the Project. Participant observation and document analysis was also used to triangulate the data. The study was inductive and based on grounded theory and case study.

The sample group comprised participants aged between 17 and 29 years old. They were classed as young mothers for the purposes of the research because their first pregnancy was between the ages of 15 and 23. The young women had been accessing the Project for lengths of time varying from between six months to seven years, five of the women were no longer Project users. Eleven of the sample had only accessed education provision at the Project, six were involved only in the SHT, and a further seven women had accessed both education and the SHT. The young women had been with the SHT from one month to seven years.

The focus of this research is to understand the experiences and processes of community-based learning and the meanings of these from the perspective of young mothers and within a natural setting to capture the complexities of their lives. It was considered that a qualitative approach would be the most appropriate method to employ because of its affinity to understanding relationships and the need to describe rather than measure the phenomenon under investigation (Silverman, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). An interpretative and qualitative research approach is recognised as a useful tool to deal with complex research areas (Stake, 1995).

I am conscious that there is a tension within this study between notions of research and evaluation. Part of the tension between research and evaluation is because the

database was generated from an evaluation. However, this paper is based on theoretical research because it is "enquiry carried out in order to understand". The key aim is to provide description and interpret issues and problems without trying to evaluate it or change what is being studied (Bassegy, 1999:40). The evaluation I refer to was commissioned to answer the questions of the national charity that manages the Project, whereas this research seeks to answer my own questions as opposed to those of a commissioner. However, Bassegy (1999) recognised that despite the differences between research and evaluation there can be 'mobility' between these categories of research. This was the case in this research as my role developed from acting as an evaluator for employment purposes to a theoretician for my MPhil research. I was seeking to answer my own questions and not intending to make any judgements about, or to change, the area of study but to develop the understanding of it.

## Ethical considerations

Research in this area of activity exploring issues such as attitudes and experience of sexual health and pregnancy is obviously a sensitive topic particularly with vulnerable client groups such as young mothers. However this is not a reason for avoiding the area because there are important issues to explore, as Lee (1995) states:

*"Studies involving sensitive topics may therefore aid theory building because they challenge taken-for-granted ways of seeing the world."* (Lee, 1995:2)

During the progression of the research, everything was conducted in an open and honest manner, so that the work was visible at each stage. Permission was granted for the research team to have access to the Project staff and service users only if informed consent was given. The young women involved in the study were over the age of sixteen and had given their informed consent. The research operated under an agreed research protocol, which is in line with BERA and APU ethical guidelines and designed in collaboration with the Evaluation Steering Group and The Research Centre at City College Norwich. The evaluation research protocol protects the best interests and vulnerability of the research participants and incorporates issues of confidentiality, child protection and ownership of information. Informed consent was obtained from participants and it was explained that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time and retract anything they had said. The underlying ethical principle of this research protocol seeks to define and protect the boundaries of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Furthermore it was ensured that the vulnerability of participants was protected through maintaining a professional attitude at all times.

## Analysis

Data gathered was analysed in order to make sense of the young women's lived experience. The recorded interviews were transcribed and all raw data held in hard copy in line with the Data Protection Act (2000). Field notes were summarised and abstracts made.

The data collection and analysis were simultaneous and interlinked throughout the research so that the research area was clarified and redefined in order to reduce the extensive database and focus on the emergent themes. This is defined as 'progressive focussing' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977) and can be useful as it:

*"...permits unique and unpredicted phenomena to be given due weight. It reduces the problems of data overload, and prevents the accumulation of a mass of unanalysed material."* (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977:15)

A rigorous process of repeated systematic analysis took place as the raw data was transformed and reduced through a process of being sorted, coded for categories and core categories, collated and interpreted in order for themes to emerge from the transcripts. The research aims and questions were then refined, in order to search for meaning. The analysis is intended to reflect the views of all participants and is placed within the wider research context. Data collected by different methods, data sources and the use of more than one researcher was also 'triangulated' in order to arrive at a balanced interpretation and one placed firmly in context, as well as a way to increase the reliability and validity of the research (Silverman, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

## The wider benefits of community-based learning

The work of the SHT is valued by teachers and seems to be beneficial not only to pupils but also to the volunteers. Young mothers involved in the Sexual Health Team have increased knowledge and skills, which in turn may have latent health benefits. Volunteers enjoyed learning about sexual health in a fun, relaxed approach and were able to share their knowledge with others. It also increased their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities, which confirms Walker's (1994) findings. Hammond (2002) found that learning can affect access and uptake of health services, as was found in this study as some of the women felt more confident visiting sexual health services such as the Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic, after learning about this service in the SHT training. The SHT helped volunteers gain the confidence to discuss sexual health education with their own children without feeling embarrassment. According to Frankham (1993) parents are ill-equipped to tackle the subject of sex with their

children, therefore, by helping the young mothers in the SHT to deal with this, the Project is taking a step towards helping families become more open about sexual health. This may help to reduce unplanned conceptions in the future and is therefore working towards the Government's goal of reduced teenage pregnancies. However, a few women's cases suggests that an increased knowledge of sexual health and contraception does not necessarily prevent every unplanned pregnancy. The SHT has helped volunteers to prepare for their future career, which often involved working with young people or in sexual health education.

The Project was often the women's first experience of returning to learning since leaving school and they were motivated by a desire to gain qualifications, "do something different", and meet others or to improve their education for their children. This reflects the findings of previous research into motivations for learning (McGivney, 2001; Hillage et al, 2000; NIACE, 1999) and Schuller et al's (2002) finding that non-accredited local courses are often the first step for people with low confidence. They found education at the Project a rewarding and fulfilling experience, as it helped them not only achieve qualifications, but also increased their confidence, self-esteem and realisation that education can be enjoyable. The experience of community based learning changed the women's attitudes and expectations of education and increased their confidence in their own abilities, which encourages them to progress to higher levels of study or plan to in the future. This relates to McGivney's (1999) findings that:

*"Informal learning often starts people with no qualifications or experience of post school education on a continuing learning path by helping them to become confident and successful learners... It was the positive learning experience in a familiar local environment that had stimulated new interests and enthusiasms and motivated people to continue learning."* (McGivney, 1999:vi-vii)

One woman's case illustrates that the opportunity to engage in employment, gain experience and financial independence was a more attractive prospect than accessing Higher Education. Education at the Project helped to bridge the gap between school and college, as a few of the women were enjoying accessing the local Further Education College after engaging in education at the Project. Unfortunately some women's personal circumstances resulted in them dropping out or struggling to cope with the demands of the course, however they were keen to, or had returned to, education despite this.

Finance is not the only reason for encouraging a desire to participate in employment, as the findings highlight

that it is often because women want to be stimulated, have improved self-esteem and also to provide a positive role model for their children. Previous research has indicated that finance and childcare are major barriers for young mothers to employment and full-time education (McGivney, 2001, 1999) and this was certainly found to be the case in this study, along with lack of qualifications and experiences.

The provision of the nursery allowed women to have time away from their children to concentrate on their own needs and interests, as well as helped their children's social and educational development. A number of women said that the Project made them more confident in their role as a mother and for some by keeping them occupied it meant that they were not engaging in crime.

The Government have a number of key policies and initiatives to try to create social cohesion and economic prosperity through creating a culture of lifelong learning, widening participation to learning, decreasing the number of people with basic skills, reducing health inequalities, and alleviating social exclusion. Kennedy (1997) identified that learning must be relevant and sensitive to the learners' needs and may involve bringing learning to learners rather than expecting learners to always take the initiative. Community-based learning has been found to break down some of the barriers to learning by offering free, relevant, local provision with childcare in a familiar environment, which helps people to build up the confidence and motivation to progress to more formal provision (McGivney, 2001, 2000, 1999; Callaghan et al, 2001; Cullen et al, 2000, Maxted, 1999). McGivney (2002) found that softer outcomes of learning are more widely reported and often encourage harder outcomes to be attained. Acheson (1998) recognised the importance of education on reducing health inequalities. The Department of Health (1999) emphasised this further in 'Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation' by outlining that health inequalities can only be improved by addressing complex causes and interactions, which requires a more holistic approach.

This study supports the findings of previous research because the young mothers in this sample, who could be perceived to be disaffected or non-participants, affected by social exclusion and health inequalities, through receiving support from a community-based project and encouragement from Project workers all progressed to access education and/or sexual health peer education.

The Social Exclusion Unit (1999) identified that the three main causes of teenage pregnancy is ignorance, mixed messages and low expectations. The work of the Project in both its education provision and SHT appears to address these causes and contributes to the goal for reducing teenage conceptions, reducing long-term social exclusion in young mothers by getting them involved in education and training, as well as

contributing to decreased numbers of STI's and HIV by making young mothers and school pupils more informed about sexual health in a relevant manner.

Wadsworth (1997, 1996) notes that educational achievements and opportunities in adulthood can be impacted on by parental interest in their children's education, regardless of social class. By increasing the young mothers' enjoyment in learning in general this may be passed on to their children, particularly if their increased confidence leads them to take more of an interest in their children's education. This subsequently may decrease risk factors and negative outcomes for their children, because most are strongly linked to low educational attainment. The Project works towards this aim and could therefore be seen to achieve this.

The Acheson (1998) report emphasises the importance of increased social and emotional support of parents, particularly in deprived areas as this can improve parenting skills and decrease the impact of disadvantage. This can have benefits for parents and children such as increased self-esteem and other social, physical and mental health benefits gains. Hammond (2002) also notes that learning can significantly impact on health and health behaviours particularly if it occurs in a co-operative and supportive environment.

Brassett-Grundy, Hammond and Preston (2002:2) in their paper on learners' lives and the wider benefits of learning focussed on three learner's biographies, which was based on the fieldwork undertaken by Schuller et al (2002). This recognises that "learners biographies are messy" that learning should not be treated as "a panacea for social problems or a form of moral redemption" (Brassett-Grundy et al, 2002:2). They found that learning providers must offer flexible and diverse provision, rather than just focussing on low level or basic skills courses, but issues such as cost often restrict access to this type of provision. This research notes that:

*"Learning congruent with the interests, knowledge and experience of learners is that which is most likely to provide wider benefits. However, the interests, knowledge and experience of learners are not necessarily congruent with learning provision. Moreover, whilst the wider benefits of learning are evident, the forms of learning which produce these benefits may conflict with other social or economic aims."* (Brassett-Grundy et al, 2002:23)

The women's experience of learning through the Project's education provision and the SHT has resulted in a number of wider benefits other than just gaining accreditation. Wider benefits of learning are evident as involvement in the Project has:

- Reduced social isolation
- Increased confidence, motivation and self-esteem
- Increased knowledge and skills through engagement in voluntary activity
- Improved possible health benefits such as an awareness of sexual health services and effective contraception use
- Improved communication and negotiation skills
- Resulted in most women feeling happier and more positive about the future
- Improved relationships for most women with their children and in some cases their partners as well
- Benefited the young women's children socially and educationally through access to the nursery
- Increased young women's confidence in supporting their children adequately with school work and regular school attendance
- Engendered a desire to give their children better future prospects than they had themselves and not become involved in crime
- Increased their desire to engage in employment
- Increased their desire for learning and participation in Further and Higher Education for their own future career
- Increased their perceptions that it is now possible to achieve their goals.

Whilst these young mothers still face barriers in life, many are more equipped to tackle these issues. Clearly the Project has been crucial in supporting many young mothers, and yet has experienced a number of funding crises because it is a voluntary organisation. Community-based learning seems to be effective and provide a number of wider benefits and therefore, as previous authors such as McGivney (2002) have recognised, policy and funding for education needs to take this into account. This appears to be of particular importance if the Government is serious about their policy of reducing long-term social exclusion of teenage parents and the integration of social and education policies to benefit communities. Improved funding of the Project would enable more young parents to receive advice and support and have the opportunity to access learning opportunities so that they can have a more positive future for themselves and their children.

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## Working towards an inclusive education for adults of all races in the Norwich and Norfolk area

By Antonella Parker-Hall, City & Guilds 7307, City College Norwich

### Introduction

In the following article we will explore the existence of racism, racial prejudice and discrimination in the Norwich and Norfolk area, much of this information is provided by Norfolk Constabulary through the Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council. We then move on to focus particularly on Adult and Further Education establishments in the locality and to look at how these bodies can work to improve integration for people of all ethnic origins within the educational system. This exploration includes some of the major areas that changes could be made such as communication of all kinds, environment and curriculum. This is followed by case studies of individual experiences from ethnic minority people moving to this area and concluded by looking at some of the changes that could be made to the Adult and Further Education systems in order to provide an inclusive learning experience for all students at this level. This is an important issue as it impacts on both learners and tutors on many subtle as well as practical levels.

### Race

In order to understand some of the race issues that we are about to explore, let us start by focusing on Norfolk and the experiences of ethnic minority people.

Following the attack on a black journalist Brian Moore and friends in Norwich in mid 1991 after which Brian Moore found himself in prison, an event which hit headlines in the Guardian, and the more widely publicised events of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the following inquiry in 1993, awareness was raised in Norfolk of the existence and effects of racism and led to the Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council being formed in 1995. During the "Now in Norfolk Conference" held in October 1998, which was held to gather information and to work towards meeting the needs of the local ethnic minority people and for local agencies to look at their experiences and proof of action in the delivery of their services it was stated by the local ethnic minority communities that although there had been some improvement since 1994, abuse, discrimination and violence as a result of racism were still being widely experienced. Not only this but also institutional racism i.e. the systematic disadvantaging, which includes supporting and colluding in disadvantaging people on racial grounds.

Racial Equality and Crime Statistics from Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council state that:

- Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are 16 times more likely to be victims of racially motivated attacks than whites
- One incident of racial harassment or abuse occurs every four minutes
- Black Caribbean pupils are up to five times more likely to be excluded from school than white pupils
- Black people are twice as likely to be burgled as white people
- Reports show that ethnic minorities receive prison sentences which are up to nine months longer than white people for identical crimes
- Research indicates that 80% of racially motivated incidents are unreported
- Black people are 4-5 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police in Norfolk than white people
- Reports of racist incidents to the Norfolk Constabulary increased by 161% during April 1999 to March 2000 and continue to rise by an average of 100% per annum.

These facts without doubt impact on Adult and Further Education as they speak of racism, prejudice and discrimination not only within the experiences of individuals with other individuals but also of racial issues within the education system and of institutional racism. With the adoption of Multi-Agency Protocol by Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council, Norfolk Constabulary, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council aiming to integrate equality into 'best value' and the development of Equal Opportunities policies by further and adult education establishments, some progress is being made towards improving situations in these organisations however there is a long way to go before such incidents and attitudes are eradicated or lessened to a significant degree.

### Adult and Further Education colleges

So what can institutions do apart from creating policies to work towards a truly integrative adult educational system? An ideal starting place would seem to be the initial points of contact that ethnic minority people would have with the idea of further and adult education and the establishments that deliver it. Are advertising

materials and information booklets appealing, relevant and readable for a wide variety of people with various cultural backgrounds? It is helpful to think about the nature of the language used in these materials, how clear they are and whether other languages might be featured that would be determined by the languages spoken in the communities for which they are intended. In my experience, information sent out about courses from Adult and Further Education establishments in Norfolk tends to be very Eurocentric in style and design and although photographs of people from different ethnic backgrounds such as those used on the cover of Norwich City College's Student Diary and Handbook are helpful, I notice that only British National Bank Holidays, Celebratory days e.g. St George's Day and Christian festivals are listed, no mention in here of any Jewish, Muslim or Hindu or other religion's festivals.

Environment is an important factor for students and this is especially so for those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Once students enter an adult education establishment they are often faced with squarely built buildings, plastic chairs and pictures on the walls of British scenes or scenery. On searching the walls of various local adult education establishments, I was hard pressed to find any pictures relating to other cultures. These architectural and visual messages communicate messages to the student and demonstrate organisational attitudes and values, they can help to create and integrative or exclusive atmosphere.

There are also issues relating to communication; both language and gesture. Tutor and student may speak totally different languages making communication almost impossible. Also potentially difficult is the situation where the student speaks English as an additional language. Even if tutor and ethnic minority student speak the same language, issues may evolve from class differences and different counties of origin. Another aspect of the differences in communication styles could be body language. For example, a thumbs-up gesture meaning OK, that's fine or great, would be a serious insult to someone from Ghana. British gestures of nodding the head to mean 'yes' and shaking to mean 'no' are exactly the opposite in Japan. In most African countries people give and accept things with both hands, to give with one hand (especially the left) is extremely disrespectful. It is easy to see how offence could easily be caused to a person from a different cultural background from a white British person in any of the situations in a learning environment.

Curriculum is another important aspect that needs to be explored in order to create truly inclusive learning experiences for ethnic minority adults. In a culture that speaks of British and European experiences and values and gives little credit to anything outside of this it is plain to see that someone from a different background may feel their language, history, religion and culture are dismissed as irrelevant, insulted, denied or ignored. For

example, English and Literature curricula focus on the works of great white writers when there are many great black writers of English including three that won the Nobel Prize for Literature during the 1990's who, after much campaigning by teachers, examination boards and parents, have only just been included by the government in recommended reading lists for these subjects under 'writers from other cultures'.

There is an alternative and that is the development of an inclusive curriculum. It starts with the students' and tutors' own experiences, their lives, homes, histories, families, cultures, languages and concerns and develops from the knowledge and insight that comes from sharing these. In the words of Chris Searle:

*"The inclusive curriculum begins as autobiography and moves outwards, always retaining relevance and sparking motivation and meaning it gives a foundation of discovery, knowledge and self-confidence in the students' own lives, which enables them to connect with and share understandings of the world outside"* (Searle, 2001:81)

However, in order for Adult and Further Education establishments in Norfolk to be able to provide a truly multi-cultural inclusive learning experience, they need to be able to attract more ethnic minority teachers and students into the classroom.

These experiences including the individual's experiences of racism and resulting prejudice and discrimination may contribute towards the low percentage of enrolments and lower achievement levels in Further and Adult Education of ethnic minority people in Norfolk as illustrated by the "Equal Opportunities Monitoring FE Performance Outcomes, 2000-01" (Muse, 2002), in which the breakdown of figures for ethnic monitoring purposed where there was a lower achievement rate of 3.5% for non-whites which may be reduced to 2.5% if gender is taken into consideration. Overall figures show an enrolment proportion of 1.3% self-declared non-white students.

### Case study

Let's move on now to look at the individual experience of an ethnic minority person living in Norfolk and accessing further and adult education. The person that I spoke to about their experiences comes from a Malaysian background and is currently living in Norfolk. He came from a country where females are passive, sitting behind the males in the classroom. From a culture that instilled morals, respect and discipline into students the majority of which held a belief in Confucianism. From a place where he had a strong sense of identity, was fluent in the language and had many friends. As a young adult his move to Norwich, Norfolk, England has been challenging. He has had to struggle with the English language, particularly when it

comes to writing and try very hard to fit in and find an identity in this new world. Schools and Adult and Further Education establishments have repeatedly let him down by promising support which has never materialised and as a result his hurt sometimes shows as anger and resentment of the people in power at these establishments. He has felt isolated and excluded from places of education where ethnic minority people were not integrated and where his valid comments and requests for help were dismissed and ignored by people who refused to see the reality of the situation.

Other ethnic minority people have told me of their lowered self-esteem since moving to this country, of feeling invalidated and of low worth.

### Conclusions and recommendations

Finally, let us look at what can be done in response to this information in order to change current Adult and Further Education for the better and work towards inclusivity for people of all races. All the ethnic minority people I have spoken to have said the same things. Firstly, they would like to be heard, to have someone listen to and validate their experiences. They would also like for their needs to be recognised and deemed important enough to be met e.g. extra help with writing English. It would be great to have pastoral support if and when needed, for tutors to take the time to know their background and have an awareness of their culture and not to label them. Ethnic minority people would like their feedback to be acknowledged and acted upon in order to make changes and improvements to Adult and Further Education in the future. This can only happen if awareness is heightened within educational establishments of the issues involved maybe through regular trainings and through individual self-development for staff, reading and discussion. It is for the governing bodies and the individuals employed by them in all capacities to recognise the importance and impact on the quality of education for all that exclusion has, to learn to celebrate difference and variety in languages, culture and personal experiences and how we can all benefit from them.

Further and Adult Educational establishments are there to provide a service for the local community and all the people within it, this can be done by developing a certain morality within the educative system which to quote Chris Searle once more:

*"...involve the values of generosity, community, solidarity, loyalty and co operation, the determination to gain a just and fulfilling education for all..."* (Searle, 2001, P140).

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## *Student and Employer Perceptions of Higher Education at City College Norwich*

By **Kate Paine**, The Research Centre, City College Norwich

### **Introduction**

In January 2003 the HE Faculty began a qualitative research project to examine student perceptions of HE at City College Norwich (CCN). The research aimed to explore perceptions of HE held by FE students, young people in the community and local employers, to begin to inform the development of an HE strategy for CCN which will meet the needs of all learners.

The final report identified a number of emerging themes from an analysis of 13 group interviews conducted with current FE students, 12 young people from within the local community, and five interviews with representatives from employer organisations or organisations in place to support businesses.

From these, key issues and recommendations were identified and presented with a view to offering guidance for strategies leading to an improved overall college experience for higher education students.

### **Background**

Increasing and widening participation in Higher Education is a major priority of the government, with the target that by 2010 fifty percent of those aged between 18 and 30 will have had the opportunity to participate in HE. The choice potential students have to make is whether it will be in a traditional institute for the delivery of HE such as a university, or in a FE and HE college such as City College Norwich.

The question for CCN is how to balance meeting the needs of a diverse community of learners and attracting these learners to the college through the provision of initiatives such as those identified above, while still working within a national regulatory framework and maintaining the quality, in terms of delivery and curriculum, of all programmes.

Within the confines of this research, the potential for new participants in HE is being explored within the existing FE student cohort, in the local community, including individual learners, both young and adult, and employees from within local businesses.

Hillage and Aston (2001) comment that there is no single definition of an adult learner, in terms of who is the learner and what makes up learning. With this in mind, perceptions of what learning is and understanding of FE and HE will differ both within the college and in the local community. Fifteen percent of HE students at City College Norwich in 2001 were under the age of twenty,

with 60% percent under the age of thirty, falling firmly within the government targets of 18 to 30 years of age. Thirty nine percent were over the age of thirty.

It is critical that the college try to gain a clear understanding of what all our current and potential learners think of learning and of HE, whether they are coming straight from sixth form, from completing 'A' levels within the college, from a few years working in the community, or as a deliberate career change strategy.

Equally, it is important to consider those considering further study as part of a work-based skills development initiative. Hughes and MacPherson (2001) state that, to remain competitive, the UK's workforce will need to continue to develop new skills. Given the government priority for HE it would be unwise to ignore the potential for HE to provide some of this skill development.

With the position of colleges as recognised institutions within communities, they should be in prime position for the provision of training to local businesses (Allen (ed), 2000), however, unless mutually beneficial relationships are forged and employers have a clear idea of what is available in terms of training at both FE and HE level, this position will not be maintained.

The growth in the number of small and medium enterprises means that many organisations are operating with less resources, with fewer staff and thus decreasing the chance of having college educated employees to spread the word about the benefits of training, are less likely to be reached by the college, and also have less chance of being able to invest in training, whether it be FE or HE.

Paradoxically, in 2000, 50% of employers within Norfolk, while perceiving their current level of training to be adequate, still lamented the lack of local training opportunities for staff (Norfolk Local Delivery Plan for ESF Objective 3, 2000).

### **Methodology**

Phenomenological research attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation (Leedy and Ormond, 2001), and in this case, it is the perceptions of the target groups that were being explored.

While potential progression from FE to HE within the college is the primary focus of this study, interviews with young people not currently within the college system provided a different perspective on HE, including the

participants' understanding of what it actually is, the value of undertaking it, and the likelihood of young people considering it as a viable option.

Given the high percentage of mature age students studying HE at CCN, and considering that 51 percent of HE students in 2001 were studying on a part-time basis, it is also likely that the majority of these students were probably working as well. This study therefore also sought to gain an understanding of employer perceptions of HE at CCN.

The research is limited in that the samples for each target group are very small, considering the size of the populations from which they are drawn. However, Hussey and Hussey (1997) point out that the aim of this type of research, as opposed to statistical research, is to obtain qualitative data, and explore fewer issues in more depth.

## Summary of Findings

### Value of HE at CCN

Despite not necessarily understanding the difference between FE and HE, the concept of HE is highly regarded amongst FE students and young people from the community, although that regard might not extend to them undertaking it themselves or choosing CCN as their preferred institution.

*"I would quite like to go to university outside of Norfolk, but I know my marks have to very good before this will become a possibility".*

*"If I didn't get in anywhere else. I'd prefer a course with a better reputation and a higher profile".*

The decision to choose CCN is also sometimes compromised by the advice students receive while still at school, with many schools not promoting CCN as a viable option for post-16 study, including the study of 'A' levels and HE, but with the exception of apprenticeships.

*"We were told that college is for dropouts, and that we wouldn't be made to do any work".*

*"I don't think it matters what a course is as long as it's interesting".*

Students were often aware that alternative pathways might exist, for example, completing a HNC at CCN and then applying for credit at another university offering an honours programme, or completing a degree at CCN and then sitting an approved exam to receive industry recognition. However, these alternatives were considered to take too long and not offer the same security as doing their preferred course of study in one institution.

Mature age students tended to talk of training and education in more general terms, without necessarily differentiating between FE and HE or between education and training. This does not mean that they do not value HE itself, however, they tended to focus on specific courses meeting specific needs instead of thinking of HE in general. Those with previous experience of HE were sometimes more cynical of the potential benefits.

*"I've already done a degree and that hasn't been really helpful in getting a job. A course would have to be really good for me to do HE again".*

Employers also often choose a course regardless of whether it is HE or FE, but instead based on its specific content and the needs of the individual/organisation. HE is not generally so highly regarded amongst employers, but again this comes back to their understanding of what it actually entails, their perception of what is available, and their commitment to staff development.

Conversely, those employers who understand the value of training and/or work in an industry that requires higher skill and qualification levels are more likely to understand the value of training, both for their employees and the organisation.

### Value of FE

Students appreciated the diversity of programmes on offer at CCN, including the range of 'A' level equivalent courses. They also felt that their current courses of study were good preparation for undertaking higher level study. This was in terms of developing learning and study skills. Students also appreciated the difference between studying at school and studying at CCN.

*"When I first came to college I wasn't studying hard enough, and then I found out I had a learning disability. Learning Support have been really supportive, and this has made a big difference to my study".*

FE is considered by many to be a useful stepping stone to HE, and as a way of improving learning and study skills in preparation for more academic study.

Mature students often undertake FE as a requirement for employment. They also consider training to be a way to consolidate and validate their current skills and experience.

### Profile of HE at CCN

Higher Education at City College Norwich does not have a very strong presence amongst current FE students within the college, nor out in the local community, including amongst young people and employers. Responses in interviews with all three target groups

indicate that respondents do not always differentiate between FE and HE. Rather, they talk in terms of individual courses of study that meet a specific need, or can be classified within a specific occupational area. Students were also unsure of how to go about applying to study HE at CCN.

Results indicate that there is a common perception that the college is not focused on the delivery of HE. With the exception of those with personal experience of HE or who have had contact with others with personal experience, the FE students were most commonly only aware of individual HE programmes within their own departments. They found it hard to say if HE would be offered across the college. Of those students considering HE at CCN, there were some who felt that not enough information was being provided to help them make an informed decision.

*"I looked at a prospectus, but we haven't been shown anything about what's available here."*

Indications are that employers associate CCN with vocational or professional programmes and not with HE, even if they are sending their employees on HE programmes such as the Diploma in Management Studies. This might be an HE programme but that is not how employers will generally view it.

The profile of HE is compounded for employers and their employees, by the constraints facing them with regard to accessing any kind of training, a lack of understanding of both the short term and long term benefits of investing in training for staff, and the difficulty for the college to reach every new small to medium sized enterprise (SME).

### **Barriers to undertaking HE**

A number of barriers to taking up HE were identified by all groups. Cost was considered a major barrier, both in the short term with upfront fees, and in the long term, with younger students apprehensive about incurring large debts.

*"I don't want to get into debt, and I don't want to remain a student".*

Quite a few participants also identified the supposed reputation of the college as a barrier. For some it is what they hear about the college, and for others it is what they think HE courses at CCN would be like compared to those done at a 'real' university.

*"I've heard bad things about the college, that it's called 'a dump' and so on, although I've been impressed by the standards".*

*"I think I would meet lots of likeminded students if studying at a university. I don't think the college would have the right atmosphere".*

For mature age students there are also concerns around ability to do a more academic programme, especially given time out of formal study, and the ability to maintain an appropriate work/life/study balance. This is an issue for students currently undertaking FE, and they do not envisage it getting any easier at HE level.

*"I've been out of study for a long time until now. I'm worried I won't get through this course. It's very hard to balance working full-time, studying part-time and looking after my family".*

*"It is very hard when you don't have a clear idea of the level of a course and how to pitch the work. I want to know what perspective to take".*

For employers there is an additional barrier concerning both a lack of understanding of the benefits of training for staff. There is also the day to day uncertainty present for many SMEs, and a fear factor associated with potentially training staff to find a better job or bring back inappropriate ideas to a small organisation.

*"Business and education are two very different worlds".*

### **Modes of study**

The mode of study was not an issue with the majority of FE students, with the exception of the mature age students, all of whom are studying part-time. Full-time study is simply not an option for those in employment.

Many of the students who indicated that they might consider HE in the future also indicated that they would prefer to do it on a part-time basis, hopefully with the support of their employers, in the form of time and perhaps payment of course fees. For employers there are practical considerations around cost and whether an organisation can 'lose' an employee each week if classes take place during the day. Employers would seem to prefer part-time study, but preferably in the employee's own time. The cost for many SMEs of losing a worker for a day is too prohibitive.

### **Support for HE students**

Students and young people were divided on the issue of support for HE students, with some thinking there would be more because the work would be harder, and those thinking there would be less because students would be expected to cope with the workload and work independently.

"I think I'd have to stand on my own two feet a bit more".

"I think there would be more support because the courses would be more demanding".

"I would hope there would be more support than we get now".

Despite this discrepancy, nearly all current and potential students named one-on-one tutorials as the most likely kind of support available, in conjunction with services and resources such as a library, a career service, a cafeteria, and IT services.

## Recommendations

1. Provision of a clear framework would assist in informing students of the difference between FE and HE, and inform them of potential progression pathways from one to the other.
2. Dissemination of comprehensive information on HE to all FE students to assist in making informed decisions. This should ideally include information on the following:
  - A definition of HE
  - The difference between FE and HE
  - HE programmes available in each department
  - Information of a range of progression routes from FE to HE
  - Information on current HE programmes in all departments, and their availability
  - Information on the support available to HE students and how it can be accessed
  - Information on application and admission procedures and where to obtain assistance in completing procedures.
3. Provision of a central HE faculty, to promote HE and the university experience to potential students, to provide relevant and appropriate support to HE students, to facilitate the development of networks within CCN, and to provide an increased HE presence on campus.
4. Development of a range of marketing initiatives, including:
  - Strategies to specifically sell HE programmes to employers as a long term investment, and on the basis of relevance to the workplace and the potential for skill development of employees

- Strategies to target specific groups from within the local community, including young people and women and those returning to study
  - Strategies to promote the HE faculty at CCN
  - Strategies to assist learners to differentiate between FE and HE, and the progressions from one to the other.
5. Development of partnerships between the HE faculty and employers.
  6. Development of partnerships between the college and schools.
  7. Development of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate delivery of HE programmes and the consistency and quality of support provided to future and existing HE students.
  8. Continued research into HE delivery at CCN.

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## *Using ICLT for teaching and learning: An emerging curricular model*

By **Tina Yates**, APU EdD, City College Norwich

### **Introduction**

This research was undertaken to find out how teachers and learners felt about using technology to support learning and teaching and what the impact of utilising ICLT (Information Computing Learning Technology) would have. In doing so I anticipated that there would be some indication of the perceived barriers to using ICLT and the perceived benefits. From this I undertook to find ways of overcoming the barriers and promoting the benefits to enable a model to be developed (Diagram 1) that would enable ICLT to be used to support learning effectively.

A diverse range of factors are impacting upon the post-16 education sector. Many of these are Government driven, with ICLT appearing high on a list of priorities for change. The resulting morass of educational change leaves the sector, and many of those who are part of it, including myself, feeling daunted and challenged in terms of:

- The shape the curriculum is taking, with the inclusion of ICLT
- The need for training and development to keep up-to-date with the technology
- Potential for changing classroom practice
- The potential for organisational re-structuring.

This reflects the state of constant flux. Whilst I felt at the outset that I was well aware of the changing nature of post-16 education, as I became more closely familiar with the material, the sheer weight and potential for continued change became my vision of the future.

The development of the change spiral became my way of managing the idea that what I have been researching, and what I am part of, will always be changing. Examining the ways in which change is often mapped, and feeling uncomfortable with the ways in which it is often represented, the change spiral has developed as a part of my belief in the way education evolves, and the need for dynamic, proactive and accumulative ways of representing this change.

There is a wide range of identifiable elements that can be associated with the impact of ICLT on education that would contribute to the change spiral. These include features such as the importance of inducting learners into the organisation and to the course and to ensure they have appropriate knowledge, skills and confidence to use the technology. The learning activities to enable the learner to achieve will be designed to accommodate

both learners needs and awarding body standards, and the points made in the findings from the learners need to be addressed. The model I have created accommodates these needs. The four phases of the model would, therefore, be plotted along the spirals route, with the driving forces and restraining forces needing to be recognised to enable the planners and operators to identify problems and whether or not they were going to cause the system to fail.

The research has been a case study, with its focus on a large college of further and higher education. The geographical location of the college is a combination of urban and rural and brings a dilemma to the challenges of inclusivity and widening participation. ICLT is being promoted by the Government as one way of meeting the needs of a variety of learners or potential learners. Together these two major issues, when associated with the availability of funding, are forcing all colleges to examine ways, other than the traditional face-to-face provision, of providing learning opportunities and experiences.

This model can be used to support the planning of a single module or unit on a programme or to support the planning of a whole course. To enable the development of on-line learning the model reflects my findings that it is appropriate, at this time, to combine face-to-face learning and teaching alongside on-line learning, this can be referred to as blended learning. The way in which the model supports this is in four distinct phases.

### **Phase 1 – Induction and introduction**

At the beginning of a module or programme the learners would have face-to-face contact. This would enable them to get to know their tutor and their peers and to establish the introductory knowledge required for studying their chosen subject. They would undergo the usual induction processes to make sure they can use the facilities of the organisation and they are aware of the requirements of the course and/or qualification they are undertaking.

They would receive appropriate support to enable them to use the technology at an appropriate level and they would have an opportunity to practice being on-line, with the support of the group and the tutor.

### **Phase 2 – Working together**

The face-to-face group meetings continue, with the priority being to enable the group to work together on the chosen subject. This would be supported by some

essential on-line work. This would be subject related and would enable the learners to practice their skills and knowledge in terms of studying independently and working with the technology.

### Phase 3 – Independent study

The learners become more independent as they use the on-line facilities for individual work, collaborative projects and discussion groups. The subject is now being dealt with using a range of e-learning resources and the learners are studying independently.

### Phase 4 – Assessment and evaluation

The group meets at the end of the programme to conclude the work undertaken, this might be for assessment purposes, for example, if the course is based on examination as a form of assessment.

Applying this model to the design and planning of programmes would enable learners to embrace technology whilst being relatively non-threatening. There would still be a challenge in changing teaching and learning, teachers and learners, without some of the barriers that would be present with a more remote or extreme move towards on-line learning.

This model does not provide simplistic answers to many of the challenges facing the utilisation of technology within the curriculum. It does, however, provide a framework within which an individuals' vision of teaching and/or learning might be placed. There is also the opportunity, for those experimenting with ICLT in learning and teaching situations, to put the changes they are considering within a structured framework.

This diagram shows strong resemblance to the spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1966) and the iterative cycle of development (Lewin, 1951) whereby the final phase is not a total completion but rather an achievement of certain specific learning experiences, but more importantly a staging point in a dynamic and accumulative learning process. This represents my view of the process of blended learning.

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*Spiral diagram*



## Towards a shared ethos: Setting out on a voyage of discovery

By Ruth Webb, APU MSc, City College Norwich

### Introduction

The aim of this article is to provide an outline of the first phase of an action research project focussing on how a team of undergraduate degree lecturers can facilitate the development of independent learners. Through our exploration of how to help students on a BA (Hons) to become increasingly self-directed in the generation of knowledge rather than the receipt of knowledge, and to develop the skills and attitudes of lifelong learners, we also developed our own approach to professional learning. The intention was to develop a 'shared ethos' through:

- Defining independent learning
- Identifying values
- Collaborating in peer observation
- Reflective dialogue.

Many have used a metaphor of reflective research as a journey; the concept of travelling from one place to another resonates with the changes taking place within an individual or a group as they move through the stages of an action research project. It seems to me that this project was more like a voyage on a sailing boat. On land there are roads to guide you, signposts to follow, whereas at sea you can plot your own course. The only limitations are practical considerations, such as the ability of the crew and the time involved. Much the same could be said of action research; it is a flexible approach less tied to convention than some other paradigms.

At sea one can choose the risk of the expedition, selecting calmer waters or the high seas. Nonetheless there always remains unpredictability from the prevailing weather. One can choose a shorter, easier passage and then circle back and, having learnt from the experience attempt a more challenging course, include different people and take a developmental, cyclical approach, thus replicating the iterative nature of the action research spiral (McNiff, 1988).

During a voyage, review is essential through keeping a ship's log, evaluating how the crew work together and recording how you adjust the course. It is much the same as when one would keep a reflective journal and use it as a tool to review and monitor the research, adapting it as needed. This exemplifies the responsiveness of action research.

The fact that these students have been studying with us at City College Norwich for some time, was a possible

antecedent to the issue that there was a high level of dependency on staff. This was evidenced in module evaluations, and comments made in class and in tutorials. For example, some students were very quick to blame the teaching team when their grades were not what they hoped for, they request photocopied material to use in assignments and were reluctant to spend time seeking out literature. The most significant indicator of the issue has been the frequency of class comments such as "what has this to do with the assignment?" There seemed to be less an enthusiasm for learning, than for meeting the course requirements. This is indicative of a strategic approach to learning, when a deep approach would be more beneficial (Entwistle, 1996). A deep approach has the intention of understanding ideas for oneself whereas a strategic approach has only the intention of achieving the highest grade possible (Moon, 2000).

The task seemed to be to develop independence as students progress within the same environment. One wonders whether if there had been a change of institution, for example to a university, this would have led to increased challenge for the students and heightened personal development.

Whatever we attribute the issue to, the team were aware of a need to address independent learning and to move forward to develop an ethos that could be shared explicitly between staff and students.

### Choosing a boat

#### The Crew

What was needed was an approach that would be collaborative, in which the teaching team could participate and become stakeholders in the process, thus developing commitment to conceptual change.

The impetus needed to come from within the team, not be imposed from outside; the concept of an 'authoritative expert' being anathema to our aims. Bell (1992) argued for the advantages of team working, that:

*"... team-work is a group of individuals working together towards some common purpose and, in so doing, achieving more than they could alone"*  
(Bell, 1992:7)

She identified other benefits which include motivation, improving relationships, increasing participation and realizing individual potential, all of which are important in developing a shared ethos.

The problems that we encountered were entrenched in our own teaching practice and context. Aspects of it were unique to our situation and in order to develop professionally we needed to explore that situation and how we, as teachers, were responding to it. The process of exploration needed to be one in which the team were involved, and which would lead to reflection on the need for change and motivation to respond to that need and put change into practice.

In considering a range of methods in relation to this issue, it was this aspiration to take a collaborative approach that was fundamental to the decision.

As the issue under consideration was concerned with the attitudes and perceptions of the team, it indicated research within a qualitative paradigm, and being embedded in our own practice, it was vital to use an approach which was grounded in our experiences and which enabled the development of change. McNiff shed some light here:

*"Applied to classrooms, action research is an approach to improving education through change, by encouraging teachers to be aware of their own practice, to be critical of that practice, and to be prepared to change it". (McNiff, 1988:4)*

This encapsulated what we wanted to achieve, she also wrote that action research is:

*"...participatory, in that it involves the teacher in his own enquiry, and collaborative, in that it involves other people as part of a shared enquiry". (McNiff, 1988:4)*

This was a key feature for us; the traditional approach of a researcher or expert doing the research on the team did not sit easily with our espoused theory of encouraging independent learning. How could we argue that we were promoting autonomy if we were not carrying out our own research, independent of a so-called expert? This sense of working collaboratively but independently is fundamental to our espoused educational philosophy:

*"For if we as teachers are truly to fulfil our obligations as educators, then we must accept the responsibility of first educating ourselves". (McNiff 1988:9)*

Thus the emphasis on collaboration led us to contemplating an action research approach. What was needed in our situation was a strategy which provided the teachers concerned with the opportunity to reflect upon and critique their own practice, promoting a sense of autonomy and valuing their commitment to their own professional development.

Hopkins wrote about practitioner research, which has

its origins in action research, enthusiastically:

*"By taking a research stance, the teacher is engaged not only in a meaningful professional development activity but is also engaged in a process of refining, and becoming more autonomous in, professional judgement". (Hopkins, 1985:3)*

These are worthwhile goals, avoiding the sense of deprofessionalisation that might otherwise occur and valuing a professional, autonomous approach.

## The Action Research Paradigm

Kurt Lewin (1946) was amongst the first to begin to advocate action research; he was keen to encourage people to participate in their own enquiries, albeit under the guidance of an external researcher. He evolved the spiral of action-and-reflection, which included four moments of action research; plan, act, observe and reflect.

His approach has over the years been adapted for education, Stenhouse (1975) has been very influential in moving the emphasis to that of the teacher as researcher and argued that

*". . . it is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves" (Stenhouse, 1975:143)*

He expressed the view that those teachers involved in classroom study were developing the:

*"...outstanding characteristics of the extended professional' which were 'a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures". (Stenhouse, 1975:144)*

Stenhouse identified an approach which he called 'social anthropological' in which direct observation of classroom events is used as a starting point, quantification is avoided and detailed field notes are used to record events. He recognises that this focuses on the uniqueness of particular situations, that the approach is a complex one and that generalisation is difficult

*". . . but the product, the study which emerges and is presented to the reader is vivid and generally speaks very directly to teachers" (Stenhouse, 1975:151)*

He alludes to a project where teachers have worked in pairs, teaching and observing and states clearly that:

*"A teacher who wishes to take a research and development stance to his (sic) own teaching may profit at certain stages in the development of his research by the presence of an observer in his classroom". (Stenhouse, 1975:155)*

Thus, we were beginning to see the direction in which we would navigate, exploring our own practice, individually and collectively.

It seemed important that we began the study with some kind of a pre-step in which we collaboratively defined the purpose of the project.

Cousin (2001) suggested action research projects should include five characteristics:

1. Analysis
2. Planning-preparation
3. Action/monitoring/adjusting/evaluation
4. Evaluation
5. Next steps

This was the structure that we initially decided to follow. However, this initial study was designed to encompass the first two characteristics only; analysis and planning. Whilst this may seem an unconventional way to carry out a pilot study, we considered it to be necessary to plot our course; to determine clearly and collaboratively our understanding of the context of the project, the necessity or desirability and the definition of a desired future state (Coghlan and Brannick, 2000).

## Planning the Voyage

Initially a team meeting was held. The team was able to meet in a comfortable setting away from the workplace, with physical needs attended to. The centre head supported the project and allocated funding from the staff development budget. The plan for the meeting included a range of structured activities through which we were able to discuss the project. A note-taker was present, enabling me to be a participant leader, in the sense of structuring the session.

Initial activities led to a definition of the vocabulary agreed by all present, the issues were then defined through a discussion. Next we agreed what we called our 'future values' and then identified a range of possible planned strategic actions. Afterwards I distributed the findings to the team in order that there was time for reflection prior to a shorter meeting in which we decided on the choice of next steps.

## Agreeing Future Values

The approach to this discussion was interesting. We began by considering students' practical skills such as

'should be able to use the library for research', but as the conversation progressed we quickly realized that what we actually valued and were therefore aiming for in the students was a state of mind, an attitude towards learning. The outcomes of this activity can be found below (Figure 3).

To facilitate independent learning, which we see as:

*" Welcoming the opportunity to challenge the status quo (post-conventional thinking)"*

*"Enjoy risk-taking"*

*"Feel that they have the right to generate new theory"*

*"Learning is not compartmentalised (helicopter detached and objective overview)"*

*"Be aware that own perspective will change"*

*"Respectful of other group members"*

*"Making informed choices"*

*"Relishing cognitive dissonance"*

*"Being excited by learning"*

*"Initiating debate"*

*"Having an enquiring mind"*

*"Enthusiastic, interested, curious in the context of their individual learning styles"*

Figure 3: – Agreed 'future values' as identified by the participants

## Plotting the Course

The group felt the need for reflection, prior to undertaking any selection and detailed planning of the action to be undertaken.

After time for reflection, a subsequent meeting was held. We considered whether there were any other strategies that we had not taken into account. Three were suggested: reviewing and changing the modules, reflective practice through the use of journals, and classroom observation.

It was felt that many of the suggestions made at the initial meeting would be carried out as part of the usual cycle of review and course development. After some discussion the team decided to carry out classroom observation using video, in order to provide each of us the opportunity to have a subsequent reflective conversation with a 'critical friend' (Stenhouse, 1975).

This would be aiming to facilitate reflection on how we promote independence, and to share our learning with the team as staff development. The intention was that a critical friend would video a ten-minute session, identified by the observee. Immediately afterwards they would each write a reflective account and at a later date meet to review the video and their notes together. This conversation would be tape-recorded.

The structure we developed for the pilot was:

- Defining the issues
- Agreeing future values
- Reflection
- Planning strategic action
- Reflection
- Next steps

### Preparation for the Voyage

The initial study incorporated the diagnosis of the issues, identification of agreed values and planning for the action to be taken. We had agreed to carry out peer observation, using direct observation with a written record and to use video recording. However, more thorough planning was needed prior to the action being taken in order to ensure that the process was openly and mutually agreed, I was particularly concerned to involve all the participants in this planning to develop a sense of collaboration and of ownership of the decisions.

### Planning Strategic Action

Inquiring into our teaching inevitably leads us to address questions about our values. It has been suggested that the whole purpose of inquiring into our practice as educators is aimed at answering two questions: "How do I improve what I am doing?" and "How do I live my values more fully?" (Whitehead, 1993:7). Coming to know what our values are is part of the process of putting them into effect (Rowland, 2000: 99). Lippitt (1979) has the view that the purest form of action research is defined as a procedure where:

*"...the participants of a social system are involved in a data collection process about themselves and they utilize the data they have generated to review the facts about themselves in order to take some form of remedial or developmental action".*  
(Coghlan and Brannick, 2000:6)

I felt that this initial study had been effective in beginning the process of examining our values in relation to promoting independent learning, and in generating impetus to further develop this research through

collaborative action. As a group, we have already travelled a long way, through the experience of the first cycle of the research and we have plotted our course, to take us onto the next leg of the voyage.

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# An Examination of the Performance Enhancement Programme (PEP) as a management tool to motivate the faculty at a Middle Eastern FE

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## Introduction

A system of Further Education Colleges in the Middle East experienced significant change during the academic year 2001-2. Budgetary restraints imposed in recent years had led to the decision to increase teaching blocks from 45 to 55 minutes with the expectation that the faculty would continue to teach 20 blocks each week. In addition, it was decided to change the system-wide management and development of courses to an individual college team approach with regular 'inspections'. The ramifications of this decision are yet to be realised.

The Performance Enhancement Programme (PEP) was introduced into the system in pilot form in 1998 as a method of appraising staff. Part of the purpose of the programme was to motivate staff. The focus of this research was to examine the PEP as a tool to manage the motivation of staff employed in one college within the system. The two key issues of this study are the identification of what motivates teachers and how performance enhancement can be managed to motivate teachers. This review is intended to establish the basic precepts of both issues as a foundation for primary research and analysis.

## What is motivation?

Hofstede (1991:262) defines motivation as:

*"An assumed force operating inside an individual inducing him or her to choose one action over another."*

A number of motivation theories have been well documented, ranging from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Middlewood and Lumby, 1998; Beardwell and Holden, 2001), which influenced McGregor's X and Y Theory (Riches, 1994; Heil et al, 2000) to the process theories developed to meet modern business needs which are summarised below.

*Expectancy theory* assumes that individuals are self-motivated with their own value system. Middlewood and Lumby (1998) give this more credence because it encompasses the personal nature of motivation and examines the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of reward. This theory is connected to the concept of the psychological contract. Sims (1994:545) cited in Beardwell and Holden (2001) gives the following definition:

*"...the set of expectations held by the individual employee that specify what the individual and the organization expect to give and receive from each other in the course of their work relationship".*

*Goal theory* is based on the premise that individuals are motivated by development within the framework of mutually agreed goals. Protagonists of this theory are considered to be McClelland (Middlewood and Lumby, 1998) and Locke (Armstrong, 1990). The main principles are that a proportion of managers and professionals will be high achievers who respond well to setting their own goals and receiving immediate feedback. Middlewood and Lumby (1998) develop this further by assuming that there is a high ratio of self-starters in education, concluding that educators cannot be managed in the same way as staff in industry and commerce. Evans (1998) refers to the 'professionalism' of educators. This assumption is not supported by empirical evidence, but Riches (1994) suggests that the setting of challenging but realistic goals is advantageous to the performance enhancement of teachers.

McGregor believed it was impossible to motivate employees (Heil et al, 2000). Instead the organisation must seek continually to enable individuals to meet their own perceived needs. The key to a well-motivated workforce is the match of individual goals with those of the organization.

*Equity, or Exchange, theory* proposes that the perception of less favourable management than other staff is a demotivator (Middlewood and Lumby, 1998 and Riches, 1997).

## Cultural Considerations

Motivational forces may be influenced by cultural background, particularly at a Middle-Eastern college where the majority of the faculty are expatriate. A breakdown of nationalities is provided in Table 1.

Nationality	Number	%
North America (Canada & USA)	36	40
Europe (UK, Ireland & Russia)	35	39
Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, UAE)	7	8

Nationality	Number	%
Asia (Philippines, Pakistan)	2	2
Africa (South Africa, Sudan)	2	2
Australia/New Zealand	8	9
Total Faculty	90	100

Table 1: Breakdown of Current Faculty by Nationality April 2002

Hofstede (1991) believes that recognition of these factors will assist in managing the motivation of staff. Beardwell and Holden (2001) report that Hofstede's research has been considered too narrow because he used a positive approach. Nonetheless, the primary research cannot ignore the multi-cultural aspect of the faculty.

### Management of Performance Enhancement

The process of the PEP and its management may have a direct effect on how staff are motivated by it. Scoots (1994) alludes to the baseless predication of management that staff dislike appraisal. Heil et al (2000) and Scoots (1994) report that, in fact, most people welcome appraisal because they like feedback and recognition. McGregor's X and Y theory can be applied to this situation, where the concept of appraisal is based on the Y approach, but managers apply the process using X strategies. McGregor was uneasy about the concept of appraisal (cited in Heil et al, 2000:180):

*"Managers are uncomfortable when they are put in the position of 'playing God'."*

He believed it was better to encourage individuals to set goals and for appraisal to concentrate on strengths rather than weaknesses.

Richards (2001:47) states that "motivation is one of the main purposes of appraisal" in her evaluation of the introduction of the appraisal scheme. She identified that staff had negative feelings about the process initially because its purpose was not clear, but ultimately enjoyed the process because of the opportunity to discuss personal progress.

What if there is no system of appraisal in education? Evans (1998:27) found that "insufficient positive feedback" resulted in demotivation of teachers. She found that local management had much greater influence on motivation than system-wide policies and procedures.

Bartlett (1998), Scoots (1994) and Richards (2001) emphasise the pivotal role of appraisers and the need for

their development and training. Bartlett (1998) comments on the differences between new and younger staff and those who were more established. The former felt that appraisal was useful while the latter considered the process to be a valueless chore. This indicates that long-term staff need a different approach and procedures to avoid negative motivation. Bartlett (1998) refers to insecure teachers with uncertain tenure who regard appraisal as a threat; a consideration that has direct relevance to the faculty.

### Research Methodology

The purpose of the investigation was to identify how the PEP was managed and how it motivated the faculty. There are 90 members of the faculty, including supervisors, representing the total population for this study. The investigation took the form of a survey using three distinct research tools to provide triangulation, recommended by Johnson (1994) and Coleman (1999), namely documentary research, interviews and questionnaires.

A combined qualitative and quantitative research methodology was used following suggestions made by Holliday (2002). Authentic, official, private documents, as defined by Johnson (1994) in the format of policy documents related to the PEP process were used. These were open to staff as they were available freely on the organisation's intranet. However, even the Head of Instruction was unclear of the website's location.

Qualitative research was conducted using a semi-structured approach with individual interviews and discussions groups with volunteers from the population, using two main questions suggested by the Head of Instruction:

- a) How does the PEP motivate you?
- b) What aspects of the PEP demotivate you?

A questionnaire was developed to survey the population in order to obtain trends in attitude towards the PEP as this was the most accessible and timely approach. The questions specific to motivation were categorised in accordance with themes identified from the documentary sources, namely:

- Self-reflection on teaching
- Involvement in college activities
- Continue to work at the college.

The Director and Head of Instruction gave permission for the survey to be conducted at the college. The questionnaire was amended and a pilot was conducted with six members of faculty, who gave useful suggestions to clarify the questions. The third version is the final one distributed to the 90 members of faculty, with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the

survey.

The question seeking information about respondents' cultural background was particularly difficult. After three rewrites and suggestions from the pilot respondents, it remained imperfect and a minority of respondents chose to ignore it. There was a 43% response rate with 39 questionnaires returned.

## Results

The findings give indications of how predominantly North American and European faculty staff aged between 40 and 60 are motivated by the PEP and what factors are likely to demotivate them. Anomalies in the responses may be due to imperfect research tools and warrant further exploration. The PEP process rhetoric reflects 'best practice' except that there are no clear objectives after 4 years in operation. There are discrepancies in the attitudes of supervisors to the purpose of the process and how it should be managed.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The primary research indicates that the motivation of teachers is not simplistic and that process theories are applicable. There was evidence that faculty are motivated by a number of factors such as unmet needs, the attitude of managers, self-set goals, and explicit rewards.

The literature review identified the proposition that teachers tend to be self-motivated. This was evident in the results of the primary research of the faculty. Self-set goals was one of the three motivators identified, along with the reflective statement and summative discussion.

It was established that the PEP is a potential tool to motivate staff, but there are a number of problems with the current management of the process, as follows:

- No clear objectives
- No explicit acknowledgement of factors such as cultural background and length of service of staff
- A lack of training of supervisors
- A recommendation for the system to be flexible which may lead to inequities within the process that could prove to be demotivating.

It is important for supervisors to identify how individuals are motivated to tailor the management of the process and maximise the potential of the process.

Supervisors are key to the effectiveness of the PEP and would benefit from guidance and training. The literature review and primary research highlighted the efficacy of

staff recognition in the form of summative discussions. This is a key area in the process for which supervisors have not received training and may remain unaware of its value. Lack of attention to supervisory training, particularly for newly appointed supervisors, is a serious weakness in the management of motivation of the faculty. The attitude of supervisors will affect the potential for the PEP to motivate.

It is recommended that faculty staff throughout the system are used to explore differences in motivators according to cultural background, age, length of service and gender. This can be accomplished in questionnaire format but should be supported by group brainstorming sessions with participants from all colleges to provide the depth required for meaningful feedback. The results of this activity will lead to suggestions for supervisory training, which can be held in-house.

These activities can be achieved within 6 months and should incur minimal costs in the form of photocopying and the time required for staff involvement. Two critical areas for consideration are the design of the faculty questionnaire and the role of facilitators at brainstorming sessions.

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## Implementing the vision: the role of senior lecturers as first line managers in a mixed economy college

By Anne Aves, APU MSc student, City College Norwich

### Introduction

Since 1998 I have worked as a Senior Lecturer (SL) in one of the largest curriculum areas at City College Norwich. In 2000/2001 the department achieved 20% of the college total student enrolments on a range of full-time and part-time, further and higher education programmes.

The SL job description requires the post holder to undertake senior responsibility, within a centre or school, in the following areas:

- Curriculum development and promotion of curriculum
- Support for and co-ordination of teams of staff
- Ensuring and enhancing the quality of curriculum provision
- Contribution to the effective academic management of the Centre.

The role of SL has two aspects; one is to work as part of the management team of the centre. The second is to have responsibility for the resource management of a curriculum area.

This research was embarked on as a means of having a better understanding of the changes that have occurred to the senior lecturer role since 1998 and to highlight reasons for the struggle that role holders have in embracing these.

### Sector Context

Since the early 1990s, colleges, like much of the public sector, have experienced multiple restructuring along market and managerial lines (Shain, 2000; Briggs, 2002; Simkins and Lumby, 2002). In 1993 the college was 'incorporated', that is became financially independent of the Local Education Authority (LEA). Since this date the college has been restructured twice.

Post incorporation, there has been an increased awareness that colleges have to be responsive to all their customers and increasingly to the market place. Earnshaw (1996:145) argues that

*"... educational establishments do not have a physical product to market and sell, rather the product is the curriculum". That is, they are "selling a promise".*

Since 1993, colleges have become more politically accountable because the system is largely supported from the public funds. College managers embraced the required change to new public sector management. Farnham and Horton (1993) define this as new managerialism that will deliver the '3Es' of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in public services and ensure value for taxpayer's money. Randle and Brady (1997:230) argue,

*"... the managers right to manage replaced the authority of lecturers as professionals".*

Simkins and Lumby (2002:14) argue for

*"... caution in accepting the interpretation that professionalism and managerialism are set against each other".*

Lumby (2001) describes professionalism and new managerialism as co-existing in the new 'learning enterprise'. Aves (2002:16) concurs with this view,

*"... the days when you could be that academic who could say all I do is teach, I'm not interested in managing and I'm not interested in finance, those days are gone".*

### Emergence of Middle Managers & First Line Managers

Post incorporation, heads of departments became indispensable, because they are situated where the vision of the college is implemented (Hughes, 2000). Increasingly the role became one of middle management with both a transactional management and transformational leadership dimension.

Law and Glover (2000:14) argue that

*"... transactional management builds and maintains an organisational structure, i.e. makes sure we are doing things right whereas transformational leadership builds and maintains an organisational culture i.e. doing the right things".*

The role of the middle manager is to balance the two. If the implementation of that vision is subject to an increased amount of public scrutiny it is highly probable that, post incorporation, the role will have grown.

Increasingly the role is shared with Senior Lecturers (SL) who became first line managers, and have a third

hat to juggle, teaching.

*"First line managers will be either in curriculum or functional roles with responsibility for a designated area of work, a team or group of people who are responsible for direct delivery of services and usually a budget. They will contribute information for strategy, but will not be responsible for it, although they will have responsibility for implementing and monitoring plans in their area of work"* (FENTO 2001:6)

In many colleges middle and first line managers have been promoted from established teaching staff (Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Hughes, 2000). Such staff have many years experience of teaching but little or no management experience. Indeed Walker (1995:134) argues that

*"... post incorporation one of the most important tasks for senior managers is to create a fully developed management team especially middle (Heads of Centre) and first line (Senior Lecturers) managers"*.

Post incorporation therefore, a management team has been created. Attention needs to be given to how teams work effectively, for example stress and or conflict can be reduced if team members share core values whether they be implicit or explicit. Without these shared values there will be tension and frustration within the team.

## Research Questions

### Role conflict and ambiguity

Since incorporation, the role of middle manager has grown and in many departments the role is increasingly shared with SLs. The perceptions of this extended SL role were explored in the research. Of particular interest was whether they felt this change would lead to role ambiguity. Was there a conflict between the management and leadership roles specified in the job description? How easy is it for role holders to juggle these 'hats'?

### Increased work loads

Did they feel that the workload had increased? If it had, was this because of increased demands from course teams, the management team or the senior managers in the college? How did the role holders withstand these added pressures? Did they undertake a more nurturing role? Did the participants have any suggestions as to how this could be addressed, for example by case or work loading?

### Implementing the Vision

Do SLs feel that one of their tasks is to implement the

vision of the college? Is a vision about giving direction to the work of the college? Is it important for role holders to hold the same interpretation of that vision? Do role holders need to sell the vision to the department?

## Research Design

### Methodology

Practitioner, or insider research, was undertaken thereby enabling reflection on my own work environment and the SL role within it. The research strategy selected to uncover these insights was a case study. Adelman et al (1980:49) define a case study as "a study of an instance in action".

The 'instance' in this study were the SL role holders, i.e. real people in a real situation. Although my study has much that is unique about it, there are some generic points that can be made about the role of SL within the case study college. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the SLs in the department are not alone, in feeling under increasing pressure with what often appears as a relentless workload. The best description of the situation is a circus performer with numerous plates circling on poles, one or two always appear to be about to fall!

### Methods of Data collection

For this study, qualitative data was collected by undertaking focused interviews with the SL role holders. The job description for a SL provided such a focus because specified in the document is a requirement to undertake senior responsibility for both curriculum leadership and centre management tasks.

From this inductive approach, grounded theory will emerge from the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990:23) define grounded theory

*"... as beginning with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge"*.

Before deciding if the results are applicable more generally across college the following questions need to be asked. Do the findings of my research fit the everyday reality of the role of senior lecturer in the case study department? Do they make sense to the role holders and members of the role set? Are the findings applicable to senior lecturers in other departments within the case study college?

## Findings

The focused interviews with SL role holders were conducted in mid December 2002. These were transcribed, studied and theme analysis undertaken. The following 'rich data' statements are presented in italics.

### Curriculum Leader or First Line Manager

Clucas (2000:31) argues that there

*"continues to be uncertainty about the SL role how much is restricted to managing the curriculum and how much embraces line management functions as well".*

The SL role holders' perspectives were sought and elicited very different responses.

They were asked about: -

How much of their time was spent on line management functions and did they have any issues with this?

*"A proportion of my time. All the SLs tend to go to the strategic planning meeting of the college with XXX and I'm probably more involved with him than the other SLs with things that we are trying to do in the future".*

Other role holders were less involved and for them it was not an issue:

*"No I'm happy with it, mainly because I haven't got any more time to be involved with it and also because I personally don't like handling budgets".*

For others their lack of involvement was a concern:

*"I think, with what is happening in my curriculum area, that I don't do those things and then long term that's not good is it. It's not good if we are not all having an equal opportunity to do those things outside the department".*

### Changes to the SL role

Research by Kerfoot and Whitehead (2000) found that profound changes have been experienced by FE colleges especially in work practices and organisational culture, 'flatter' structures have meant that departments and within them course teams are required to be more accountable to their students and their line manager; a term unheard of before incorporation!

Did the SL role holders concur with this finding?

*"In terms of contributing to the management it's definitely been constant change, constantly new initiatives constantly new pressures, I don't think things ever stand still in education".*

This has an effect on the SL workload:

*"So yes I do think it is slightly more complex, more work to do, more balls to keep in the air and more problems".*

An increasing awareness of the importance of meeting targets for student enrolments, achievements and retention was evident from the responses:

*"Well we were definitely put under pressure in terms of numbers of taking on as many students as possible and now we've got them we're being hassled because we've got to keep them".*

### Protecting / Nurturing teams

The SLs were asked if they felt that sometimes their role was to say no to outside initiatives?

*"I think, it is very definitely, I put the management of my team, the looking after of my team before that external directive".*

Does leading the curriculum mean protecting the course teams against some of these directives?

*"Yes protect is a very good word because at times I will protect them both against our own manager and against external people as well".*

### Team work amongst SLs

Do SL role holders feel they work as a team?

All respondents responded negatively:

*"I think that is one of the things that has gone with the stress".*

There was a sense of frustration that this had an impact on our effectiveness:

*"We don't have the time to work together to come to solutions, we help each other as much as we can but the time isn't there to work out the best way to come to solutions between us".*

A more effective team would be able to take an enhanced management role and filter some of the external initiatives and deciding which ones were worth following:

*"I think that's it, it's about deciding which thing, prioritising them, deciding which ones were worth following and which ones aren't because all of them take time and energy".*

### Implementing the Vision

Part of the SL role is to implement the college vision.

The implementing of that vision results in:

*"I think we need to do as much educating, training as we can, in other words attract as many people as we can onto courses and then provide a high quality of teaching, and to support staff".*

The implementing of that vision could raise issues for teamwork:

*"Obviously if you want real team work you need united goals and visions but the danger is in getting to that point it would cause an awful lot of disagreement".*

Another respondent was more circumspect and felt there was more than just 'evangelically' implementing the vision:

*"Yes and for each of us, maybe it is partly personal that to keep on putting in effort for the centre you have to feel that you are going somewhere for yourself as well. Because if the Centre is moving in the direction opposite to the way you want to go you are much less likely to be committed".*

Does the SL have the responsibility to sell that to the rest of the Centre:

*"I think we have to try to. I think it is quite difficult because of course they all have a different value set to us".*

### Conflict with implementing the vision

Does the implementation of that vision result in conflict amongst the role set members?

*"No I don't think there is much conflict there. I think there might be purely a difference in terms of what comes to mind first".*

There were however other perceptions:

*"There is a clash of value systems ... I think there is a difference in value sets and what people are trying to do and what they are prepared to do to get there".*

To turn what at first could appear as a negative and prevent a team working to its optimum to a positive may require more time devoted to building that team:

*"I'm not sure. I think maybe the awareness of the way that other people are going to react does already modify the act".*

### Importance of effective communication

How did the SL role holders view the effectiveness of the communication channels?

*"I think for me one of the biggest problems of this business things are falling on your head is the very poor communication between the Senior Managers and our Head of Department".*

The importance of getting this right was considered to be growing:

*"It's increasing because I think the pressures from outside are increasing... because they all have their own pressures and it all eventually falls down onto the course co-ordinators if you are not careful".*

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Changes in the senior lecturer curriculum role since 1998

The SL job description was formulated in 1998 at the end of a cycle of far reaching restructuring and has not been revised since, i.e. it is a static document implemented in a dynamic environment. Such documents therefore need periodic updating to encompass any changes.

Since 1998 the senior lecturer curriculum responsibilities have grown both in size and complexity, there are more students, more commercially run courses, more external exams and more audit requirements. What is also becoming apparent to all Senior Lecturers is that the curriculum areas carry different loads and responsibilities, which are dynamic in their distribution.

### Senior lecturer role ambiguity and the need for role clarity

From this research it would appear that the role has developed in an ad hoc fashion. There has been a tendency by the role holder to 'customise' the role into a job they feel comfortable with. The SL has the responsibility for resourcing their curriculum area but not the authority to ensure the delivery of a quality product for the customers. They can coerce, encourage, suggest changes to staff but they cannot require them to be acted on.

Role ambiguity will occur as senior lecturers take on the role of first line management, i.e. they take on the dual role of leading a curriculum area and managing the resources of the centre. The senior lecturers in the case study department were appointed because of subject expertise, indeed the title presumes this, rather than because of any prior management experience. Role clarity is needed for the first line management task.

The Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) has begun to address some of these issues and have proposed national occupational standards for management in education. The standards categorise generic competencies for senior, middle and first line managers. A recommendation is that a specific first line management training programme is introduced instead of the generic college management training programme.

## Work Loading

It is appropriate to look again at some type of work or case loading for the role. As budgets are devolved and Heads of Centre have increased accountability for budgets and targets more departments are finding it essential to create a management team. All activities undertaken by SLs would be looked at and given a weighting factor. Weightings would be based on a measure of complexity of the job and expertise required to carry it out.

## Management Team and Implementing the Vision

The role holders do not feel they work as a team. The main reason cited is workload in their curriculum area. Curriculum work overload is also cited, as leading to an unequal opportunity among role holders, to become more involved in department management tasks. A better definition would be a group of people who support each other in their curriculum areas.

The role holders have concerns about lack of teamwork resulting in not enough attention being given to how, and why, the vision of the college is to be implemented in the department. Engaging in debate and resolving differences about this would result in a more effective selling of that vision to staff. If that does not happen role holders can become frustrated and demotivated.

## Importance of effective communication channels to sell the vision

If the department team is going to be effective in 'selling' the vision the senior managers need to engage more with them to enable the team to help inform that vision rather than directing them to implement a vision that they do not feel any ownership of. The same comment can be made with regard to the department management team and the rest of the department. It is essential for the effectiveness of the department that staff feels that they are experiencing transformational rather than transactional leadership.

## Overall Conclusions

Ten years after incorporation more research into the impact of the changes on first line managers/senior lecturers is needed. Most SLs were promoted because of teaching expertise rather than management skills or expertise. For many these new skills have been learnt in an ad-hoc way often with little or no management training. Can SLs 'juggle' teaching, leading curriculum areas and managing the centre? An unintended consequence of strategic planning is that by trying to make all first line management roles the same in all departments and even within departments, i.e. in respect of the amount of remission from teaching, senior managers are being equal but the distribution of work across the college means that the workload may well be unfair.

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## Developing a Typology: A response to analysing disparate qualitative data

By Angela Steward, The Research Centre, City College Norwich

### Introduction

**Typology** = Classification according to type (OED)

The purpose of this article is to present and discuss issues surrounding qualitative data analysis that I encountered during one phase of research into lecturers' workloads undertaken between 2000 and 2003 and which was set in the context of a college of Further and Higher Education. The rationale for the research was to develop understandings of how lecturers reconcile the potentially conflicting demands of external policies and organisational practices with their own continuing professional development.

### The nature of lecturers' workloads

Contemporary research in the UK reveals an overstressed and over-worked profession (Ainley and Bailey, 1997; Williams, 1998; Yarrow and Esland, 1999) and accounts emerge around increasing workloads (Earley, 1994; Batten and Skinner, 1997; Hill, 2000). Others argue that the increased workload and stress associated with changing educational policies and practices can be attributed in part to the way in which individuals organise themselves (Timperley and Robinson, 2000).

Evidence from the first phase of my research resonates with this contemporary research. First, I identified that tensions between organisational systems in the college created frustrations which aggravate, rather than support, the changing conditions lecturers now face in their workloads with escalating administration, additional responsibilities and mounting student needs. Second, there are tensions as lecturers juggle competing demands which they consider result in professional compromise. In the second phase of the research, the key concern of college managers identified was the conservative nature of teaching, which they attributed to lecturers' nostalgia for past practices and perceptions of stress.

### A problematic context for continuing professional development

Occupational standards introduced by the Further Education National Training Organisation in 1999 not only inform initial teacher qualifications in the Further Education (FE) sector but set expectations about the design of continuing professional development activities and state that lecturers need to be able to engage in

continuing professional development. The pressure on lecturers to respond to new policies and take on new occupational responsibilities stimulates the need to engage in continuing professional development but, at the same time, can make it difficult for lecturers to take up opportunities.

A survey by Martinez (1999) for the Further Education Development Agency (now the Learning and Skills Development Agency) revealed that:

*"If lecturers are running hard just to stand still, continuing professional development for improvement becomes problematic".*

Martinez contends that continuing professional development is invariably a 'maintenance activity' rather than an opportunity for improvement. A leading teacher-educator in the FE sector confirms these findings and suggests that the pace of change results in lecturers engaging mostly in task-orientated work:

*". . . as it is often too easy to become bogged down with all the day-to-day activities that there is little time left over for deeper thoughts about their practice as they are sometimes so overwhelmed and concerned how best to survive".* (Hillier, 2002)

These findings indicate that the context of lecturers' work is not conducive to thinking about continuing professional development as improvement.

### Continuing professional development through informal learning

The Teaching Standards Project Manager, at the time the occupational standards for lecturers were launched, suggested that a further use of the occupational standards is to assist individual lecturers to plan their own professional development which they can pursue through informal learning, but he does admit that opportunities for reflection and discussion are limited in the "hurly-burly of everyday college life" (Peeke, 2000). Although there has been recent recognition that the workplace is a major site for informal learning (Evans, Hodkinson and Unwin, 2002), Hicks's (1999) observations of approaches to continuing professional development in Higher Education are that in some universities learning was left to chance and it was somehow expected that academics would know what was expected of them in their teaching role and in their administrative tasks such as course leader or personal tutor, and she likens the process to "training and

development by osmosis". There is an assumption, which may also be relevant to the FE sector, that after initial teacher training lecturers improve the quality of their work over time just through the experience of doing their job.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson's (2001) study of teachers' learning in their workplace illustrates that it is not just that each person learns in a context, rather that each person is "a reciprocal and constituent part of their context". Thus my explorations of informal learning opportunities for continuing professional development need to take into account the connections between lecturers, their practices and their context.

### Familiarisation with the data

During the third phase of the research, a purposive sample of eighteen lecturers, i.e. who fitted a profile of characteristics in the workplace such as gender, age, career stage, etc, were engaged in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The main focus of the interviews was to identify how lecturers prioritise their work, manage their workloads and what they had learnt through their changing workloads and how they had done this. A large amount of complex qualitative data was gathered between June 2001 and June 2002. This protracted data collection period was also an important familiarisation stage. An overview of the data was gained by listening to tapes, reading transcripts and listing ideas and recurrent themes. Lecturers' descriptions of how they had adjusted to change, what they had learnt through their changing workloads and how they had done this, produced diverse responses. Through this

immersion in the data, I was becoming aware that the data reflected different perspectives simultaneously and I began to notice contradictory themes emerging. I noted that lecturers experienced work overload and role overload and some lecturers described symptoms of stress and anxiety, whereas it seemed as if others were able to reconcile the tension in workloads and continue their professional development through awareness of their informal learning.

### Choosing a typology

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that, if the researcher wishes to move beyond mere description of a particular setting, one way is to develop a typology. A typology is where two, or more, key issues, or dimensions, of a phenomenon are linked at different points, giving a range of 'types' of cases and provides multidimensional analysis, i.e. the types of cases would reflect the different approaches to continuing professional development that I had already detected in the data.

Two key issues were evident in the data which explained how lecturers approached continuing professional development. My judgement was that first "control of workloads" and second "awareness of informal learning" were dimensions that would provide a framework within which the data could be analysed.

### Plotting the dimensions of the typology

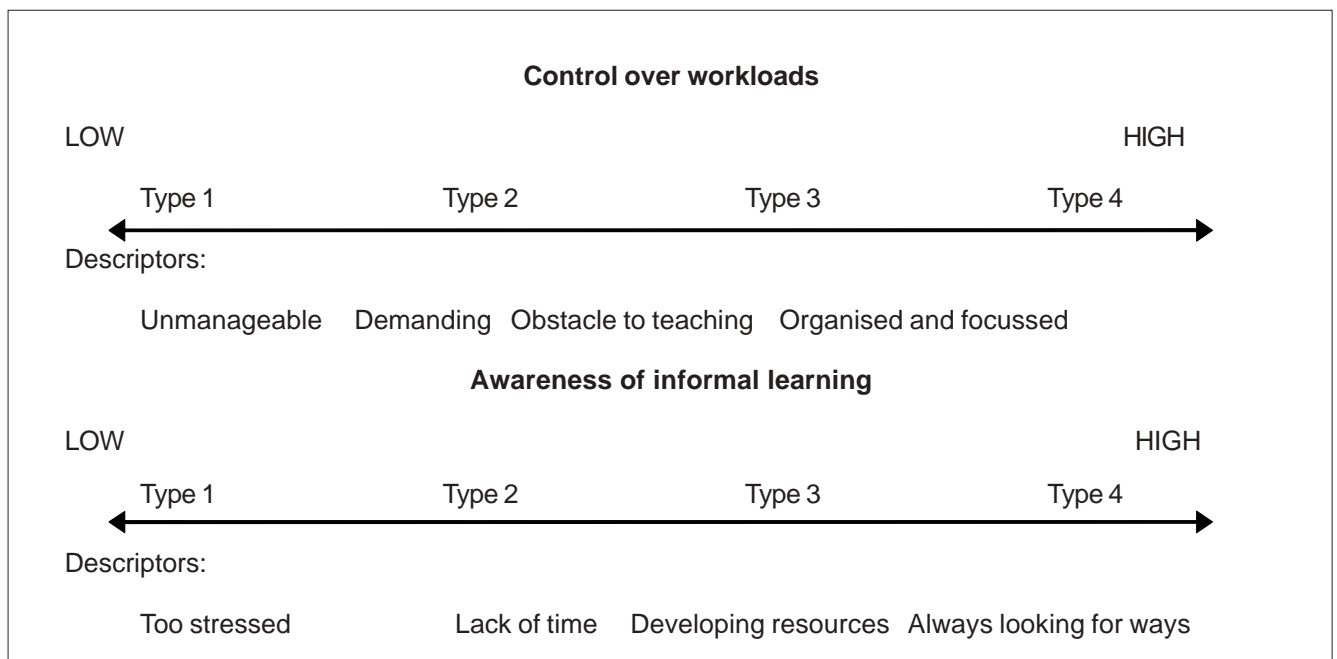


Table 1: Plotting the dimensions

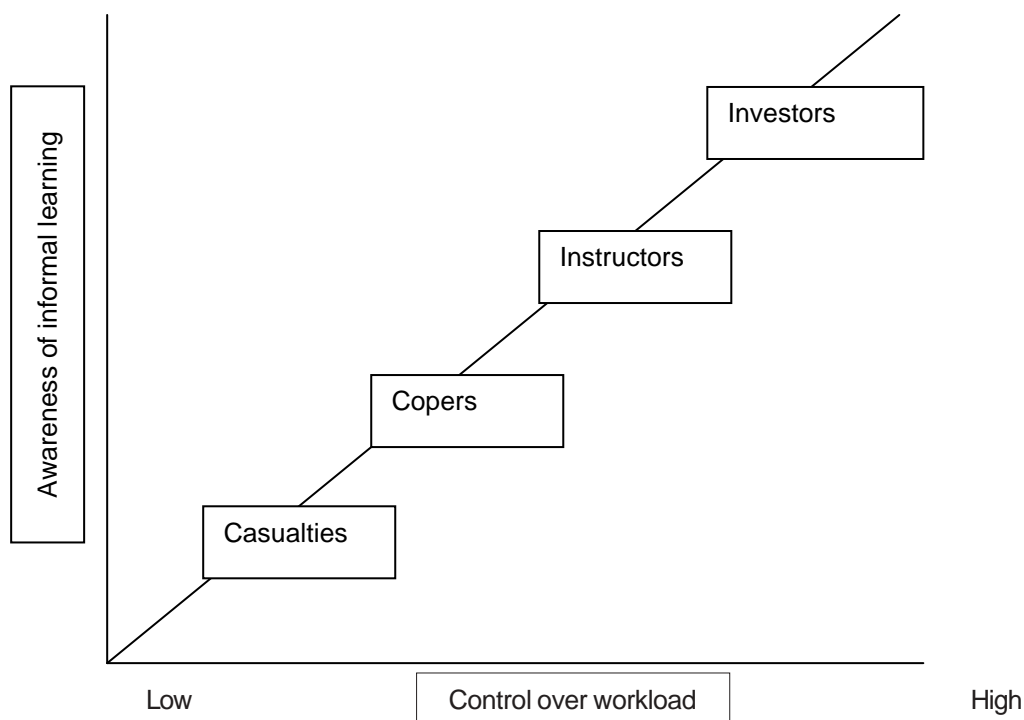


Table 2: Approaches to continuing professional development

To begin the construction of the typology I undertook cross-case analysis of all the lecturers’ transcripts using the two key dimensions identified and systematically checked the whole data set for associations. The analysis was methodical and involved review of all the data collected. The typology was thus grounded in the original accounts provided by all the lecturers. Through close examination of data for both differences and similarities, I noted that patterns of control over workloads and awareness of informal learning varied from low to high. I identified four types: Type 1, Type 2, Type 3 and Type 4 and plotted the relevant descriptors, e.g. unmanageable, demanding, etc, against the dimensions (see Table 1).

To check out this stage of analysis and confirm my ideas, I carried out within-case analysis and identified four transcripts in which the accounts ranged from low to high on my two chosen dimensions and which illustrated the four types. I prepared four descriptive case studies using the lecturers’ accounts within each transcript and also used their own words to label each case study. The four distinctive types I identified and labelled were lecturers as: casualties, copers, instructors and investors. By plotting the case studies along the two dimensions a typology of approaches to continuing professional development could be completed (see Table 2).

#### Four different approaches to continuing professional development

Brief descriptions of each of the four case studies are provided here to illuminate the different approaches.

Casualties are lecturers who appear to have little control over their workloads and seem unable to identify positive learning opportunities within their everyday practice in college. Casualties describe feelings of working to the limit of their capacity, of falling apart or being thrown in at the deep end.

Copers are lecturers who appear to have developed ways of coping with their workloads. They are aware that they have taken measures to cope, but do not always regard these as positive opportunities for informal learning from their workload that could contribute to professional development, but more as ways of handling past mistakes.

Instructors are lecturers who prioritise subject expertise, focus on teaching, spend time on preparing all their materials on their own and conscientiously try to keep up-to-date.

Investors perceive student learning and achievement as their focus and are enthusiastic about their work. They are happy to invest time in sessions with students to reap long term rewards. They are creative in their approach to their work and realistic about the current workplace demands.

## Ensuring interpretive validity

As a qualitative researcher, I am not only concerned with providing a valid description of lecturers' practices in a specific context, but also with what they mean to the lecturers engaged in them, i.e. the lecturers' perspective. Although I had drawn the dimensions from the data and based the case studies on lecturers' words from the transcripts, according to Maxwell (2002) accounts are always constructed by the researcher and thus interpretive. The issue to resolve is not whether the accounts are valid in my eyes but whether they are valid in the eyes of the lecturers. To assess the interpretive validity of the case studies I asked lecturers in the sample to identify which description fitted them best. Lecturers recognised the four types but the responses raised another issue. Lecturers indicated that at different times they could fit different cases and they were often reluctant to see themselves as one type. I had to ask myself whether my attempt to explain different approaches to continuing professional development by employing a typology was ill-conceived.

There are conflicting views about the effectiveness of typologies and Evans (2002) considers they serve as poor models because it is difficult to slot real people into only one of them as "invariably, in the real world, people represent hybrid or combination typologies". Evans states that their static nature is a drawback, but my experience was that lecturers had engaged readily with the four different types and could make associations with them and comparisons between them.

## Reasons for creating a typology

The typology developed represented the disparate views expressed in the data and I had identified a set of conditions for ways of engaging in continuing professional development through 'high' control over workloads and 'high' awareness of informal learning, which was the purpose of my research. Recognising the limitations of the typology enabled me to consolidate the first three phases of the research and reflect on the notion of the changing practices and shifting context of lecturers' workloads. The typology had enabled me to explain differences and understand the dynamic nature of lecturers' workloads, which led me to developing a model of practice as a continuum in the next phase of the research.

Despite the stated drawbacks of a typology, it is one way for the qualitative researcher to approach synthesising and interpreting qualitative data and move beyond descriptive case studies towards an explanation of data collected. The multidimensional analysis required illuminates perceptions of different individuals or groups being studied and is a way of making data analysis explicit and accessible to research participants through a process which requires them to articulate their understandings of the evidence presented to them.

Ritchie and Spencer (2002) urge the research community to widen its pool of analytic knowledge and extend its methodological base. To encourage you, a brief, but accessible, account of creating typologies that proved useful to me is to be found in a chapter on qualitative data analysis by Ritchie and Spencer (2002).

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## *Case study of a PGCE student: A personal account of professional development*

By **Claire Matthews**, PGCE student 2002-3, City College Norwich.

### **Evaluation of strengths and development needs**

The PGCE course reflects the guidelines and principles of FENTO, the Further Education National Training Organisation. These guidelines identify the professional standards and development needs of teachers in further education. Throughout my time on the course, there has been emphasis on evaluation, planning and development, according to FENTO, the three key functions of the professional development process (Gray et al, 2000). FENTO Standards are integral to all course work and assignments and my course portfolio will therefore serve as a diagnostic tool for professional development. Furthermore, the course content and the modelled behaviour of course tutors have provided me with inspiration for further progression, e.g. a desire for Power Point training. Three micro-teaches provided me with valuable feedback on my teaching strengths and development points. Peer assessment was just as valuable as tutor assessment, and my reflection on these assessments provided further helpful evaluation. The evaluations from my micro-teaches provided material to use in planning the development of my teaching skills on placement.

My teaching placements for the PGCE course have been varied and challenging and have provided me with a wealth of experience by which to critically evaluate my professional strengths and development needs. At Great Yarmouth College I was responsible for the planning and teaching of a 16 week Access module. The setting and marking of assignments and the final exam was my responsibility, as were student tutorials, and I was involved in course reviews and planning meetings. As a result, the scheme of work produced for this module was a valuable planning document, enabling both formative and summative evaluation of the module. Similarly, my lesson plans enabled me to effectively review and evaluate each lesson and my teaching skills.

I have been observed in my teaching placements on three occasions and have found the feedback and reflection on it very helpful in assessing and developing my teaching skills and knowledge. For example, the observation at East Norfolk Sixth Form College highlighted a deficit in skills in controlling and maximising the potential of the learning environment. As a result of reflection on this point, I have thought of strategies that can be applied in future similar situations. This may be very valuable to me as I intend to apply for consideration as a supply teacher at the same college. I have been observed twice on my

placement at Great Yarmouth College. The fact that both tutors highlighted a particular aspect of my teaching which needed modification, has led me to reflect on aspects of my teaching skills and style which can be developed in order to improve my overall teaching.

Course reviews and student tutorials have also provided me with valuable feedback on my professional skills and knowledge, for instance; although I did not encounter any serious professional problems whilst tutoring, I am now aware of the literature and practical help that colleges such as City College have available on the subject, and plan to use this to improve my tutoring skills. Much of the feedback I have received has been very positive and has raised my self-esteem regarding my teaching abilities and given me the confidence to address issues that will advance my professional development. These issues revolve around the skills and knowledge that I see as being needed for my future practice, including key skills.

The Government see Key Skills as a range of essential generic skills that underpin success in education, employment lifelong learning and personal development (DfES, 2002). In my Access teaching I have had to build CAVA (Cambridge Access Validation Agency) Learning Skills into my scheme of work and lesson plans. These are similar to key skills and it would be unsurprising to see these learning skills become 'official' key skills in the future. My current qualifications appear to have provided me with sufficient key skills for my teaching requirements to date. However, given the government's commitment to key skills and their integration into most college courses, I intend to ensure that I have key skills qualifications to the required level, in order to be able to teach them effectively. Once I have identified my key skills needs I hope to gain qualifications from colleges in which I will teach, fitting any study around my teaching commitments.

I intend to seek career guidance at City College in order to ascertain the subjects and courses that I am qualified to teach on and to obtain advice regarding further qualifications for subject areas and teaching that I may wish to do in future. My current qualifications and my PGCE

will enable me to continue teaching part-time on the Access course, which I have enjoyed, and I may be offered some part time HND teaching, which sounds appealing I am also attracted to the idea of teaching in higher education and will therefore need to consider the Masters degree courses offered by City College and the Open University.

Although I realise that there may be more limited opportunities for professional development for part-time staff, I hope to benefit from the mix of provision and opportunities available from a variety of colleges. It may well be necessary to be resourceful and proactive in developing my career, as Huddleston and Unwin (1997) point out that the level of importance attached to professional development is dependent on the culture of the learning organisation.

### Current developments in the learning and skills sector

New Labour came to power in 1997 declaring that:

*“Education will be at the heart of government”.*  
(DfEE, 1997a)

Since their election, the Government has overhauled educational policy and practice, with many new measures aimed specifically at further and higher education. Some of the more radical reforms are associated with changes to ‘A’ level and vocational syllabuses and the introduction of Key Skills qualifications (DfEE, 1997b). The new foundation degrees aim for greater integration of vocational and academic learning and qualification (Mourant, 2003).

The recent changes in the ‘A’ level syllabus mean that textbooks and other resources are still in the process of being updated. As I hope to supply teach in the future, I shall obtain the new textbooks, which I have been advised will be available. This will enable me to keep my knowledge of the new syllabi as up to date as possible.

The role of the teacher in further education is undergoing radical changes. As Reece and Walker, (2002), point out:

*“The modern teacher is a person who assists students to learn for themselves”.*

It can therefore be asserted that nowadays there is a much greater need for the teacher to be engaged with theory and research pertaining to learning and teaching. The Government is actively encouraging self-development through training and education in its interpretation of Lifelong Learning (DfEE, 1998). I plan to engage further in theory and research, primarily through taking a Masters degree in Education. The government’s target ambition to get 50% of young

people into higher education (TES, 2003) which means that there should be a greater demand for teachers with a Masters qualification.

Many writers stress how the ‘education industry’ is now replete with ‘market economy’ philosophy and language, e.g. Smith and Wexler (1995), who examine these phenomena as part of the post-modernist debate. This New Managerialism has great implications on the job functions and efficiency and, flexibility expected of the teacher. My previous work experience as a manager in the service industry means that I should be well equipped for the duties of the ‘modern’ teacher. I appreciate however that the job will still require ongoing training in a wide variety of skills. The PGCE course has raised my consciousness of areas that I need training in, e.g. disability awareness, and I shall take advantage of the training opportunities available when I start work. While it can be easy to cynically see the current phrases of ‘lifelong learning’ and ‘the learning organisation’ as clarion calls for people to rise up and pledge themselves to the altar of human resource development (Huddleston and Unwin, 1997) they can equally be seen as means for the growth of individuals, not just professionally but personally.

### Professionalism in the teaching role

To work within a professional value base means a consideration of and appropriate adherence to the professional values of relevant national training organisations. The NTO of the greatest relevance to teachers in colleges is FENTO, established in 1998. Working within a professional value base also means meeting professional responsibilities in relation to the policies and practices of the organisation one is working for, in addition, it means an exploration of ones own preferences, biases and values (Tight, 1996). Through exploration of personal and professional experiences and values, one is also made aware of the experiences not had, hopefully resulting in a more sensitive and honest approach towards others and ones work. The development of a professional value base that consciously acknowledges my own values and the strengths and limitations of my experience is something that I hope to continuously development, most notably, through personal reflection. Keeping up to date with the latest policy and practice will be important, and I intend to subscribe to educational journals and papers if I am not able to access them easily through work.

My professional value base has been formed largely by the knowledge gained on the PGCE course and from my placements. I have built on the theory taught, particularly Androgogy, eg. Knowles (1973), and Humanism, e.g. Rogers (1961), to develop teaching skills and methods that foster motivation and independence in my learners. For example, I

encouraged the students in my Access class to perform mini-seminars. Several students did so and as a result improved their knowledge and learning skills and reported a growth in their self-confidence. I feel that developing such methods has been of benefit to the students and myself and I intend to build on my knowledge and skill in such teaching methods.

The Access course required me to attend student reviews and team meetings regarding the progress of the students and the course in general. On my placements I developed good professional relationships with many teaching and support staff at the colleges. I hope to maintain many of these contacts in order to develop my career. The help and guidance I have received from colleagues has been welcomed although I have found that I have often had to stress my lack of experience in certain areas, e.g. marking assignments, in order to obtain help. On reflection, my maturity and previous teaching experience probably meant that I was viewed as being more competent than I am. In future I plan to be more proactive in seeking help from colleagues and try to obtain a mentor in new teaching posts.

Models of professional development, such as Maynard and Furlong (1995), vary in their foci and concerns but emphasise that professional development is a journey. In conclusion, my course and work experiences to date have led me to view this journey as continuous, and necessary for a rewarding and successful career.

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## THE RESEARCH CENTRE CITY COLLEGE NORWICH

### *Work in progress*

The Research Centre has been extremely busy over the last few months which has resulted in a wave of new projects and recruitment to research opportunities.

### *HEFCE Restructuring and Collaboration Project*

This research project is currently underway at the Research Centre, City College Norwich and is part of a wider £1.5 million programme to finance changes within Anglia Polytechnic University and its twenty three partner colleges.

The Regional Partnership will be able to offer greater student choice on Higher Education Programmes if they can collaborate where needed on delivery through the medium of video-conferencing. This project is looking at the practical issues surrounding this collaboration, issues of finance, operation, quality and the student experience.

The research is managed by Sandra Rowney who is working closely with Paul Fynn, Anne Aves and Peter Bullard who have been seconded on a part time basis from their work in the college. The team are seeking opinions from representative staff at all levels of City College Norwich, together with representatives from within the Regional Partnership Colleges. They are researching what arrangements already exist in other college partnerships both nationally and internationally putting together a collection of concise discussion documents that will assist the decision makers at local, regional and HEFCE in their future planning.

**Research Fellow:**

Sandra Rowney (srowney@ccn.ac.uk)

**Senior Lecturers:**

Robin Graves Morris (rgravesm@ccn.ac.uk)

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Peter Bullard (pbullard@ccn.ac.uk)

**Lecturer:**

Paul Fynn (pfynn@ccn.ac.uk)

### *SOUL*

September saw the start of an exciting and innovative local research project into Soft Outcomes & Universal Learning (SOUL) with potential major benefits for small voluntary organisations throughout Norfolk, made possible by a £191,000 grant over two and a half years from The Community Fund.

Many Voluntary Sector Organisations are increasingly frustrated at the difficulty in obtaining money/grants as they are unable to 'prove' the value of their work and the beneficiary's learning outcomes, and often feel pushed down the accreditation route even when inappropriate for their learners.

A consortium of NVS, Norwich Community Workshop, Break, The Benjamin Foundation, Creative Arts East, together with City College Norwich responded by designing a project which aims to create a 'model' to help organisations understand how their work nurtures clients' progression, to measure this effectively and enable them to access and justify funding. The Research Centre will be undertaking the research on behalf of this consortium. Two new members of staff have been appointed to undertake this research.

**Lead Research Fellow:**

Brian Butcher (bbutcher@ccn.ac.uk)

**Research Fellow:**

Lee Marsden (lmarsden@ccn.ac.uk)

### *M Learning Project*

The LSDA have formed an m-learning consortium to explore how mobile learning equipment, systems and learning materials can be used to help young people develop and achieve life long learning objectives including improving their literacy and numeracy skills. CCN will be one of the learning providers that will be testing hard and software for this project, and this will be spearheaded through staff seconded from Community Studies.

**Lecturer:**

Sandra Thurston (sthurston@ccn.ac.uk)

## *LSDA Action Research Projects* *x 4*

In October four new action research projects received funding from the Learning and Skills Development Agency. Staff have been seconded to work on these for periods up to eighteen months.

## *Working with Fourteen Year Olds*

The project will support staff that are dealing with 14 year old learners in a FE context for the first time, through an action research investigation into classroom practice amongst a number of volunteer staff. Staff will be encouraged via a project co-ordinator to gather data on their teaching techniques reflect on this data and change their practice as a result of this reflection. This process will be encouraged and enhanced by a series of workshops facilitated and organised by the researcher, a lecturer seconded from Childcare Studies, where staff experiences a can be shared and outcomes monitored.

**Senior Lecturer:**  
Ruth Webb

## *Widening Participation in the Voluntary Sector*

This research aims to investigate and implement support mechanisms for students undertaking the Level 2 ASDAN Certificate in Community Volunteering. The project will enable action research to identify students and volunteer 'employers' needs on a one to one basis and to offer support and guidance on good practice to volunteer 'employers' in areas such as volunteer agreements and policy documents. This project is being undertaken by a lecturer seconded from Voluntary Sector Studies.

**Lecturer:**  
Kate Paine

## *Staff development*

The research aims to use action research to investigate current lecturer skills demands and produce bespoke staff development opportunities and strategies based on identified areas of need. Invoking an action research cycle, staff will monitor their practice and use workshops to share their perceptions of areas of strength and weakness in relation to their ability to fulfil the varying demands of their changing role. The data will be collected by the researcher; a lecturer seconded from the Hotel School, and be used to develop bespoke solutions to expressed development need.

**Lecturer:**  
Vicky Hingley

## *Level 3 Information, Advice and Guidance Relating to Progression*

Recently concluded research in the college has suggested that information flow, attitude and perception hamper progression in some areas. This action research project will draw on this data and investigate how these barriers to in-house level 3 to HE progression opportunities might be addressed and successfully overcome. Invoking an action research cycle, the researcher, a senior lecturer seconded from CIS, will explore the ways in which staff promote progression with level 3 students, share experiences and offer alternative approaches.

**Senior Lecturer:**  
Anne Aves

## *Leonardo Project*

City College is in receipt of Leonardo funds to investigate methods of careers guidance in the UK for inclusion in a pan-European project. A member of academic or support staff will be seconded, on a part-time basis, for the next 15 months commencing in January 2004 to act as a Research Assistant supporting the Project Leader, Mark Bayley, from Services to Business.

The research will involve comparing career guidance within the UK with partners across Europe at a forum in Vienna, where jointly, the best practice and relevance of system transference from one country to another will be assessed. The project will also look at typical or innovative methods of testing and profiling young people.

The aim of the project is to develop effective assessment instruments for small and medium sized enterprises and colleges. These instruments should be able to give information about formal and informal qualifications; if possible they should be able to certificate soft skills like social competence, experiences and abilities.

The project findings will result in a series of recommendations for delivering careers guidance within the UK and possibly pan-European.

**Project Leader:**

Mark Bayley

**Lecturer/Researcher:**

Paula Henderson-Gray



## THE RESEARCH CENTRE Research Seminars and Bulletin

**Do you .....**

- ... have an interest in research?

**Are you .....**

- ... teaching or undertaking any course or programme involving research?

**Have you .....**

- ... undertaken some research as part of a course of professional development or simply for your own personal interest?

**Are you .....**

- ... presenting a conference paper and would like a dry run?

In the NEW YEAR, THE RESEARCH CENTRE will be running a new series of Research Seminars which are open to all - but may be of particular interest to staff undertaking research degrees, other programmes involving research, or for those just wishing to find out more about research activities within City College Norwich. The Research Seminars and Bulletin aim, in time, to reflect the wide diversity of research activity that is undertaken across City College Norwich. Research Seminars will be held approximately twice a term, with one Research Bulletin published at the end of each semester.

**So . . .**

If you think **YOU HAVE AN ARTICLE** that you would like to  
publish in the **RESEARCH BULLETIN**  
or would be prepared to **PRESENT YOUR RESEARCH**  
in a **RESEARCH SEMINAR . . .**

Please contact **Roz Mazey** on **3478** or by email: [rmazey@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:rmazey@ccn.ac.uk),  
in THE RESEARCH CENTRE, City College Norwich.

NOTES

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Committed to developing individual learning and achievement in the community

