

academy

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exchange

Supporting the student learning experience



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Mission

The Academy's mission is to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to provide the best possible learning experience for their students.

Strategic aims and objectives

1. To be an authoritative and independent voice on policies that influence student learning experiences
2. To support institutions in their strategies for improving the student learning experience
3. To lead, support and inform the professional development and recognition of staff in higher education
4. To promote good practice in all aspects of support for the student learning experience
5. To lead the development of research and evaluation to improve the quality of the student learning experience
6. To be a responsive, efficient and accountable organisation.



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Editorial

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that recent policy-making in UK higher education has taken place in a research vacuum. The teaching and learning area is no exception. Empirical evidence about the connection between university teaching and research, for example, was misunderstood by those who drafted key recommendations in the 2003 White Paper.

The irony of this approach is all too apparent. The critical, theoretical, doubting and methodical approach that underpins all university research worthy of the name has not been applied to the use of evidence to shape higher education policy. In teaching and learning, we still depend too much on prejudice, hunches, opinions and guesswork. More sinisterly, decision-makers rely on the selective use of data to shore up insularity: on policy-based evidence rather than evidence-based policy.

The Higher Education Academy is committed to developing evidence-informed approaches to improving students' learning experiences. We have established our Research and Evaluation Directorate in the context of multiple requests from stakeholders for leadership in the area of evidence-based practice in higher education.

The Academy has instituted its own programme of research and evaluation activities, and a number of them are described in this issue of *Academy Exchange*, which is devoted to the theme of research and evaluation. We are working with several groups to ensure that evidence-informed policy is given a higher priority in higher education. Emerging issues in UK HE that need a strong and systematic evidence base include:



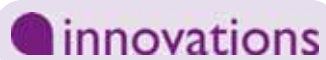
- the impact of variable fees on the student experience
- the role and function of e-learning in higher education
- the use by HEIs for their own quality and improvement purposes of information about performance – such as the results of the recent National Student Survey and data on completion and retention rates
- the impact on the student learning experience of schemes such as the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in England and Northern Ireland.

There is also a long-term challenge for our research and evaluation function: to encourage an enlarged emphasis on fundamental research into aspects of higher education. If research into higher education is conceived purely as the solution of immediate practical problems, then paradoxically it risks becoming irrelevant. Much truly great research is discovery pursued for its own sake, underpinned by exacting conceptual foundations and conforming to the established canons of rigour, originality and significance. It is about the imaginative acquisition of knowledge. It has no instrumental imperative. But it contains the seeds of the policy solutions of tomorrow.

PAUL RAMSDEN
Chief Executive
The Higher Education Academy

news

New themes for 2005-06



In response to feedback from institutions about areas of interest they would like the Academy to support, we will be basing our work with HEIs for the coming year on four broad themes:

- innovations in the curriculum and student support
- quality management
- assessment of student learning
- academic leadership.

We will build a programme of activity around each theme, to include workshops and seminars, conferences and related materials. We will phase in each theme over the course of this academic year, beginning with innovations and quality management in the coming months. Each theme and event will be targeted at particular groups.

BRUCE GREER



Full details will appear on the News and Events pages of the Academy website at www.heacademy.ac.uk. To register an interest in any of these themes please contact enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk.



Gabriel Jezierski



Alastair Robertson

Senior Advisers for Wales and Scotland

We have appointed two new Senior Advisers to address the needs of higher education institutions in Wales and Scotland. Gabriel Jezierski has been seconded from the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) as Senior Adviser Wales. Alastair Robertson, Assistant Director at QAA Scotland (the Quality Assurance Agency in Scotland), has been appointed as Senior Adviser Scotland.

They will be based in Cardiff and Edinburgh respectively. Their role will be to develop the Academy's function in Wales and Scotland and to work with all higher education providers to broker support and build relationships.

We have also appointed Professor Rob Norris, one of the Academy's existing Senior Advisers, as Liaison Officer for all Northern Ireland institutions.

Academy Liaison Officers

To strengthen our relationship with individual universities and colleges we have set up a liaison scheme. It is intended to help us develop programmes of support based on HEIs' needs. We are asking each institution to nominate a senior member of staff to act as its main contact with the Academy at the strategic level. In turn we will designate a senior officer of the Academy as the link contact with each institution and have begun a programme of visits to all institutions in the Autumn Term. For further information please contact liaison@heacademy.ac.uk.

news

Welsh strategies



We have recently published a report on *Welsh institutional learning and teaching strategies 2004-05*, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). It identifies emerging trends in learning and teaching developments and highlights examples of novel and effective practices in institutions' learning and teaching strategies. It also provides links to resources and other forms of support available to HEIs from the Academy and its Subject Centres. The report will form a starting point for our discussions with Welsh institutions over the coming year.

The report is available on our website at www.heacademy.ac.uk/Cymraeg.htm (in Welsh) or from Academy Resources at www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp (searchable by title).

We will be holding a one-day event for all staff with responsibility for learning and teaching, quality enhancement and learning support in Wales on 1 December 2005 at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells. The report will be launched at this event. Further details are at www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/List.htm.

Support for e-learning

We are developing a benchmarking exercise open to all UK HEIs, which will allow them to benchmark their current progress in e-learning and make realistic plans for future development. The exercise has been developed in response to feedback from institutions about the need to understand more about their own and the sector's progress in e-learning. It will start with a pilot phase in January 2006 and is part of our collaboration with JISC to take forward HEFCE's e-learning strategy.



We will also be developing a programme of Pathfinder projects that will take forward e-learning in particular areas of institutional work. Funding of £6 million will be available to individual HEIs or groups of institutions to undertake projects building on the results of the benchmarking exercise. These will focus either on key areas of institutional activity or on specific discipline areas. Pathfinder projects will begin in mid-2006.

Although the Pathfinder programme is restricted to HEIs in England, we will be working to disseminate the approaches and results more widely across the UK.

Further information is at www.heacademy.ac.uk/e-learning.htm. For questions about the benchmarking exercise go to www.heacademy.ac.uk/eLBFAQ.htm.

National Student Survey

To support HEIs wishing to use the results of surveys – such as the first National Student Survey (NSS) in 2005 – to improve their students' learning experiences, we are planning a series of seminars and workshops for various groups of staff in HEIs, and will be holding a one-day conference early next year on examples of good teaching, learning and course design relating to student experiences as indicated by such surveys.

We have also commissioned surveys on the first-year experience and on the impact of initiatives to improve learning and teaching, which will complement institutions' own internal surveys. Through our representation on the NSS Steering Group, we are working on ways to improve the survey for the next round.

Dr Mike Prosser, the Academy's Director of Research and Evaluation, will be giving presentations over the next few months on using the survey results to help to understand better the ways in which our students are experiencing their teaching and their courses. He would be happy to speak to regional meetings or groups of specialist staff on this subject: contact

enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk to make a request.

New structure for National Teaching Fellowship Scheme



In November we announced a restructuring of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) for 2006. The scheme, which is managed by the Academy and funded by HEFCE and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, recognises and rewards individual excellence in teaching in higher education. From 2006 the new scheme will comprise two strands, Individual National Teaching Fellowship Awards and Project Grants. The total funding will be £2.5 million.

Earlier this year we undertook a comprehensive review of the scheme, now in its seventh year, to evaluate its impact on both individuals and institutions. This resulted in a recommendation to decouple the award from the requirement to carry out a project.

Higher education institutions will be able to nominate up to three staff for the individual strand. The previous

categories of 'Experienced Staff', 'Learning Support Staff' and 'Rising Stars' have been abolished and next year's scheme will be open to all staff who are engaged in supporting and promoting excellence in student learning.

Individual awards of £10,000 will be made to support the Fellows' learning and teaching. The call for nominations for the individual strand will open at the launch of the revised scheme on 18 January 2006 in London.

In the project strand, designed to develop and disseminate innovations and good practice which address common learning, teaching and assessment concerns across the whole sector, teams will be able to bid for funds of up to £200,000. At least one member of the bidding team must be an NTFS award holder. The invitation to bid for project funding will open in September 2006.

From 2006 each strand will be overseen by a National Advisory Panel comprising senior representatives from the sector. Professor Rick Trainor, Principal of King's College London, and Professor Janet Finch, Vice-Chancellor of Keele University, have been invited to chair the Panels for the individual and project strands respectively.

Details of the new scheme will be posted on the NTFS website at **www.ntfs.ac.uk/**.



Consultation on professional standards

Our national consultation on a new framework for professional standards for teaching and supporting learning was launched in August and closed at the end of October. The framework was developed as a result of our first consultation *Towards a Framework of Professional Standards* in 2004 and builds on our existing system for the accreditation of programmes for new teaching staff.

The new framework proposes a broad definition of standards that institutions will be able to use to develop their own distinctive criteria. The proposals are designed to enable HEIs to meet the recommendation in the 2003 White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* that national professional standards, designed and agreed by the sector itself, will form part of accredited programmes for all staff who teach in higher education.

From September 2006, we will incorporate the agreed standards in our accreditation framework.

The consultation paper is available at www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/consultations.htm

Conference on the teaching and research relationship

On 8 November the Academy held a one-day conference for policy-makers on 'The teaching and research relationship: developing institutional policy and practice'. It was attended by over 160 delegates and generated much useful discussion that will enable the sharing of policy and practice, and themes that we will be taking forward over the coming year in our work with institutions.

The conference discussed national initiatives, the research evidence about the relationship between teaching and research, and case studies from individual institutions, as well as providing a view from the Research Councils.

The speakers included Dr Liz Beaty, Director (Learning and

Teaching) at HEFCE; Professor Roger Brown, Vice-Chancellor of Southampton Solent University; Professor Andrea Nolan, Vice-Principal, Learning and Teaching, University of Glasgow; Professor Bob Munn, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning, University of Manchester; Professor Alan Jenkins, University of Warwick and Oxford Brookes University; and Iain Cameron of Research Councils UK.

At the conference a new Academy publication by Alan Jenkins and Mick Healey was launched. *Institutional strategies to link teaching and research* is designed to help institutions review their current policies and decide on what measures they might introduce to strengthen the teaching-research relationship. The guide is available from www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp.

Association of National Teaching Fellows

An Association of National Teaching Fellows, to which all 180 Fellows to date belong, was set up in the summer and will work with the Academy to promote the expertise of the award holders to the benefit of the wider HE community and to enhance the impact of the NTFS initiative. The Association has elected a committee to represent the interests of the Fellows and to help to disseminate their work. Bob Rotheram (Nottingham



Trent University, NTF 2002) and Lesley-Jane Eales-Reynolds (University of Portsmouth, NTF 2001) have been elected as its first Chair and Vice-Chair.

Supporting the student ex

In the previous issue of *Academy Exchange* I wrote about an evidence-informed approach to the improvement of practice and policy relating to student learning experiences. In that issue I argued for a broad conception of what we mean by evidence-informed approaches. This issue of *Academy Exchange* examines this topic in more detail, and outlines some of the work of the Academy in this area.

There is a great deal of discussion about pedagogic research in the context of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). But 'RAE-able' pedagogic research is not the only form of evidence-informed scholarship that can inform our understanding of, and help improve our practices in, ways to improve student learning experiences. One of the most influential analyses of the state of research and teaching in the modern university was that by Ernest Boyer in 1990. He drew analytical distinctions between the scholarship of discovery (more traditional forms of research), the scholarship of integration (writing textbooks, conducting literature reviews), the scholarship of application (investigating local issues and problems and applying scholarship to addressing them), and the scholarship of teaching (which I think of as evidence-based critical reflection on practice to improve practice). In thinking about the research and evaluation role of the Higher Education Academy I have drawn upon Boyer's analysis to define analytical distinctions between pedagogic research (consistent with the present definition of research for the RAE), investigations and evaluations, literature reviews and the scholarship of teaching.

Specifically, we are drawing distinctions between the following:

Research

- enhances our theoretical and/or conceptual understanding of teaching and learning
- is firmly situated in its relevant literature and makes a substantial contribution to that literature and/or field

Investigations and evaluations

- enhance our understanding of a local problem or issue, providing recommendations for policy and/or action firmly situated in the relevant literature

Literature reviews

- collection and analysis of literature aimed at describing the various ways in which the object of the review is thought about, and recommendations for practice

Scholarship of teaching and learning

- evidence-based critical reflection on practice aimed at improving practice

Surveys of academic staff and student experiences of teaching and learning

- collection and analysis of current experiences of teaching and learning (see the article by Nick Hammond in this issue of *Academy Exchange*).

Drawing upon these sorts of analytical distinctions (there is of course overlap between them in practice), it is important to ensure that we do not neglect important aspects of scholarship aimed at improving our understanding of student learning experiences, and our practice in ways to improve those experiences, in the context of responding to the imperatives of the RAE.

The Academy has just funded its first round of research projects. There were a very large number of applications for a small number of

experience

a scholarly approach

Pedagogic research isn't the only kind of scholarship that can lead to improvements in the student learning experience, says Mike Prosser. Here he defines the different types of research and evaluation the Academy will be funding to help institutions benefit from evidence-informed approaches.

projects. Those funded were judged to have been of a very high standard indeed (see pp. 10-11 for examples of three of them). In the New Year we will be calling for applications for our first round of investigation and evaluation projects. We consider such projects to be vitally important in bringing a research-led, evidence-informed and scholarly approach to the investigation of more local problems and issues.

We have also recently funded our first round of literature reviews. A major concern is that we in the UK should continue to develop and value the scholarship of teaching and learning – a key aspect of developing and improving individual practice.

Finally, in order to better understand the experiences and concerns of academic staff and students, we are commissioning a number of surveys in areas such as the first-year experience, experiences of academic staff on accredited programmes and research student experiences.

With the growing national concern for more evidence-informed approaches to the improvement of teaching and learning experiences, the Academy intends, through activities such as those described above and elsewhere in this issue, to provide leadership and support for institutions, subject groups and individual academic staff to build upon and further extend their evidence-informed policy development and practice. ●



MIKE PROSSER is Director of Research and Evaluation, Higher Education Academy.



ANDREW STEVENS



Academy research projects: three case studies

Case Study 1

Strategies for internationalisation in UK universities

Our research project focuses on three key questions: what is the impact of the changing global educational context on the international activities of UK universities? To what extent do current institutional strategies for internationalisation reflect these changes? And how best can institutions organise their international activities to serve the needs of their students? UK universities operate in an increasingly complex and globalised higher education arena and are competing, both nationally and internationally, in the recruitment of overseas students and for research funding. This has led many overseas (and some UK) institutions to develop a more strategic approach to their international activity. Such an approach can have significant educational dimensions such as 'internationalising' the curriculum to serve the changing needs of students and the global employment market. It can also have social, administrative and financial implications, including the recognition of the international and intercultural

dimensions of services such as human resources, recruitment and marketing, and student support.

To date, there has been very little investigation of the strategies used by UK universities in relation to their international activities, whether they are serving the needs of their international students, and how they could improve in the future. This project seeks to fill this gap through an in-depth case-study of one institution (the University of Surrey), combined with a review of current policy and practice related to internationalisation in HE in the UK and internationally.

The case study approach we are using at Surrey combines documentary research and interviews to investigate the University's strategy for internationalisation and international

activity, and how this impacts on its educational and administrative activities, including the experiences of both learners and teachers. The project will act as a pilot study for further research, and the research approach is designed to be adapted and used by other UK universities to investigate their own policies and practices. Early publicity about the project has already generated interest from other UK universities who wish to work in parallel with the project.

The project is co-ordinated with assistance from the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE). Throughout the research, we will seek to work closely with key stakeholders such as other universities, national policy agencies and representative organisations.

ROBIN MIDDLEHURST and STEVE WOODFIELD,
Centre for Policy and Change in Tertiary Education, University of Surrey

Further information
www.surrey.ac.uk/cpc-te/HEA tel: 01483 683125
email: s.woodfield@surrey.ac.uk

Case Study 2

Developing a reflective capacity within undergraduate education: the role of work-based placement learning

What happens when a student engages in a year-long, work-based placement? Why do many lecturers perceive a qualitative difference between placement and non-placement students during their final undergraduate year? Our project focuses on one aspect of the student experience – the role of work-based placement learning in supporting the development of a reflective capacity. In undergraduate education there is an increasing emphasis on the need for reflection as an integral part of becoming a lifelong learner. It is also an essential element in professional training.

We draw on the work of Marcia Baxter Magolda to link the development of a reflective capacity with a student's 'way of knowing'. The latter is influenced by cognitive development, as well as interpersonal development (how you view yourself in relation to others) and intrapersonal development (how you perceive your sense of identity). Thus placements, where students have to 'act' in a range of roles and take a variety of independent decisions, is highly relevant to examining development in these areas.

Using a questionnaire and interviews, we are comparing the development of placement and non-placement Business

Studies and Accounting students. Ultimately we seek to use our findings to inform the design of subject-based and work-based learning activities to support the development of a reflective capacity.

The project is also funded by the Charitable Trusts of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

URSULA LUCAS and PHAIK TAN,
Bristol Business School, University
of the West of England

Further information
[www.uwe.ac.uk/bbs/
research/drc/](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/bbs/research/drc/)

Case Study 3

Argumentation and first-year undergraduates

Our project aims to answer three questions: how are students in their first year introduced to argumentation? How do different curricular structures address argumentation? And what are the obstacles to the embedding of argumentation across the disciplines for first-years in the UK and US?

It might have been assumed, when only 8% or so of school leavers went on to HE in the UK, that students came to university fully equipped to deal with the argumentative demands of induction into a discipline. That assumption can no longer hold in the age of mass higher education. In the US, rhetoric and composition classes for new undergraduates aim to address the problem by teaching generic argumentation skills. In the UK (in England at least – the rhetorical tradition entered the US via Scotland in the 19th century), such generic courses are rare. It is more likely that the teaching of academic writing will be discipline-based.

In each discipline, arguing well will be a matter of linking claims or

propositions to evidence, supported by 'warrants' which enable the link to be made, and by 'backing' which provides the set of practices and values that underpin the warrant. Not only will warrants and backing differ from discipline to discipline, but also some disciplines will predominantly argue inductively, while others will favour deductive arguments.

Compare English studies with Physics. English students tend to argue inductively, from the text. They generate propositions on the basis of the evidence, and then test them. Physics students tend to argue deductively, from laws and theories that have been produced over time, by testing these against observable evidence. In the current project, we are working with departments of History,

Biology and Electronics/Electrical Engineering at three universities. We are undertaking a systematic research review of existing work in the field, and new empirical work via a questionnaire, interviews and document analysis, with both students and lecturers. On completion of the pilot project, we hope to extend the research to continental Europe and China via the Worldwide Universities Network.

The project is co-ordinated by Richard Andrews and Carole Torgerson at the University of York, with Sally Mitchell at Queen Mary, University of London, and Paul Prior at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. David Russell of Iowa State University, Visiting Leverhulme Professor at Queen Mary, is also involved.

Professor RICHARD ANDREWS, Department of Educational Studies,
University of York

Further information www.improving-argumentative-skills.net
For the full list of funded projects, see
www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/1370_2862.htm

Strategies for linking teaching and r

Alan Jenkins argues that we need to re-engineer our institutions and curricula to support the relationship between teaching and research.

There is growing international interest in how teaching and research are related in universities and how the research-teaching nexus is expressed in the student learning experience. The research suggests that the correlation between teaching (as measured by student evaluations) and research (as measured by numbers of publications) is near zero, indicating little or no relationship between teaching and research. This near zero relationship is often misinterpreted as arguing for a separation between teaching and research. But a strong negative relationship would be required for such a conclusion. A more appropriate interpretation is that if HEIs value the relationship, and if they wish their teaching and curricula to be research-informed, then they need to establish institutional policies and structures to support the relationship.

Consistent with this interpretation, a number of UK HEIs have recently reshaped aspects of their institutional policies and practices to better ensure that teaching and research are linked, and that these linkages focus on how the student learns and is assessed. For example, selected undergraduates at Imperial College and the Universities of Warwick and Cambridge carry out research guided by staff, and their institutions

have adapted the US model of 'undergraduate research' to the UK context. At the University of Chester students in biology and other disciplines edit and publish their research for an undergraduate research journal. At Oxford Brookes in 2002-03 all courses were revised to "demonstrate how the linkages between research and teaching and learning are realised in the formal curriculum and the wider student experience". York University carried out an institution-wide survey of teaching-research links. The University of Gloucester and the University of East Anglia researched the student experience of research and then used this evidence to reshape institutional policies and curriculum practice. Manchester University is spreading problem-based learning from its current base in medicine and the humanities and supporting its adaptation to different disciplinary contexts.



Internationally there is much discussion and debate about the creation of 'teaching only' universities. There are also strong claims from universities that they are delivering 'research-led' or 'research-based' teaching. The proposals to create 'teaching only' universities raise significant issues of what is meant by higher education; and even terms such as 'research-led teaching' require careful definition and an appreciation of what can be realistically delivered in the context

Research

of 'mass' higher education. The good news is that there is now a developing research-based understanding of what is effective institutional practice, a language to talk about these issues, and internationally a wide range of examples to guide practice in institutions. In England, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has announced a special funding stream to support teaching informed by research, to be allocated in inverse proportion to an institution's research funding, for 2006-07 and 2007-08 (see www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/enhance/).

What is meant by the link between teaching and research?

International research and educational development have moved our understanding of teaching-research relations away from a central focus on the research qualities of *staff* (e.g. are the best researchers the best teachers?) to a focus on what contexts help *students* learn the complexities of knowledge that research reveals in their disciplines. Such contexts do of course include the skills and research knowledge of staff, but also departmental, institutional and national policies for both teaching and research. A central implication of this research and educational development is that institutions need to develop a 'language' to explore and deliver a view of teaching-research relations ('research-led' etc) that they think is appropriate to their particular context. The following definitions were developed from a reading of the research evidence and its development in the practice of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) project LINK, 'Linking teaching, research and consultancy in Built Environment disciplines'.



I believe that the main hope for realising a genuinely student-centred undergraduate education lies in re-engineering the teaching-research nexus.

Paul Ramsden,
Chief Executive,
Higher Education
Academy



- **Teaching can be *research-led*** in the sense that the curriculum is structured around subject content, and the content selected is directly based on the specialist research interests of teaching staff
- **Teaching can be *research-oriented*** in the sense that the curriculum places as much emphasis on understanding the processes by which knowledge is produced as on learning the codified knowledge that has been achieved; careful attention is given to the teaching of inquiry skills and on acquiring a 'research ethos'
- **Teaching can be *research-based*** in the sense that the curriculum is largely designed around inquiry-based activities, rather than on the acquisition of subject content; the experiences of staff in processes of inquiry are highly integrated into the student learning activities
- **Teaching can be *research-informed*** in the sense that it draws consciously on systematic inquiry into the teaching and learning process itself.

Michael Bradford, then Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) at the University of Manchester, modified the above wording as follows when developing his own institution's learning and teaching strategy:

- learning about others' research
- learning to do research – research methods
- learning in research mode – inquiry-based
- pedagogic research – enquiring and reflecting on learning.

What can realistically be delivered?

As we develop a language and policies to progress effective teaching-research connections in our institutions we have to be realistic about what can be delivered – and seek to widen what is possible. Thus close links between researcher/teachers and undergraduates might once have been readily delivered with small classes, selective student entry, and staff with time to teach and research effectively. Clearly, if that 'golden age' ever existed, it has now long gone. Assuming that we want to hold on to the sense of higher education as enabling all students to understand 'knowledge complexity', and recognising that for many staff their motivations as teachers are shaped by a commitment to their own and to student intellectual development, then we need to re-engineer or reinvent our institutions and curricula to support *student* understanding of and through research.

All of us as teachers, researchers, IT specialists, educational developers – and Vice-Chancellors – have roles to play in creating the contexts that enable such understanding. While the nature of those interventions and the ways in which teaching and research are connected – from research-led to inquiry-based – will of necessity have to vary between institutions, such links can and should be effectively created in all higher education institutions for *all* students. ●



Annual Conference 2006

Enhancing the Student Learning Experience

3 – 5 July
East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

The second annual conference of the Higher Education Academy focuses on enhancing the student learning experience. It will be relevant to anyone involved or interested in either the UK or the international higher education sector. There are three central themes:

- higher education policy and practice
- scholarship of teaching in the disciplines
- innovations to support the student learning experience.

Over 100 sessions will be on offer and delegates will have the opportunity of attending pre-conference workshops showcasing different areas of the Academy's work and keynote presentations from distinguished speakers.

Session proposals are now being sought, and bookings for the conference will open in the Spring. Contact the conference administrator at conference@heacademy.ac.uk or visit our website at www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/conference.htm

Professor ALAN JENKINS is Professor of Higher Education at Westminster Institute, Oxford Brookes University and Fellow of the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research at the University of Warwick and Brookes University.

Further information

To download copies of *Institutional strategies to link teaching and research* by Alan Jenkins and Mick Healey, published in November 2005 by the Higher Education Academy, go to: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp. To order hard copies, email enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk

SURVEYING student and staff perceptions

Nick Hammond describes the Academy's forthcoming programme of surveys.

The Academy seeks to ensure that its focus, priorities and advice are well-grounded in evidence.

Student and staff perceptions of matters that affect students are an important part of such evidence – although the relationship between the perceptions and outcomes may not be straightforward, influenced as it is by prior experience, individual differences and the student's chosen approach to learning.

We have therefore embarked on a programme of surveys to inform strategies for change and to serve as a baseline for future investigations. Some surveys are already underway and a number of others are in the pipeline. They include the following:

First-year students' experiences

This survey will seek first-year full-time students' perceptions of their initial experience of higher education across a wide range of HEIs, and will investigate the reasons of those who do not return for a second year in the same institution. Reasons for non-continuation can be compared with those given in previous studies, perhaps providing an insight into which aspects of the changing context of higher education most strongly influence non-continuation.

The experiences of graduates of accredited programmes in HEIs

An important development in recent years has been the emergence of accredited programmes for new staff (often termed Certificates in Higher Education). At a meeting of the Academy's network group for Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Learning and Teaching, the idea of conducting a formative evaluation of Academy-accredited programmes was raised. An initial step in the evaluation is a questionnaire to poll the experiences and perceptions of staff who have completed such programmes. This survey will be followed by directed interviews and focus groups. The evaluation is intended to provide an evidence base to feed into policy for the development or refinement of such programmes.

The postgraduate research student experience

This work, to be conducted in collaboration with the UKGRAD programme, will explore the expectations and experiences of research students across different disciplines and institutions. The survey will include consideration of the supervisory process and other support, the provision of resources and the wider research setting and environment.

Academics' perceptions of learning and teaching initiatives

The past few years have seen many funded initiatives designed to develop aspects of teaching and learning. Many staff have been involved in these programmes, but concerns remain as to their wider impact. Have all these initiatives raised the status of teaching as a professional activity? Do academic staff think they have made a difference? Which have had the most or least impact?

This survey, still in the early stages of planning, aims to provide some insights into what teaching staff think about the impact of learning and teaching initiatives on the educational environment.

National Student Survey

Finally, we are planning to work with HEIs on how they might make the most effective use of the results of the National Student Survey. We hope to develop our understanding of how students' perceptions of their experiences at university are to be interpreted in relation to their previous experiences, dispositions and learning activities so that changes in policy and practice can be based on reliable evidence. ●

NICK HAMMOND is a Senior Adviser at the Higher Education Academy.



How can academics apply the research methods of their own subjects to their teaching? **George MacDonald Ross** takes a disciplinary view of philosophical research into the teaching of philosophy.

What makes the Higher Education Academy unique in educational development circles is its firm focus on disciplinary differences. This is why it has a network of 24 Subject Centres, each with its own distinctive perspective on helping academics to improve the quality of their students' learning. However, disciplines differ as much in their methods of research as of teaching, and at a time when the spotlight is on the relationship between research and teaching, we need to consider the implications of different research traditions for research into teaching.

The concept of the scholarship of teaching has become widely accepted, and it demands that all university teachers should be actively engaged in research into teaching – at least into the effectiveness of their own teaching. However, it is unreasonable to expect hard-pressed lecturers to learn an entirely new and foreign research methodology in order to fulfil this expectation. The methods of

educational researchers are very different from those of philosophers, physicists, and practitioners of other disciplines.

It is not merely that academics would have to learn new skills, such as statistics or sophisticated techniques for analysing questionnaires. Rather, many are actually repelled by the language and modes of argument of educational research. They will not read it, and still less will they themselves write in the same style.

The Academy Subject Network has already done much to help academics in different disciplines to become more professional in their teaching by presenting the findings of generic educational research using a language and modes of argument acceptable to them. However, this alone does not address the *raison d'être* of the Subject Centres, which is to broker research into subject-specific issues that are outside the field of generic educational researchers. There is no research to broker if no research is carried out. Little research will be carried out if practising academics have to re-train

themselves as educationalists in order to be taken seriously. And if the outcomes are presented in the style of generic educational research, few of their colleagues will pay any attention to it.

This presents a serious challenge. If Subject Centres are to fulfil their function of stimulating and disseminating subject-specific educational research, they must conduct meta-research into how the established research methods of their own disciplines can be applied productively and validly to educational issues. If the outcome is negative, then the whole project of the scholarly teacher and of subject-based educational research will have to be abandoned. On the other hand, if the outcome is positive, this means that current generic research is lacking dimensions that can be supplied only by subject-based academics with their own distinctive research skills. Rather than simply translating the generic into the subject-specific, Subject Centres will generate a two-way traffic, in which subject-specific research methods will

Research into teaching ph





feed into generic research, to the benefit of all.

My own subject of philosophy is a case in point. Relatively little research into the teaching of philosophy has been carried out — not because philosophers are uninterested in their teaching, but because hitherto there has been no culture of systematic research using philosophical methods. As it happens, there is a separate discipline of the philosophy of education, in which philosophers have made important contributions to generic educational research, especially with respect to school teaching. But philosophers of education do not normally teach philosophy to university students, and there has been little dialogue between philosophers of education and mainstream philosophers about the teaching of philosophy, or about the application of philosophical research methods to generic educational research. There is still a dearth of philosophical research into the teaching of philosophy.

Any teacher can do simple, empirical research into his or her own teaching, without needing sophisticated statistical tools or a high-level theory. For example, teachers can make a single change to their teaching methods, and see whether it results in significantly higher marks. But more is needed for a substantial contribution to the

literature. Philosophers can add more by applying the research techniques at which they are most skilled — analysing the concepts used to describe educational processes, evaluating the logical relations between claims, unearthing hidden assumptions, and so on. Not only is it possible to do robust, subject-specific educational research using a mixture of such techniques, but they are also sorely needed in generic educational research. Just as subject-specific research will be better if it is informed by the outcomes of generic research, so generic research will be better if it is informed by the research skills of philosophers.

I certainly would not wish to argue that philosophy is unique in this respect. There is widespread dissatisfaction with educational research as being restricted to a relatively narrow range of techniques and values, and complaints come from all quarters. For instance, teachers of the humanities complain that there is too much quantitative research of little significance, whereas scientists complain that there is insufficient quantitative rigour. Indeed, in the US there is now a flourishing movement, called Physics Education Research, in which dedicated staff do research into the teaching of physics using the broad research methods of physicists. In the

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philosophy

Case studies: pedagogic

UK, the Subject Network has an obvious role to play in fostering comparable research across the disciplines.

Subject-specific research will not happen unless it is funded and recognised. Humanities disciplines have been distinctly unsuccessful at obtaining funding under initiatives such as the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) Phase 5, and there are worries that educational research may not be taken seriously in the next Research Assessment Exercise. With the support of the Academy centrally, humanities Subject Centres have come together to research into the reasons for the low success rate in obtaining grants; to articulate the ways in which humanities research methods can add value to educational research; and to draw up criteria for assessing the quality of research. The results will be reported on the Philosophical and Religious Studies website at <http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk>.

We certainly do not want to see educational research splintered into a myriad of sub-disciplines. But by working together through the Academy, we can foster the growth of robust educational research within the disciplines, and at the same time make our own distinctive contributions to the quality of generic research. Let us finally overcome the historic divide between the generic and the subject-specific! ●

GEORGE MACDONALD ROSS is Director of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies and Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Leeds.

Case Study 1

Pedagogic research in art and design: an RAE perspective



The art and design sector has seen significant developments in pedagogic research that have matured from anecdotal accounts and case histories into systematic enquiries drawing from, and adding to, the body of literature. A range of subject associations in art and design, together with the Academy Subject Centre for Art, Design and Media and GLAD (the Group for Learning in Art and Design), have helped to support and stimulate these developments.

An underlying feature of this research has been an emphasis on the link between research and *learning* rather than that between research and teaching. This may be a consequence of an education through disciplines where most knowledge is contested and so the passive transmission of information plays a marginal role in the student learning experience. Generally, the

teaching practices of studio-based subjects in art and design aim to enable students to construct their own intellectual frameworks so that they can build the attributes and competencies needed to sustain lifetime careers. Much research has been devoted to a better understanding of this learning experience.

A further stimulus to this work may come through the explicit inclusion of pedagogic research in the criteria for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The criteria for the RAE Main Panel O (which assesses art and design, creative and performing arts, the history of art, architecture and design, cultural communication and media studies and music) make clear that no type of research will be privileged over any other and that all forms of research outputs – whether textual, visual, sonic, digital or dynamic – will be treated equally. In particular, applied research, practice-based and pedagogic research are all specifically identified within the types of research to be embraced in the assessment. Though it is not anticipated that the volume of pedagogic research submitted in RAE 2008 will be high, it is hoped that its specific inclusion in the criteria will help stimulate both a deepening and an embedding of such work and an enhancement of its status.

BRUCE BROWN is Director of the Art Design Media Subject Centre and Chair of the RAE Main Panel for these subjects.

Further information www.rae.ac.uk

research in the disciplines

Case Study 2

An alien research ethos? Engaging with pedagogical research in the physical sciences

When physical scientists undertake formal research they adopt meticulous research practices. This ensures that their work is properly thought through, results are analysed appropriately and any conclusions are based on factual observations and experimental outcomes. Unfortunately, when considering research into teaching, scientists don't always find it easy to be as rigorous. However, there are often mitigating circumstances such as ongoing RAE pressures and the persistent challenge of all the other activities that impinge on an academic's time. In addition, physical scientists take a quantitative approach to research and data gathering which is not always easy to transpose to a pedagogic research context. Physical scientists necessarily have to engage with a completely new research ethos which may feel very alien to them.

With the greater prominence and recognition being given to academics who engage with pedagogical research, more physical scientists are now taking a more scholarly approach to teaching practice. The growing interest in



ANDREW STEVENS

pedagogical research in the sciences was exemplified by the recent national Science Teaching and Learning Conference held in June at the University of Warwick. This new biennial conference was jointly organised with colleagues from the Materials and Biosciences Subject Centres and was oversubscribed. The quantity and quality of papers presented at the conference provided a clear demonstration that pedagogical

research in the sciences is now becoming a more acceptable aspect of an academic's work.

I have been working with Tina Overton, Director of the Physical Sciences Centre and a National Teaching Fellow, to look at different models of independent study for part-time Chemistry students. We have been researching student reactions to different modes of independent study, ranging from paper-based resources to web resources and fully integrated resources in a Virtual Learning Environment where the students also engage with group work.

This is just one example of ongoing work that can add to the growing body of literature in the physical sciences, which may support other innovations such as the new online course for chemists at Manchester Metropolitan University. With well-established educational journals such as *Chemistry Education Research and Practice* and *Physics Education* taking an interest in educational research in the physical sciences, the discipline is growing and taking exciting new directions.

PAUL CHIN is Manager of the Physical Sciences Subject Centre.

Further information

An annotated bibliography of research into teaching and learning of the physical sciences in HE
www.physsci.heacademy.ac.uk/Resources/AnnotatedBibliography/AnnotatedBibliographyFull.pdf

Getting started in pedagogical research in the physical sciences

www.physsci.heacademy.ac.uk/Publications/PracticeGuide/GettingStarted.pdf

Science Teaching and Learning Conference: <http://www.sltc.heacademy.ac.uk/>

Research-teaching linkages: a common

Professor Andrea Nolan reports on how a group of Vice-Principals are working to make research-teaching links a national enhancement scheme for Scotland.

The relationship between research and teaching is being challenged at many levels. The reasons why this agenda has engaged the Scottish sector are many, and clearly there will be considerable overlap with those in the English, Welsh and Northern Ireland sectors. The mutual synergy that exists between research and scholarship and learning and teaching is considered by many to be a key feature of the academic environment of a university, and yet there are strands of Government policy, such as the Research Assessment Exercise, that appear to have created a tendency to increase demarcations between research and teaching.

This is evidenced in the way many universities are organising their key activities, for instance the establishment of teaching career paths, differentiating recruitment policies and new approaches to managing teaching in the early years. In Scotland the merger of the Scottish Funding Councils for Further and Higher Education reflects the political drive for greater articulation, and consequently mobility for students, between further education and higher education, and raises issues about the role of research-teaching linkages in higher education.

In reviewing the challenges and aspirations for the sector, a group of Vice-Principals (Scottish Pro-Vice-Chancellors) came together to discuss research-teaching linkages, supported by Mike Prosser from the Higher Education Academy. As a group of leaders of learning and teaching development within our institutions, we wished to consider these linkages further in the context of the student learning experience in institutions with diverse missions. We are aware of some evidence that indicates there is no empirical



relationship between teaching quality, as determined by student evaluation, and research, as determined by research outputs. However, this does not indicate that there is no relationship, but suggests that we should as a sector focus on our institutional missions and the strategic objectives that flow from these, with a view to embedding policies, structures, practices and strategies that enable each institution to evidence its explicit teaching-research nexus in operation. This will then allow us to articulate clearly for all our stakeholders and partners – not least our students – the nature of our linkages in an institutional context at all levels of our educational programmes.

With a high level of interest demonstrated informally by the VPs (who comprise the body of the Universities Scotland Learning & Teaching Committee), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland commissioned a scoping study, first to identify the level of interest in and engagement with this issue across the sector, and second to scope out the parameters of an enhancement theme in this area (see box). The study is being conducted by Dr Alan Davidson, who was due to report to the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) in late October.

Preliminary feedback indicates that there is considerable interest among Scottish academics in having an enhancement theme on a well-defined aspect of the research-teaching nexus. The decision to proceed (or not) with such a theme will be made by SHEEC, in the light of the perceived demand, the number of enhancement themes currently underway or in the planning stages, and the priority accorded to it by the committee. We wait with interest. ●

agenda

Quality enhancement: the Scottish model

The approach to quality being adopted in the Scottish higher education sector has five main elements: a comprehensive programme of subject reviews run by institutions; enhancement-led institution-level review; improved forms of public information about quality; a greater voice for student representatives in institutional quality systems; and a national programme of enhancement themes, aimed at developing and sharing good practice in learning and teaching in higher education. This national programme of enhancement themes aims to enhance the student learning experience by identifying specific areas for development, encouraging academic and support staff and students to share current good practice and collectively generate ideas and models for innovation in learning and teaching. The outcomes to date of the enhancement themes on 'Responding to student needs' and 'Assessment' are a resource for institutions to access in developing the student learning experience as appropriate to their local context.

The Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) has overarching responsibility for reviewing and developing themes which the sector and other stakeholders identify as being strategically important.



UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



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Professor ANDREA NOLAN is Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) at the University of Glasgow.

Further information
www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/qualityframework/enhancementthemes.asp

How can evaluation help manage complex change?

The focus of this article is on the nature of complex change and how we might depict its evaluation. Unlike research, at the heart of the idea of evaluation is forming and making a judgement. These are judgements made on the basis of evidence from relevant sources about the quality, worth and effects of a change.

How we do this, who does it, to what purpose, with what focus and timing is a matter of debate, not only in the literature but also in real time with real stakeholders involved in change. At the same time, we know that evaluations might be for *accountability* (e.g. measuring results or efficiency), for *development* (e.g. providing evaluative help to strengthen institutions or projects) and for *knowledge* (e.g. obtaining a deeper understanding in some specific area or policy field).

The new policy instruments

If we look at the characteristics of Government policy instruments in the HE sector that have developed over the last six years or so, we can see that there has been a shift. Policy instruments have traditionally relied on carrots (funded projects), sticks (laws, sanctions, reductions in funding, inspections) and sermons (exhortation to improve the learning experience of students). Now they include much less defined processes like partnerships and networks. They are based on the idea

that much expertise, capability and support is locked up in dispersed groups and what we need to do is to unlock this power for positive change by bringing them together. The Academy's Subject Network and the Change Academy are good examples of this new way of supporting change.

These instruments are designed to improve teaching and learning quality in HE but do not have detailed specifications. The underlying theory is that HE is proud of its semi-autonomy, has complex cultures and affiliations and is used to generating its own momentum. A relatively light touch (unlike that which pertains in primary schools, for example) has been identified by Government as most likely to yield positive improvements through these instruments. In so doing, Government policy, through the Funding Councils via the Higher Education Academy, acknowledges a number of key features of the new 'change environment'.

Change tends not to be linear and happens unevenly, with some areas surging ahead while others take some time to shift or remain resistant to change. Because of the distant control mechanisms and open agendas, changes tend to be unpredictable. Change is brought about by complex causal mechanisms (carrots, sticks, sermons and partnerships) but also by the convergence of many long-term and short-term factors (opportunity,



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Change tends not to be linear and happens unevenly, with some areas surging ahead while others remain resistant to change.

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Murray Saunders provides a conceptual overview of the move from carrots, sticks and sermons to networks, partnerships and evaluation in promoting change.

funding, policy change, new appointments). Change increasingly relies on many enabling features or 'affordances' being put in place. Fundamental change is the outcome of multiple small changes: a suitable adage would be "provide suitable conditions and trust change will come".

Under these conditions, what makes for successful change? It seems that change needs more than enabling features – an over-supply of tools and other help will produce a 'change dynamic'. In the same vein, we know that attempts at change touch diverse stakeholders involved in multiple activities, in many projects, some changes 'taking hold', some not. Some commentators have called change instruments of this kind 'mutually adaptive systems' (after mainstream complexity theory). In most cases we have many agents (e.g. Subject Centres, Change Academy projects) acting in parallel in an environment produced by its interactions with other agents (institutions, Subject Centres, other projects); because the agents (project participants) are constantly acting and reacting to others' actions, nothing in the environment is fixed.

Implications for evaluation

How can we evaluate this new change environment? A good place to start is to look for the logic implicit in policy instruments. The starting point for an evaluation could be working with project

or programme designers through the logic of their change strategies, i.e. on what basis do they think activity X will lead to effect Y? For example, a common strategy is to pilot or trial an approach. On what basis and under what conditions might this pilot lead to desired effects? Experience has suggested that it is a mistake to rely on single methods or types of data. Evaluations should feel relaxed in using a range of different types of data, including creative and laterally derived evidence, to depict the experience and effects of a change.

Evaluations should be open and focus on evolution, i.e. how interventions evolve over time. They should be flexible enough to accommodate unanticipated events and effects. Broad indicators of evidence that will be collected rather than narrow prescriptions of 'good practice' are likely to be more useful. Often metaphors like narratives or stories concerning participants' experiences may be used to creative effect. The way networks operate and interconnect provide new types of focus for evaluation. Rather than benchmarks or baselines, we might talk of subtle 'situational analyses' that

provide starting points for the journey through which change processes take us. These sorts of evaluations are valuable because they are able to capture participants' experiences.

Evaluations that have important aspects designed by the change participants themselves are particularly potent. Often, evaluations of complex change involve collaborations between many stakeholders to identify key questions.

Finally, a word about the role of evaluation in complex change. The results of evaluations can help us, as learners and teachers in HE, to find short-term, provisional, creative solutions to the problems produced by change. They can help us to think more clearly about complex problems and act as a 'bridging tool' to enable planning and decisions for future action. We might describe this process as 'creating provisional stabilities'. This means that evidence, narratives and case studies about how change is being experienced can provide enough knowledge for forward planning. In rapidly evolving change, this knowledge is provisional, but stable enough for us to make some sense of what we see around us. ●

Professor MURRAY SAUNDERS is Director of the Centre for the Study of Education and Training at Lancaster University and was one of the facilitators at the 2005 Change Academy.

Inspiring stories of CHANGE

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Change Academy is designed to help institutions accomplish difficult, ambitious and strategic change by providing opportunities for project teams to develop their thinking and share the knowledge they have gained through many years of organisational change. Run in partnership with the Leadership Foundation, the second Change Academy in September 2005 brought teams from 16 HE institutions to an intensive four-day programme in Edinburgh on institutional change. The experience is created by all participants, some of whom tell their own stories here.

Norman Jackson,
Change Academy
Co-ordinator

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Towards a culture of enhanced 'customer care'

Nigel Dandy,
University of Sheffield

The concept of 'customer' or 'consumer' seems quite inadequate to describe the people who participate in the day-to-day life of a university, but the idea does embody notions of concern and care for an individual, the provision of relevant services and commitment to understanding their needs. Sheffield's participation in the 2005 Change Academy was prompted by a desire to grapple with these ideas and to develop a vision that would be meaningful to a university community, and engage it in a process of change that would result in an enhanced culture of 'customer care'.

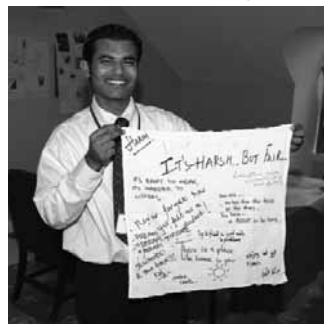
The size, complexity and diversity of the institution and the need to address sometimes conflicting stakeholder interests all added to the complexity of our problem. We were particularly conscious of the need to explore the 'cultural' dimension – what did we really mean by 'culture change' and 'customer care'?

Change Academy provided a great opportunity to invest a serious amount of time in pursuing these ideas, with a team of experienced individuals with very different roles (some in senior management positions), in a facilitated environment in which other institutional teams were also examining

the whole question of successful change management. But we wondered whether it would produce useful outcomes, and whether at the end of it we would be an effective team or would have come to blows!

At the end of the four days, there was a strong feeling that the team had been very effective in working together. We realised that our mix of roles, perspectives, experiences and different levels of management had enabled us to work very successfully in a non-hierarchical way. In particular, it was felt that the inclusion of two Pro-Vice-Chancellors had been very important in giving the team authority and confidence and in enabling us to make real progress towards an action plan. The involvement of a student representative in the team helped us to ground our thinking in the students' perspective and to demonstrate our commitment to working with the student body to make this change.

We felt that the Change Academy experience had been a very intensive few days, but it had also been fun and extremely productive. It had provided a rare opportunity to step back, reflect, change our minds as ideas unfolded, think individually and collaboratively, and experience new things. It was a source of fresh, valuable ideas for our project, triggered by the practical techniques we had learnt. Significant progress had been made with all of our primary objectives. We had challenged some of our assumptions and considered new approaches. In a nutshell, we came to see the world differently.



Telling tales of Sandra

Geoffrey Stoakes, College of St Mark and St John

In his *Guide to the research evidence on teaching-research relations*, Professor Alan Jenkins examines the link between discipline-focused research and teaching and concludes that 'there is not a simple functional relationship at a departmental level between quality in research and quality in teaching'. But few would dispute the fact that scholarly activity – keeping up to date with the latest research in your field – provides the crucial underpinning of high quality teaching and learning.

'Research in a teaching-led institution' – the title for our Change Academy project – reflected the shift in culture envisaged by the College's new Research Strategy. The Research Co-ordinators of five of the six schools at St Mark and St John ('Marjon') converged on Edinburgh to explore the ways in which the necessary culture change could be effected. The role of research co-ordinators was still relatively new and the post holders were still struggling to define their function.

Change Academy proved to be a transforming experience. Despite engaging in the preparatory exercises beforehand, we were not a team. But the experience of working together intensively over a four-day period changed us all. "We've been de-

culturated," declared one. All of us feared rapid 're-acculturation' on our return to College the following week. As a result, much of our deliberations concerned 're-entry' and how we could 'spread the word' without alienating colleagues with our evangelism. Fortunately, Richard Seel, one of the Change Academy's consultants, was on hand to give some good advice: avoid formal reporting and top-down cascading; tell your stories instead.

While the team-building was invaluable, we were expecting more from the experience and we got it. The rich-picture poster exercise enabled us to develop a shared understanding of the College and the difficulties facing its promotion of research and scholarly activity. How were we to encourage those who were active in action and practitioner research but had received little encouragement because of the RAE's emphasis on publication rather than practical application? How were we to convince those who were alienated from, or intimidated by, RAE-led research? We decided that we needed to stop talking about Research and Scholarly Activity (since the last three words frequently got lost) and instead refer to Scholarly and Research Activity. The change in word order seemed to symbolise what needed to change in the institution and after one particularly restless night

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It moved our thinking forward in ways we couldn't have imagined beforehand. We have continued to have creative thoughts about the possibilities so the Change Academy process is everlasting! We really valued the time invested in us.

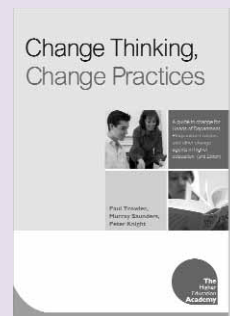
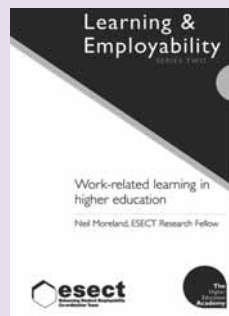
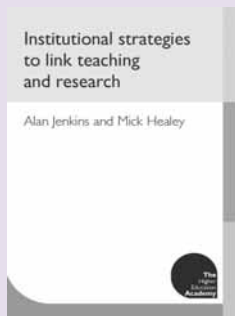
**Margaret Weaver,
St Martin's College**

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'Sandra,' or as my linguistically-minded colleagues insisted, 'SandRA' (Scholarly and Research Activity) was born.

The input from specialists and the encounters with other teams (invaluable features of the Change Academy) prevented too much introspection. Out of conversations with the team from St Mary's came an immediate recognition of a common purpose and the idea of a bid to fund a collaborative project. Now we are back at the College and, with the imminent arrival of QAA assessors, we have well and truly 're-entered'. But rumours about a mysterious woman are beginning to circulate ...

In 2006 we will be able to offer Change Academy places to 20 institutional teams. Further details are at www.heacademy.ac.uk/changeacademy.htm



New Academy publications

All publications are available to download from our website at www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp.

For printed copies please email enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk.

All publications are free of charge except where otherwise indicated.

Learning and Employability series 2

Intended for staff considering how to enhance student employability.

1. *Work-related learning in higher education* by Neil Moreland, ISBN 1-904190-82-0
2. *Employability and doctoral research postgraduates* by Janet Metcalfe and Alexandra Gray, ISBN 1-904190-84-7
3. *Part-time students and employability* by Brenda Little, ISBN 1-904190-81-2
4. *Ethics and employability* by the Rev Simon Robinson, ISBN 1-904190-80-4

What is learned at university?

(SOMUL Working Paper 1)
by John Brennan and David Jary,
ISBN 1-904190-70-7

The first in a series of working papers on the SOMUL (Social and Organisational Mediation of University Learning) research project. The project seeks to explore what students are learning in an increasingly diverse higher education system. In this initial paper the authors set out the underlying ideas behind the project and report on some of the issues.

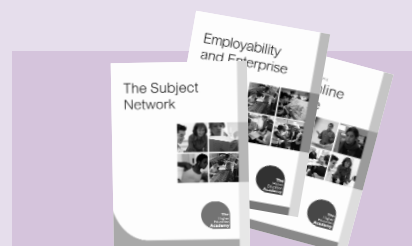
The organisational mediation of university learning

(SOMUL Working Paper 2)
by John Brennan and Mike Osborne,
ISBN 1-904190-9-8

The second in the SOMUL series, to be published in January 2006, looks at how organisational factors impact on student learning.

Managing assessment: student and staff perspectives (€15)

A practical tool developed by the Managing Effective Student Assessment (MESA) benchmarking club. It aims to give insight into assessment issues along with ideas and tools for improving student learning and reducing the burden on staff. The pack consists of a ringbound set of case studies on assessment topics such as plagiarism, students (and staff) under stress, work placements, mature students and overseas students, and looks at each situation from the point of view of both the student and the tutor. There are also suggestions as to how the material could be used in workshops or programmes for new staff.



Academy leaflets

We have a number of leaflets on different areas of our work. They can be downloaded from our website at www.heacademy.ac.uk/Leaflets.htm or you can request supplies of printed copies from enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk.

Titles currently available are:
The Higher Education Academy (general leaflet), e-Learning, Employability and Enterprise, Professional Recognition, The Subject Network, and Supporting New Academic Staff – SNAS Online Database.

Institutional strategies to link teaching and research

by Alan Jenkins and Mick Healey,
ISBN 1-904190-91-X

Published in conjunction with the Academy's national conference in November 2005 on 'The teaching and research relationship: developing institutional policy and practice', this guide is designed to help institutions review their current policies and decide on what measures they might introduce to strengthen the teaching-research relationship. Illustrated with a large number of international case studies on how to support effective teaching-research links.

Forthcoming EVENTS

A selection of forthcoming events organised by the Higher Education Academy. Full details of all events are available at www.heacademy.ac.uk/events

1 December 2005

Welsh institutional learning and teaching strategies conference

Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, Wales

A one-day conference for the Welsh higher education community. For staff with responsibilities for overseeing learning and teaching strategies, quality management, curriculum development, recognition and reward, and assessment.

1 December 2005 (London),
11 January 2006 (Birmingham),
18 January 2006 (Edinburgh)

Planning and evaluating effective practice with e-learning

This joint JISC/Academy workshop is aimed at advanced practitioners, e-learning champions, staff developers and others supporting effective practice with e-learning. The workshop will be highly interactive and participants will use tools, test models, and provide feedback to help develop and adapt the materials.

1 December 2005

Research into practice: bridging the gap

Mary Ward House, London

This workshop will suggest how e-learning practitioners can apply research findings to their work. It will be relevant to e-learning researchers, teachers and support staff. An action plan will be drawn up to follow up with stakeholders such as the Academy, JISC and the Research Councils.

14 December 2005

Open source VLEs: the next generation

York St John College, York

This is the first event in the Academy's 'Innovations in the curriculum and student support' theme. It has been jointly developed with the JISC Regional Support Centre, Yorkshire and Humber. It will explore how open source tools and platforms can be used to support learning and teaching in post-compulsory education.

16 December 2005

The challenge of student engagement

Higher Education Academy, York

This event, co-convened with Nottingham Trent University, is the next in the Academy's Innovations theme. It is intended for practitioners involved in raising the levels of engagement that students have with their courses, their individual modules and their institutions, and will provide an opportunity to share current thinking, research and practice.

3-5 July 2006

The Higher Education Academy Annual Conference: Enhancing the student learning experience

East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

The Academy's second Annual Conference will focus on three major themes:

- higher education policy
- scholarship of teaching in the disciplines
- innovations to support the student learning experience.

The call for contributions is now open and the closing date for submissions is 30 January 2006.

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