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Foreword

I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce this special edition of HERN-J, published to celebrate the outcomes of the first European Forum on Academic Development, held at King’s College London in June 2011.

King’s Learning Institute undertakes high quality research into academic practice. We focus on ways of understanding and developing the capabilities of all learners in higher education and professional settings, on the social and cultural context for learning and on the leadership of learning and teaching. We have particular expertise in working in research-rich environments. We work collaboratively with colleagues in ways that fully reflect the diversity of disciplines. Details of our teaching, research, consultancy and networks can be found at www.kcl.ac.uk/study/learningteaching/kli/index.aspx.

Based in a university at the heart of a capital city that is connected with every part of the world, we have long recognised that our work benefits from an international dimension. Recently, we undertook a major study of curriculum change in twenty-five institutions across the world. That breadth of perspective has been immensely valuable in informing our own thinking about curriculum innovation. We believe also that we have a great deal to share with our international colleagues, because of our position in a major higher education system that is undergoing rapid change.

We greatly value our growing network of colleagues across the world. The European Forum is an example of our commitment to strengthening relationships, by meeting, establishing shared interests and working collaboratively. If any of our work is of interest to you, please do get in touch with us.

Finally, I would like to add my personal thanks to Dr Ian Kinchin, who first had the idea of a European Forum and whose enthusiasm and commitment brought that idea to fruition.

Professor Paul Blackmore
Director, King’s Learning Institute
A European Forum on Academic Development: Editorial

Ian M Kinchin

On the 22nd June 2011, a European Forum on Academic Development (EFAD) was hosted at King’s College London with the aim of stimulating a collaborative research network for the development of a European agenda on Academic Development. 23 delegates attended the forum from 18 countries (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia and Switzerland). Delegates were welcomed to King’s College by Vice Principal Professor Eeva Leinonen at a formal dinner on the evening of the 21st before the group got down to work on the 22nd.

Formal proceedings were opened on the 22nd by Professor Paul Blackmore (Director of King’s Learning Institute). Three guest speakers provided stimuli for discussion: Professor Mariane Frenay (Dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Education at Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium) spoke on her international work in the field: ‘the meaning and scope of educational development: a conceptual framework grounded in practice’; Dr Saranne Weller (Assistant Director, King’s Learning Institute) spoke on the tension between personal and institutional development: ‘One or two ‘I’s in development: ‘individual’ and/or ‘institutional’? ’; and Professor Ray Land (Head of Learning Enhancement at the University of Strathclyde) considered the relationship between teaching and research: ‘Venturing into strange places: linking research and teaching to prepare graduates for the 21st Century’.

There was also time set aside during the forum to allow informal discussions to take place and for delegates to raise issues for discussion that might not otherwise have appeared on a formal agenda. Lively debates were conducted in small groups and in plenary sessions during the day. It was evident that many delegates present shared the same interests and frustrations though the support received for their work varied tremendously at the institutional and national levels. Many of the issues have been described as competing tensions within the university environment (see Table 1).

It was felt important to get away from the linear arrangement of binary tensions as represented in table 1, as this may be seen to depict a collection of disaggregated issues that can each be tackled independently of each other. Also, the list may be interpreted as describing a hierarchy of issues to be addressed in turn. Therefore an attempt was made to introduce some structure to the arena of discussion, and to emphasise a more integrated view of academic development in which attention paid to one issue will also be seen to influence related elements. The depiction in figure 1 was used to stimulate discussion and to offer a tacit agenda to explore.
Table 1. A list of binary tensions within academic development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledge disciplinarity</th>
<th>Recognise generic issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situated within departmental cultures</td>
<td>Encourage exchange across institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be sensitive to local needs</td>
<td>Adhere to national standard frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting individual development</td>
<td>Supporting institutional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote reflective practitioners</td>
<td>Encourage evidence-based practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about performative aspects of teaching</td>
<td>Promote understanding of student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematize the first year experience</td>
<td>Give attention to postgraduates’ challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the non-traditional student</td>
<td>Recognise the intercultural dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the academics’ teaching function</td>
<td>Integrate the academics’ research function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on: Kreber, C. (2011)

Figure 1. A non-linear depiction of binary tensions within academic development, suggesting an integrative role for international collaboration.

One of the issues that provided the impetus for King’s to host the forum was the acknowledgement that whilst the College recruits large numbers of academic staff from across Europe, in our own reading and research, we tend to focus on the literature from the USA and Australia. Much of the literature from Europe (as in the UK) is intended for the
domestic/national audience. Therefore, very little is written in English and so is not widely cited in the UK educational research literature. By initiating this European Form, we were aiming to access some of the ‘locally developed knowledge of teaching and learning in higher education’ from non-English-speaking contexts, the importance of which has been explained by Taylor and Rege Colet:

‘...like many fields of scholarship situated in practice, much of the knowledge generated through practice is created in local contexts, where new understandings, approaches and terminology emerge as colleagues collaborate with each other, or with a teaching and learning specialist, to achieve more effective learning experiences. The local genesis of this knowledge is both an advantage and a challenge. Because initiatives to develop learning and teaching capacity are now embraced and supported across disciplines, practical and theoretical knowledge is being generated at an exponential rate. While all this is good news, advancing our work as a field of practice and scholarship depends upon commitment of the practice community to meet the challenges of sharing, critically examining, and synthesizing locally developed knowledge of teaching and learning in higher education. It is only through sharing this distributed knowledge and expertise that we can contribute to a collective body of practical and conceptual knowledge.’ (Taylor and Rege Colet, 2010: 139–140)

An international focus on the evolution of academic development may have a part to play in the integration of some of the competing elements – as indicated in Figure 1.

One of the intended outcomes from the forum was a special issue of HERN-J featuring submissions from EFAD delegates. This volume is the result. We are able to present seven papers here from EFAD delegates and their colleagues. It is clear from comments made that one of the issues facing academic development is the tension between teaching and research. Some delegates explained in correspondence with me after the forum that their institutions would ‘not be happy’ for them to engage in research activities that may detract from their development work within the university and so were prevented from submitting papers for publication in this issue. This is not a new problem. Barica Maretič Požarnik and Oliva Peeters (in their paper here) list this as one of the problems facing academic development: ‘how to maintain the status of academic development units ‘in difficult times’, when they are treated like service units; when they are not supposed to do research...’. But recognising the value of research, Bernadette Charlier (in her paper here) calls for, ‘evaluative research and comparative analysis with other academic development programmes in Europe’ as a way forward in her own institution.

This situation seems somewhat ironic, and it has been commented on that unless university teachers are granted access to the conceptual knowledge that underpins the practice of teaching, they cannot participate in the evolution of the communal practice of teaching (Kinchin, 2012), and unless academic developers are encouraged to move the field forward through research, then they are limited in their function to preserving the status quo. Without a research base, academic development will be restricted to maintaining a level of competence among practitioners, but without being able to encourage innovation. This would seem to be at
odds with the purpose of the university as centres of knowledge creation. It is worth noting that whilst academic development in European universities appears to be having to ‘fight its corner’, universities in other national contexts are more positive about the development of the teaching and learning agenda and are investing heavily in academic development (e.g. Alsudairi, 2012), possibly as part of a wider strategy to displace North American and European universities from their dominant positions in international league tables. In this competitive global context, it is even more important to share research and innovation across international and linguistic boundaries within Europe. I therefore offer my sincere thanks to those colleagues who have taken the time to contribute to this volume, and hope that the papers will be of interest to colleagues from other national contexts. Thanks are also due to my colleagues within King’s Learning Institute for the time they have taken to review the submissions.

The first three papers offer insight to national contexts for academic development from Portugal, France and Japan. Isabel Huet considers the changing landscape of higher education in Portugal under the influence of the Bologna process, but also points to the importance of developing an ‘institutional culture’ that promotes the scholarship of teaching. Siara Isaac and Emmanuel Sylvestre describe the grass-roots backing for ‘nascent pedagogical support structures’ in a context where ‘The title academic developer does not currently exist in the official human resources lexicon of French universities’. Hiroaki Sato and Tsuyoshi Yamada give an overview of the emergence of academic development in Japan and discuss the range of challenges and possible future developmental trajectories.

The fourth paper in this issue looks in detail at teachers’ reflections on questioning and its implications for academic development. This research study uses ‘questioning’ as a focus for the development of reflective practice and shows how case study analysis of an activity that is central to classroom practice may contribute to the wider discussion of academic development.

The paper presented by Barica Marentič Požarnik and Oliva Peeters gives a personal account of the activities of an informal learning community and their meetings between 1978 and 1997. This descriptive account emphasises the importance of ‘community’ within academic development, and the space to think:

‘There are now many international conferences for the giving and receiving of information, but few opportunities for extended discussions.’

Finally, we have two papers that focus on institutional perspectives. Jean-Marie Weber considers teacher training within the University of Luxembourg and the development of teacher competencies. Bernadette Charlier’s paper draws upon one of the presentations given at EFAD, by Saranne Weller, by considering academic development within a Swiss context as ‘a private or a public good’, and in calling for international research suggests that the ‘EFAD community’ may ‘provide a space for such a study’.

Whilst this volume is seen as a product of the EFAD meeting in June 2011, it is hoped that it will not be the end product. It is clear that the field of academic development can be viewed
Currently as an uneven patchwork of activity across Europe (and beyond): some colleagues are encouraged to be research-active whilst others are not; some colleagues are working within nationally agreed frameworks whilst others are not; some colleagues receive encouragement from their own institutions whilst others do not. However, as aspects of higher education become more integrated across Europe, with terms such as ‘Bologna’ and ‘ECTS’ becoming embedded within the discourse of academic development within European higher education, it would seem inevitable that:

‘Networking on an international scale is going to be essential to evaluate effectiveness and to design appropriate research programs.’ (Taylor and Rege Colet, 2010: 159)

It is hoped that the EFAD network might contribute towards the ‘extended discussions’ that will help the academic development community to work together in addressing common concerns that interest us all, and are discussed within this volume.

Figure 2. 2011 EFAD delegates – group photo.

(Standing, from left to right): Norma Miller (Panama), Richard Muscat (Malta), Isabel Huet (Portugal), Bjørn Stensaker (Norway), Saranne Weller (UK), Helena Pedrosa-de-Jesus (Portugal), David Delany (Ireland), Iain Mac Labhrainn (Ireland), Ray Land (UK), Hiroaki Sato (Japan), Priit Reiska (Estonia), Giacomo Guaraldi (Italy), Elisabetta Genovese (Italy), Mariane Frenay (Belgium), Hetty Grunefeld (Netherlands), Siara Isaac (France), Pedro Fonseca (Portugal).

(Sitting, from left to right): Anja Taanila (Finland), Santina Battaglia (Germany), Barica Marentič Požarnik (Slovenia), Bernadette Charlier (Switzerland), Maria Amelia Ferreira (Portugal), Camille Kandiko (UK).

(Kneeling, from left to right): Jean-Marie Weber (Luxemburg), Bruce Macfarlane (Hong Kong), Ian Kinchin, (UK), David Hay (UK), Paul Blackmore (UK).
The term ‘Academic Development’ has been adopted for consistency throughout this volume, whilst acknowledging that colleagues working in different national contexts may be familiar with similar terms such as faculty development, staff development or educational development. Where possible, the term ‘academic’ has been used here to describe colleagues who might refer to themselves as teaching staff, lecturers, professors or faculty members.

Whilst not strictly ‘European’, we were happy to welcome colleagues from Hong Kong, Japan and Panama to our forum and widen the international dimension of the discussions.

References


The author
Ian Kinchin (ian.kinchin@kcl.ac.uk). King’s Learning Institute, King’s College London, 57 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8WA, UK

Ian is Assistant Director of King’s Learning Institute where his primary role is to support the academic development of staff across the College. His research interests are focussed around the nature of knowledge structures and their exploitation in the development of teaching, learning and research within the university environment.
Academic development as a strategy to enhance teaching quality in research intensive universities: the Portuguese context

Isabel Huet

Abstract
Academic development in Portugal was until recently not a priority in universities. This situation has altered, partially motivated by the demands for high-quality teaching and learning, mainly influenced by the international and national guidelines and principles of quality assurance, and by a certain ‘pressure’ for accountability and improvement purposes of teaching and learning. This paper discusses the recent interest for academic development in Portuguese higher education institutions after the so called ‘Bologna process’, and the implications that such initiatives have for promoting teaching quality and a ‘teaching culture’ in research intensive universities. This discussion will be oriented through the view of a researcher on higher education who has been involved in academic development since 2005.

Setting the scene
The higher education (HE) system in Portugal comprises university and polytechnic institutions, which can be public, state-university foundations, or private. There are 133 HE institutions, which 39 are public or state-university foundations and 94 private. The university and polytechnic systems have fairly different approaches, dynamics and legislation. The polytechnics are vocationally or professionally oriented and do not carry out fundamental research as do the universities. Only applied research is conducted at the polytechnics. The educational aim of polytechnics is, mainly, to train students to be successful professionals in their working place.

The number of HE institutions in Portugal expanded rapidly in the eighties and early nineties as a response to an increase in student numbers enrolling. The number of students in HE institutions has grown from 30,000 in the sixties to nearly 400,000 in 2003. Nevertheless, recent and projected downturn in enrolments has led to a marked imbalance between supply and demand for study programmes. The result is an enhanced competition between institutions and an increased need for a more effective means of assuring academic standards are maintained as well as for more effective institutional management and governance (Dimas, 2005).

This article focuses the discussion on how academic development can enhance teaching in a research environment and how academic development has been implemented in Portuguese HE institutions. The discussion is supported by data gathered in the context of academic development courses and workshops that ran between 2005 and 2010, and from the ‘Quality
Assurance System (QAS) of Teaching and Learning’ of the University of Aveiro. The data collected from the QAS help us to understand how teaching and learning is important for students and how institutions can put forward initiatives that will help teachers and students to overcome some of the identified problems.

The discourse of excellence in teaching and research
Teaching excellence can be connected to an overall set of ideas or assumption of what is excellent or outstanding. The term ‘excellence’ in teaching varies according to the conceptions of different stakeholders and is often associated with quality enhancement (Clegg, 2007; Elton, 1992) and reflective practice ‘located within a shifting social, economic and political context’ (Skelton, 2004, p.452). Research excellence can be associated with publishing research papers and securing funding.

Despite the complexity of both terms which I will not explore in this article, it seems consensual that excellence in teaching and research implies a set of standards or frameworks leading to indicators that can be used to ‘measure’ whenever is possible the excellence of teaching and research.

Disciplinary research was or still is in some western institutions recognised as a priority by academics which turn to be a factor for academic development resistance since the effort is putted in publishing research papers and securing funding (Quinn, 2011). Until recently teaching excellence has not been taken into consideration for career promotion at Portuguese universities. Research quality was the common method for promotion, leading frequently to teachers’ lack of motivation in enrolling activities related to teaching since the time devoted to preparing teaching activities did not leave them much time for research (Huet, 2005). This reality shaped teachers’ engagement and effort in teaching activities not only in Portugal as in other international HE contexts, being the disciplinary research the ‘primary source for academic identities’ (Quinn, 2011, p. 73).

The above conceptions or assumptions have contributed to some academics feeling they have less time, energy and commitment to devote to teaching activities, but increasing attention is being given to teaching in universities. This concern is closely linked to a discourse related to managerialism, quality assurance and accountability. Portuguese HE institutions have been implementing their quality assurance systems in the past few years, but these systems were mainly focused on administrative procedures following, for example, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO certification). More recently, institutions have been concerned with the quality of teaching, developing QAS for evaluating and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This trend has motivated discussion in academia which resulted in a positive side effect since teaching related aspects and the quality/excellence of teaching were sometimes forgotten. It is clearly a turning point on the traditional culture of career progression, taking teaching more ‘seriously’ in a research-intense university environment.

Academic development in Portugal: potential impact of Bologna
Academic development in higher education has never been a priority in Portugal (Huet, 2005; Huet & Costa, 2010). Neither the rules for career progression nor the
institutional authorities stimulate the personal and institutional investment in the development of teaching competences and/or skills, except for a minor part of self-stimulated colleagues who have the necessity to exchange and discuss teaching related ideas/issues with their peers. This situation can be partially explained by the research culture that is still embedded in most of the Portuguese universities, as already referred in this paper.

Initial training of university teachers is now established in countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Finland, USA or Australia, but non-existent in Portugal or in most of the other southern European Countries (Kálman, 2008). In Portugal, national regulations do not contemplate initial and/or continuous teaching training for university teachers. According to National Legislation university teachers do not need any professional qualification to become permanent teachers in HE (the same is not true for all the other educational levels). Nevertheless, teachers are expected to be scientifically accurate and pedagogically efficient. A teacher is expected to encourage students to find questions worth pursuing, to engage students in continuous work and to encourage deep learning. These goals are not always easy to achieve, especially when the majority of teachers have never attended a formal course in education, have no deep knowledge of students’ approaches to learning or pedagogical skills (Huet & Costa, 2010).

Under the Bologna reform in Portugal there was a need for teachers to discuss teaching related issues. This ‘sudden’ interest was initially motivated by the necessity to reformulate the study programmes and to focus the learning on the student. Indeed, Bologna has been a political motive to speed the need of a profound reform in the Portuguese higher education system. Major changes were introduced in the organization of higher education, concerning both the degree structure and the organization of teaching, with effects that started in the academic year 2006/07 (based on the law 42/2005, 74/2006, and 107/2008). Undergraduate study programmes (‘Licenciatura’) changed from 5/4 years previously to 3/4 years followed by a 2-year master (‘mestrado’) and 3-year doctoral study. Such changes demanded major efforts of institutions and teachers in order to redesign the curricula. In the beginning of the process, discussions were mainly focused on the cycles duration (3+2+3 or 4+1+3), and the number of disciplines and ECTS a course should have and not so much, as reported by the OECD examiners’ report in 2006 (OECD, 2006), on the transition from a passive education paradigm based on the acquisition of knowledge to a student-centered model based on the development of competences:

‘The institutions were engaged in submitting their proposals for Bologna-compliant programmes during the course of this review. In discussions held with institutions, the focus of their attention was on restructuring programmes to the three degree cycles and enumerating ECTS credit points for study elements of the cycles. There was less discussion of the Diploma Supplement, and barely a mention of the transformation of approaches to learning from curriculum to competence (actually a mix of both).’

(OCED report, 2006, p.5)

At this time academic development courses and workshops seemed to be a useful initiative to help teachers to understand the implications of a curriculum centered on the student
workload, using learning outcomes and competences as a framework for achieving understanding. Most of the courses or workshops were offered by individual experts, departments or faculties oriented for the specific needs of these teachers. These actions were not accredited by any training agency or teaching and learning unit with exception of the continuous professional development courses offered by the UA/UNAVE (‘Professional Training and Research Association of the University of Aveiro’). These courses have been running since 2005 and had until now around 360 participants from Portuguese Polytechnics and Universities.

The three courses delivered on a blended-learning approach and with a 50 hours duration each, aim to help teachers improve essential skills and competences in areas such as curriculum design and university pedagogy – ‘PeDCES’, collaborative learning – ‘DACES’, and the adoption of ICT/Internet technologies – ‘TICES’. The topics addressed in these courses attempt to promote academics’ reflection on teaching and learning related issues as well as to support teachers with tools that can enhance the process of teaching and learning. The courses adopt a general and broad approach, since the aim is to discuss issues that are transversal to most of the disciplines. A more detailed description of the principles and design of the courses can be explored in the works by Huet & Costa (2010), Huet, Casanova & Ramos (2011) and Ramos et al. (2011).

Although most of the academic developers value the importance of monitoring the impact of the courses, systematic evaluation is not common, and often relies on the satisfaction and suggestions of the participants (Hicks, Smigiel, Wilson, & Luzeckyj, 2010; Kreber, Brook & Educational Policy, 2001) which takes place right after the terminus of the programme. In one of these courses – PeDCES and in other workshops delivered in four Polytechnic HE institutions we ventured further by asking participants after a period of 4 months about the advantage and effectiveness of using a tool that was introduced in the course or in the workshop: a curriculum map of alignment – CMA (Huet, Oliveira, Costa, & Estima de Oliveira, 2009). Therefore, a questionnaire was delivered to the participants aiming to analyze how CMAs are being used and the impact this instrument is having on the change of their teaching practice. The questionnaire, designed by the authors, was delivered, in January 2009, by mail, to 150 members of staff who attended the courses/workshops and where the design of learning outcomes (LOs) and the use of CMA were explored. We gathered 72 valid answers. The majority of the respondents had between 6 to 10 years of teaching experience in HE. A considerable number had less than six years of experience and only 16 respondents were teaching for more than ten years.

We came to the conclusion that:

The course/workshops had a reasonable impact on the clarification of what LOs are, namely if we notice, as we did, that before the course/workshops, few participants were able to define LOs and to design the curricular unit based on LOs;

1. The course/workshops helped to proceed with the curriculum alignment, more specifically in articulating the LOs with teaching and learning strategies and the assessment;
2. A large number of participants admitted to specifying the LOs and to design the teaching and learning activities and assessment accordingly;

3. Most participants recognised the potentiality of the CMA as a tool that helped in modifying their teaching practice (moving towards a student-centered approach) but a lesser number admitted to use it in their CUs.

4. In spite of these findings – focused on the impact at the level of teaching practice further studies need to be explored, more specifically those aiming to address the impact of academic development in students’ learning. How can we assume that students actually learn more, can be more motivated or develop active learning strategies?

**Academic development and scholarship of teaching (SoTL)**

The continuous academic development courses as presented previously promoted, in some cases, the scholarship of teaching by engaging teachers to reflect, discuss, research and evaluate their own practices, and in some cases to make their work available to peers. Throughout my experience as an academic developer and reflecting on the data collected in the evaluation process I can say that some of the courses were the starting point for teachers to reflect and research their own teaching practice and engage in the scholarship of teaching. Educational research is still not considered as an object of research by many colleagues from other scientific areas, thus one of the challenges was to engage teachers in researching their own practices and make this research available to peers.

In October 2008 it was possible to engage some of these colleagues in a one-day poster session and to participate in a workshop open to the academic community. In the poster session teachers presented and discussed the work developed in their disciplines, which in some cases was a continuity of the work carried out in the academic development courses. Aiming to bring visibility to their work and to motivate others to reflect about their teaching practice the poster session was allocated in the main building of the rectorate. The workshop was led by Alan Jenkins and Lisa Lucas (Lucas, Healey, Jenkins, & Short, 2008) and was run on the topic of research-led and research-informed teaching, promoting a discussion on how departments and teachers can engage undergraduate students in research.

These colleagues were then invited to transform the posters into papers to be published in a book (Huet, Costa, & Tavares, 2009). The final results overcame our expectations as editors. The authors supported their work in the educational literature review and in some cases proceeded to an evaluation of their practice, from a hetero (from students’ questionnaires and interviews) and self-evaluation perspective. Figure 1 presents the teaching and learning strategies explored in the book chapters.

This opportunity provided recognition for investing their time in educational research. This type of incentive is broadly explored in the literature as a strategy to acknowledge teachers’ effort and work. Different schemes could be promoted as awards (D’Andrea, 2007, Skelton, 2004) and some of these are spread in different US, UK, Australia and Scandinavian institutions. Generally this culture of ‘teaching excellence’ needs an institutional climate that supports the changes to take place and resources that make changes possible, otherwise the
impact of SoTL projects as the one previously described can be easily forgotten (Hay et al., 2008), even faster in research intensive universities where teaching recognition takes second place when compared to research.

Figure 1. teaching and learning strategies explored in the chapters of Huet, Costa, & Tavares (2009)

After the impact of Bologna: the unknown future

Is spite of the positive experiences presented in this paper there is still a long way to go. Since 2010 there has been a decrease in the number of teachers looking for academic development courses offered by the UNAVE. The reasons for this can be various and it is not my intention to explore all of them in detail, since I do not have a background study to support some of my thoughts on this matter. Nevertheless, I can categorically say that the ‘sudden’ interest for academic development was driven by the Bologna process and the discussion that arose during that period regarding the student-centered approach to learning. This could be observed by the analysis of an initial questionnaire delivered to participants at the beginning of the UNAVE courses. The interest in discussing issues such as curriculum design, didactics or pedagogy, collaborative learning or ICT-enhanced learning was driven by the necessity to reformulate the curriculum right after the national legislation for reformulating the Higher Education system, following the Bologna guidelines in 2005.

After a certain period, teaching related issues were ‘again’ forgotten or considered as a 2nd priority when compared to research activities and supervision duties, or administrative and bureaucratic daily-life procedures. The increase of supervision duties motivated by the ‘boom’ of postgraduation studies, mainly master programmes with a higher number of projects or supervision dissertations, for the same (or even less) number of teachers,
have been taking teachers time for teaching. The pressure for publishing, together with increased calls for accountability in higher education, has led to a gradual segregation of research and teaching, especially in the first years of undergraduate studies, instead of establishing the link of teaching and research as suggested by several authors (Brew, 2007; Elen, 2007; Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Jenkins, Breen, Lindsay, & Brew, 2003; Lapworth, 2004).

Other factors might be associated with the recognition of teaching excellence for career promotion. There are no national or institutional schemes to recognize excellence in teaching so in spite of the different assessment tools to measure ‘teaching quality’, integrated in the quality assurance system (QAS) of teaching and learning (T&L), institutions do not give awards or promote those who devote some/much of their time to teaching, producing high quality teaching materials, employing a different teaching strategy, or running research on teaching and learning in their specific disciplines. The idea of what constitutes quality teaching or teaching best practices remains unknown since there are no evaluation procedures associated with quality criteria and indicators.

Taking into account these arguments, research intensive universities need to rethink their institutional policies regarding teaching quality and academic development, in particular because there are problematic situations that become evident in the QAS of T&L and that need to be overcome. At the University of Aveiro some of the identified problems, pointed out by students’ representatives (n=369) and coordinating teachers (n=280) in the evaluation reports reported in 2009–10, are concerned with teaching, learning and assessment. Students point out as weak points the communication skills, teaching strategies, teacher support, and assessment as needing to be improved. Teachers also refer most of these points which indicates a similar view on the problems connected to teaching, learning and assessment (Huet, Rafael, Costa, Figueiredo & Oliveira, 2011).

These findings are being discussed inside the Laboratory for the Evaluation of Educational Quality (LAQE) and the Vice-Rector for Quality Assurance so interventions can be planned. One of the first interventions will be the organization of workshops directed to students’ representatives, course coordinators, directors of the departments and members of the pedagogical council of the University aiming to discuss the data collected in the QAS reports, and to discuss intervention activities that need to be implemented in the Departments and/or in the institution to cope with the identified problems.

The academic development courses offered by UNAVE and already explained in this paper are being considered to be strongly recommended for all the teachers of the institution. Hopefully the financial constraints will not stop this initiative since it will be essential for the development of a ‘teaching culture’ in a research intensive university. Otherwise, the principles of a student-centered approach to learning, based on the development of competences and learning outcomes can fail to succeed. It is not enough to have study programmes designed in terms of learning outcomes and/or competences if teachers don’t change their practice.
Final considerations

Research indicates that teachers who receive pedagogical training reflect more on their teaching practice (e.g. through students’ feedback, peer evaluation or self-assessment) than those teachers without such pedagogical training (Shannon, Twale, & Hancock, 1996). Although academic development can have a positive effect in the way teachers develop student-centered learning activities it does not work by itself. The institutional culture should promote those initiatives in the form of incentives, for example, grants or prizes for the best teacher, and strongly promote the scholarship of teaching. The scholarship of teaching, uncommon in Portuguese universities should be strongly encouraged by the institution, so educational research in different disciplines can be taken seriously by the academic community.

It is urgent to motivate and involve more active teachers in lifelong learning, giving them the opportunity to acquire scientific and pedagogic training according to the needs of each individual (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Since the ethos of Higher Education is to encourage the pursuit of lifelong learning, why not apply this ethos to our essential staff? This training cannot be restricted to the organisation of courses alone. Indeed, it is necessary to involve academia, students and other educational agents in a dynamic and co-operative learning community. This way, the development of working and research spaces inside the universities might be one way to promote a strong structure that could lead to innovative changes for teaching quality.

References


**The author**

Isabel Huet (huet@ua.pt), Department of Education, CIDTFF (Research Centre for Didactics and Technology in Teacher Education), Campus Universitário de Santiago, Universidade de Aveiro, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal.

Isabel is a researcher in Higher Education at the Research Centre for Didactics and Technology in Teacher Education in the Department of Education at the University of Aveiro, Portugal. She coordinates the section of Higher Education at the Laboratory for the Evaluation of Educational Quality.
Pedagogical support services and academic developers at French universities

Siara Isaac and Emmanuel Sylvestre

Abstract
Numerous programmes have been implemented to improve the quality of French higher education but the paucity of learning-focused objectives has resulted in contradictory initiatives. Expanding pedagogical development activities for professors, as emphasised by various reports, is a remedy worth exploring as only approximately 15 out of 150 higher education institutions currently have a teaching development centre. Professorial support for these initiatives is growing. A recent survey of professors found 91 per cent in favour of teaching development activities, with young instructors the most in favour and the most diverse in their teaching development requests (Demougeot-Lebel and Perret, 2011). In response, new teaching development units are emerging. The nascent pedagogical support structures raise issues of how to foster both the development of these centres and of their often inexperienced academic developers. Two promising initiatives are the national network of academic development centres and an academic developers’ community of practice in the Rhone-Alps region.

Introduction
There is a general agreement that higher education in France is in need of significant change. The challenges listed often include the evolving demands of an expanding, increasingly diverse student population and ensuring that high standards are maintained to ensure that students are developing the high level skills and mental dexterity required to compete in the global market. The consensus breaks down as to strategies that should be employed to achieve these ends. The pedagogical development of professors has been identified repeatedly as a potential yet underdeveloped tool. National reforms and local efforts to harness this potential are changing the context but the final effect will depend on achieving a consensus definition of coherent goals for student learning. This paper will review the current situation in France in view of highlighting some contradictory policies and some promising initiatives for improving coherency.

National context
Education represents 20 per cent of the French national budget and the Ministry of Education is largest employer in France. This investment reflects the importance held by education in France, so the poor performance of French higher education institutions in international university rankings (ie Shanghai ranking) has stimulated much debate.

At the national level, the shortcomings of French higher education are more often expressed as social, whereby measures to make university widely accessible have had little impact on increasing social mobility and decreasing economic disparity. The strong role of the
social status of one’s family on university completion and employment has been thoroughly investigated (Duru-Bellat 2002) and there are numerous initiatives intended to reduce this bias. Many of these initiatives have been designed to boost high school completion rates (Cohen and Aghion, 2004) resulting in secondary schools consuming an equal share of funding (Lorenzi and Payan, 2003) compounded with a boom in university enrollment (Rege Colet and Romainville, 2006). The situation for universities is further exacerbated by extremely low tuition rates (~200 € per year) and the absence of entrance selection. The result is only 54 per cent of first year students continue directly into second year (Demuynck, 2011) and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to drop out (Cohen and Aghion, 2004). One out of every five students who begin higher education studies will not obtain any post-secondary certification (Demuynck, 2011) and the wages of graduates remain highly correlated to those of their fathers (OECD). A recent initiative designed to reduce university attrition and dropout rates (Plan réussite licence) has repeatedly been interpreted as setting specific goals for the number of students who must pass. The extension of universal accessibility of university from the lack of selection through to externally decreed pass rates is difficult to harmonise with the official discourse regarding a culture of excellence. The articulation of clear objectives with respect to student learning would facilitate the alignment of policies and ensure that the focus is well placed.

The role of legislation governing universities plays a crucial role in the development of pedagogical support at French universities as decision making in all areas is centralised in Paris and individual institutions have comparably little autonomy. For example university professors were employed directly by the Ministry of Higher Education until 2009. It has been postulated that this centralisation in a key aspect in the slow rate of cultural change in French higher education (Cohen and Aghion, 2004), as sweeping national reforms often obliterate local initiatives. In this context, two recent reforms will have wide ranging effects. The LRU Law (2007) gives universities more budgetary autonomy, more flexibility in appointing professors, and for the first time, the possibility to raise money through private foundations. The 2009–460 decree enacted important changes in the university professors’ careers, through aspects of evaluation and recognition. The involvement of professors in more areas of university life will be better recognised, such as distance courses, international cooperation, tutoring, and coordinating internships. This latter law is part of a larger discussion regarding the relative importance of teaching and research activities at French universities (Musselin, 2008). The decree states that professors will be evaluated every four years on their collective teaching activities and contributions to the university (administrative service) and that this evaluation will be taken into account in all promotion decisions. Most institutions have interpreted the reporting of teaching activities as quantitative, involving the names of courses taught and the number of students enrolled. Others are exploring a more qualitative approach, based on a teaching portfolio model but norms regarding what should be assessed and how to present supporting material have not yet been established. This is clearly an area where to definition of clear objectives for student learning would be an asset, as the choice of indicators will orient how professors invest in their teaching. Objectives coherent with the learning-focused approach to teaching developed by Säljo, Entwistle, Ramsden, Prosser, and Trigwell (summarised in Prosser and Trigwell, 1998) could assist the penetration of these ideas into French university culture.
Despite the work of Rege Colet and Romainville in French, university teaching in France remains focused on transmission and students on assimilative, memorisation-based learning strategies (Gustin and Isaac, 2010). This may be in part due to the fact that the majority of university professors in France start their careers without any formal pedagogical training (Coulon and Paivandi, 2008). For example, a 2010 survey of 25 newly recruited assistant professors at Lyon 1 found 16 had no pedagogical training, 3 had previously participated in short activities at Lyon 1 and 4 in activities as doctoral students. The average reported teaching experience was 3.5 years, with values ranging between 0 and 10 years.

Formal opportunities for development during academic careers are rare (Demougeot-Lebel and Perret, 2011) and numerous reports have called for better resources (Dejean, 2002; Espéret, 2001; Faure, Soulié and Millet, 2005; Fréville, 2002; Petit, 2002; Romainville, 2004). A survey in Dijon found 91 per cent of professors in favour of pedagogical development activities, with interactive teaching methods the most popular theme (Demougeot-Lebel and Perret, 2011). On average, professors declared themselves willing to commit two days per year to pedagogical development.

The preparation of doctoral students for academic careers was undertaken by 14 regional centres of initiation to higher education (CIES) for the period between 1989 and 2009. Selected teaching assistants (moniteurs) completed a service of 64h/year of teaching activities and 10 days of professional development for a career in higher education over a 3 year period. The programmes of these centres varied considerably by region, some including a strong pedagogical aspect and others entirely focused on technology or research methods. Schemes for mentoring by experienced instructors were also put in place but this aspect was generally judged to be ineffective (Paivandi, 2010). Since 2009, some regions have continued with a CIES-like inter-institutional organisation and others have developed panoply of institutional programmes.

The French university context further reinforces a transmissive model of teaching through the algorithm for calculating professors’ yearly teaching service requirement in terms of in-class hours and class format (lecture, tutorial, lab). An hour of lecturing is worth 90 minutes of teaching a tutorial session. It thus appears that small group teaching designed to involve learners is less valuable or requires less work to prepare. Investment in teaching is often perceived as detrimental to career advancement as it infringes on research activities and has not been taken into consideration in promotion decisions. One outcome of this arrangement is that many senior professors fulfil their service exclusively in lectures and newly hired professors may find themselves completing twice as many hours in laboratory supervision.

**Institutional initiatives**

The objectives of teaching improvement initiatives in France generally explicitly target technology use. Most universities and higher education establishments have a formal mission devoted to supporting and encouraging the use of teaching technologies (Adangnikou and Paul, 2008). There is a mission devoted to using technology in teaching in higher education within the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, and communications involving teaching technology dominate the French pedagogical literature, with up to 50 per cent of the
papers presented at conferences focusing on technology use (de Ketele, 2010). In contrast, few (if any) universities have a policy for promoting excellence in teaching discrete from technology use.

The first university teaching support services emerged around 2000 (Demougeot-Lebel and Perret, 2011); such services are now present in about 20 per cent of universities, particularly in those teaching science (Adangnikou and Paul, 2008). The mandates of such structures vary, but essentially all have a teaching technology mission and a lower percentage offer pedagogical workshops, individual counseling, or teaching evaluations (Adangnikou and Paul, 2008).

In the centralised, French context, the creation of the réseau des SUP, a national network of university academic development centres is essential, as initiatives without formal recognition from the Ministry of Higher Education risk being obliterated in the next set of reforms. The réseau is thus a political entity, currently made up of 9 pedagogical support centres, with the goal of ‘describing the roles of a pedagogical support service, with the objective of making them better known and to aide in the emergence of such services in other universities’. The distinction between the objectives of a pedagogical support service and one that specifically focuses on technology use is not clear in all quarters, resulting in some dynamic technology support services feeling undervalued or excluded. Outside the réseau there are also several vibrant pedagogical support centres at engineering schools or Grandes Ecoles. These schools are distinguished by rigorous selection processes and are set apart from the universities; the réseau des SUP represents universities exclusively.

The positioning of a pedagogical development service is a fine balance of needing to be a central service and simultaneously adopt a more academic approach with respect to the dissemination and contribution to research (Frenay et al., 2010). This equilibrium is a considerable challenge in the highly structured French university culture but ultimately essential for building constructive and influential partnerships within the university. The emergence of new teaching support services is also creating tensions with existing educational technology services, at both the local and national level. While competition for funding and recognition are always a challenge, the cultural differences between applied technology-focused services and a more academic approach adopted by many pedagogical support services further aggravate communication and collaboration between these groups. Synergy has been shown to be possible, with successful fusions between the 2 types of services at some universities and productive collaborations between distinct services at others.

The title academic developer does not currently exist in the official human resources lexicon of French universities, nor the competencies and services offered by a pedagogical support service in the official database of responsibilities. Academic developers in France generally hold administrative posts, and some are professors with a reduction in teaching responsibilities in order to allow them to coordinate faculty development activities. A view commonly, if infrequently, expressed is that only professors are competent to discuss pedagogy and the administrative staff should assist only with technology-related training. This symptom of the hierarchical French university culture tends to be more prevalent in older professors.
Pedagogical research in France has been the domain of the IFE\textsuperscript{13} and the IUFM\textsuperscript{14}, who train primary and secondary teachers. The research programmes of these institutions have consequently focused on the primary and secondary levels. Adangnikou states that research in university teaching and pedagogy in France was first addressed in 2008 (Adangnikou, 2008) and publications on university pedagogy in French language remain representatively lower than in English (de Ketele, 2010). This has lead to a paucity of relevant resources for French universities to draw on, exacerbated by the belief that research from abroad cannot be directly applied. In 2008, each IUFM was directly associated to a (usually scientific) university, leading to significant ongoing structural changes. The rapprochement will likely increase research in university pedagogy, generating relevant literature to nourish debate in the public sphere and to nuance questions of whether foreign research in pedagogy is indeed relevant.

Student evaluation of courses were initiated in 1992 by national directives stating that the council of each university may hold a teaching evaluation process but that this process would not affect the careers of professors. In 1997 a second decree was published requiring that each course and each programme of study must be evaluated. The objective of this evaluation was stated as providing professors with information on their teaching, and hence not to manage the career of the professor. To reinforce the desired application, it is stated that the results of the evaluation must be directly addressed to the professor concerned and not to the institution. It is further elaborated that the objective is the formative use of course evaluations and not simply an administrative requirement.

A further modification published in 2002 explicitly includes students in the procedures for evaluating courses and programs. To ensure the implementation of this cultural change, an independent body was created in 2007 (AERES, the reporting agency for research and higher education) to coordinate audits. The lack of a course evaluation procedure or the improper use of the results can lead the agency to judge a programme as unsatisfactory and to impose significant reforms or even to revoke the certification of the programme, resulting in its closure.

It is a hope of certain academic developers in France that course evaluations may be leveraged to increase reflective practice among professors and stimulate changes in pedagogical practices. The effect of the 2009–460 decree will likely be the decisive element in whether course evaluations are seen as a tool of the administration and thus summative. The ambiguous term ‘evaluated on their collective activities’ and the possibility of future decrees keeps the current debate lively, both within each university and on the national level. Overall, there is an evolution of the perception of course evaluations from a tool of administrative control in favour of a more formative process.

**Academic developer initiatives**

The number of academic developers in higher education in France is increasing significantly; most are new to the profession, offering a novel service within their institution and/or associated with a nascent teaching support unit. An anecdotal example is the significant increase in the number of academic developers attending the BSQF\textsuperscript{15} rose from 8 individuals in 2008 to 23 in 2009 and again to 24 in 2010. However opportunities for professional development for these conseillers pédagogiques remain scarce (Frenay et al., 2010). A survey
of 50 academic developers working in Quebec or in francophone European universities (Germain-Rutherford and Grandtner, 2006) found most held a Masters degree in psychology or education, while a third came from completely different disciplinary fields. As Frenay at al. note, ‘expertise in this field is typically acquired through experience’ (2010).

The response in the Rhone-Alps region was to create a self-facilitated community of practice. PENSERA was established in 2009 between 3 higher education institutions to respond to a small but growing number of academic developers in need of community, critical friends and resources to continue their professional development. There are currently 4 official institutional members (2 science/medicine focused universities, an engineering school, and an architectural college) and 3 permanent visitors (a multidisciplinary university and two engineering schools) with a combined 14 academic developers.

Having met many of the original challenges of a new community of practice (Isaac et al., 2010), PENSERA has now entered a new phase where it is frequently solicited to accompany new academic developers and emergent teaching support structures. Repeated experience has lead to the definition of a posture designed to assist the emerging structure while avoiding acting as a service provider for their institution.

An initial inquiry often involves launching a teaching development workshop series and experience has shown such request can become permanent with no accompanying structural or cultural changes in the host institution. An approach involving hosting an emerging academic developer for the first experience of the workshop, followed by the co-facilitation of the workshop in the new institution allows for scaffolding of the nascent academic developer in both practical and theoretical areas. It also enables the new academic developer to gain recognition in their own institution. PENSERA thus requires an institution to identify 1–3 people interested in taking on academic developer roles before engaging in support roles. A motivated individual should likewise be mandated by their home institution for initiating academic development activities.

**Conclusion**

While there remain a number of major obstacles to the alignment of teaching and learning goals in France, the proliferation of pedagogical support services should improve the level of discussion. Additionally, research in university pedagogy seems likely to rise, providing relevant literature and research collaborations to enable professors gain recognition for investment in teaching excellence through publications.

The lack of formal recognition of pedagogical support units and academic developers remains a weakness, particularly in terms of the ability of such services to accompany and counsel the decisional bodies at the university. A clear legislative framework would give greater credibility to existing structures and support the emergence of new structures.

Possible threats, but also opportunities, may come from human resources departments and quality units. Human resources departments have recently been awarded the responsibility for on-the-job training of professors (whereas they were previously concerned only with
administrative staff) and this will likely expand the offer of short workshops in pedagogy for professors. The importance of a range of pedagogical activities, including action-research and long-term accompaniment roles of academic developers, needs to be valued and clarified. In the quality side, institutions are giving more thought to how to measure excellence. Depending on the type of indicators selected for the evaluation of professors and the evaluation of courses, value of academic developers in improving student learning may become more apparent. A context of formative, rather than summative, use of the results is essential.

The coming decade is shaping up to be a period of accelerated evolution for the culture of teaching and learning at French universities.

1 Le réseau des SUP http://sup.ups-tlse.fr/reseaudessup/

2 PENSERA http://pensera.fr

3 The statutes of academic staff at French universities are numerous and complex. For simplicity, this article will use the term ‘professor’ to denote all levels of academic teaching staff.


6 Internal document, ICAP, Lyon 1.

7 Centre d’Initiation à l’Enseignement Supérieur.

8 Mission numérique pour l’enseignement supérieur.

9 Services Universitaires de Pédagogie.

10 Le réseau des SUP http://sup.ups-tlse.fr/reseaudessup/


12 SUP Grenoble http://sup.ujf-grenoble.fr/

13 Institut français de l’éducation, formerly called the Institut nationale de recherche en pédagogie.
Institut Universitaire de la Formation des Maitres.

The francophone academic development conference was created in 2001 by academic developers from Belgium, Switzerland and Québec, taking the name BSQ. French academic developers participated as they emerged and in 2008 the biannual conference was held in France for the first time, leading to a renamed BSQF.


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**The authors**

**Siara Isaac** (siara.isaac@univ-lyon1.fr). service ICAP, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, Quai 43, 43, Blvd 11 novembre 1918, 69622 Villeurbanne cedex, France.

Siara is a faculty developer at the Université Lyon 1 and a founding member of PENSERA. She has teaching experience at universities in Canada, China, and France, ranging from practical lab settings to courses for 1,000 students and has facilitated pedagogical development workshops in Canada, France, Morocco, and Switzerland.

**Emmanuel Sylvestre** (emmanuel.sylvestre@unil.ch). Centre de Soutien à l’enseignement, Université de Lausanne, Unicentre, Lausanne, Switzerland 1015.

Emmanuel is a faculty developer at the Université de Lausanne and a founding member of PENSERA. He holds a PhD in Education from the Université Grenoble 2 and has teaching experience at universities in France and Switzerland. His areas of research include the assessment of learning and the evaluation of courses and degree programmes.
Academic development in Japan

Hiroaki Sato and Tsuyoshi Yamada

Abstract
Academic development in Japan does not have a long history. Its concept was introduced from the U.S. and UK by visiting Japanese researchers in the beginning of 1980’s. After the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) decided that each university should offer academic development in 1999, some micro-level initiatives have been started, such as peer teaching observation and course evaluation by students. After legal revision in 2007, universities ‘shall conduct organizational training and research for improving the contents and teaching methods to give classes’. Most of the current topics are middle and macro-level initiatives like re-construction of curriculum, assessment of learning outcomes, quality enhancement of teaching and learning and organizational development. There are a lot of challenges left to promote academic development. But Japan is working to overcome these with a new generation of academic developers.

Introduction
The Japanese educational system has been traditionally seen one of the best in the world because of high ranking on international test for children (see the result of Programme for International Student Assessment: PISA). But it is also true that some foreign researchers point out that there are a lot of problems in Japanese higher education system (OECD 2009, 2011). This article’s aim is firstly to overview the history and the current situation of academic development in Japan. Secondly some challenges for the future of academic development in Japan will be discussed.

Overview of universities in Japan
There are 780 four-year universities in Japan (MEXT 2011). Eleven per cent (N=86) are national universities, 13 per cent (N=95) are local universities which mean cities or prefectures funded ones. Three quarters (N=595) are private universities. There are 2,893,434 students enrolled. In addition to four-year universities, there are 387 two-year colleges and 57 six-year colleges of Technology, but they are not included in this article. In respect of student fields of study, Social Science is the largest group (34.2 per cent), followed by Engineering (15.4 per cent) and Humanities (15.0 per cent). After graduation, 61.6 per cent of students go to direct employment, followed by graduate schools (12.8 per cent) and the remaining quarter on to other activities (this includes students whose careers after graduation are not clear).

History of academic development
In 1970s: Importing the concept without importing the practice
In many countries, there was student movement in late 1960s and 1970s, much of which was students’ protests against traditional courses and curriculum that could not cope with the massification of higher education. Unlike many countries, it was not a time for reflection about teaching and learning for Japanese universities and there was little impact on teaching improvement. Most universities cracked down student unions and they quickly lost their power.
In response to student movements, the first research institute for higher education was created at Hiroshima University in 1972. Their main interest has been academic research about higher education and less so for academic development practice at their own university. The number of centers for teaching and learning in charge of academic development were very limited in 1970s and 1980s (Tanaka 2009). In the late 1970s, some higher education researchers visited centers for teaching and learning in the US, UK and a number of European countries. They discovered the concept of academic development and introduced it into Japan (Umakoshi 1981).

**In 1980s: Absence of academic development**

During the 1980s, the Japanese economy was booming and students could get jobs easily with a certificate of graduation. Because Japanese companies recruit new employees among current students, students can start to work just after graduation. This means that students have to begin undertaking job interviews in the early year. Companies evaluate student’s ‘potential abilities’ and can reserve the best students for their future employees. As Japanese companies had strong in-house training systems, they did not expect much from a university education. They did not ask student what they learned or could do; the companies used to say ‘Don’t teach anything’ to universities.

This led to an unspoken ‘WIN-WIN’ agreement between students and academics in 1980s. First, students did not want to learn difficult material because they wanted to spend time socializing. Furthermore, they were not asked to show learning outcomes by companies and needed the time for taking part in job interviews. On the other hand, academics did not want to focus on teaching because they liked research more than teaching. Some students and academics were not satisfied this situation, but most of them were; this led to little desire for academic development in 1980s.

**In 1990s: Government-led academic development**

Beginning with the deregulation brought about by the ‘Standards for the Establishment of Graduate Schools’, which were implemented in 1991, based on predictions of the decline in the population of 18-year-olds. In only 20 years, the environment surrounding Japanese universities has changed rapidly due to such factors as worsening social and economic conditions, universal access, the advent of the knowledge-based society and globalization (Yamada 2010). Due to these forces, the higher education system has been in the midst of an important period of transformation and transition, and there is an urgent need to assure and enhance the quality of education.

One characteristic of higher education in Japan is that academic development has progressed under the policy guidance of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), while presupposing the autonomy of universities’ teaching staff. Based on various reports submitted since 1998 and assisted by systematic revisions and various attendant ‘good practices (GP)’ including financial support, various associations and other organizations of higher education specialists have been proactively carrying out discussions. Furthermore, with little time to wait for the results of implication based on surveys and research conducted by higher education scholars, good-quality practice is being
undertaken on a vast scale in universities with little academic input. Various actors from policy, research, and practice backgrounds are all becoming involved in the common issue of academic development. Below, we review the policy trends and situation regarding academic development of MEXT, which has been strongly leading on academic development in Japan.

After 1990 numbers of centers for teaching and learning were rapidly growing. Compared to the early centers, these centers were much more involved in practice like curriculum management of general education, academic development, educational assessment, curriculum development (Tanaka 2009).

In 2000s: Academic development becomes formalized
MEXT’s definition of academic development currently comprises ‘a collective term for systematic efforts by teachers to improve and enhance classes content and teaching methods’ (Central Council for Education ‘To Construct Undergraduate Programme’ (report) December 2008). This definition is limited to the improvement of lesson content and teaching methods, and because it contains few classifications (cf. Seki 1995) – including aspects such as Instructional Development, Curriculum Development, Organizational Development, and Personal/Professional Development – it is referred to as ‘academic development in the narrow sense’ as opposed to ‘academic development in the broad sense’ as defined by Seki. However, this report further notes that: ‘The definition and content of academic development vary depending on the advocate, and there are also cases in which the term ‘academic development’ is used to refer to general vocational development activities by academic members involved in broad educational improvement as well as research activities, social service, and administration, and is not limited to training aimed at simply improving course content and/or teaching methods.’ We can thus see that academic development is expanding from the micro-level to middle and macro levels. Moreover, MEXT stipulates that graduate and undergraduate schools ‘shall conduct organizational training and research for improving the contents and teaching methods to give classes’. Universities are obliged to implement academic development as a result (graduate schools were enforced in 2007 and undergraduate schools were enforced in 2008).

The current situation with academic development
Having reviewed changes concerning academic development policy trends and definitions, next we examine the actual situation regarding academic development activities based on survey and statistical materials. First of all, every year MEXT conducts a survey of national, public, and private universities nationwide entitled ‘Status of Reform of Educational Content in Universities’. The 1997 survey found that 193 universities (approximately 33 per cent) had practiced academic development (teachers’ professional development); by 2009 (the most recent data), this figure had increased to 746 universities (99.1 per cent), indicating that almost all universities are now offering academic development.

With regard to content, the practice rate among all universities for ‘class evaluation by students’, which is synonymous with academic development in Japan, is 79.5 per cent. In descending order, practice rates for other academic development activities are ‘seminars, workshops or lectures’ (74.1 per cent), ‘lectures for improving teaching
methods’ (65.6 per cent), and ‘peer teaching observation’ (53.7 per cent). Meanwhile, practice rates for academic development related to peer reviews, such as ‘case conference for improving teaching methods’ (36.9 per cent) and ‘peer teaching evaluation’ (19.8 per cent) remained low.

Next, ‘the University Education and Student Support Promotion Project (referred to as ‘Good Practice; GP projects’), which was introduced by MEXT in 2003, is an example of a programme that has lent momentum to promoting the organizational development of academic development. GP projects select university education reform efforts aimed at enhancing educational quality, providing financial support and a broad range of information with the objective of promoting efforts by individual universities and other educational institutions to reform education. Currently, no new projects are being developed due to the depressed economy. In the past six years, some 4,660 applications have been received for various GP projects, with 716 applications receiving approval (Yoshimoto 2009). In terms of number of institutions, approximately 650 four-year universities have lodged applications, and more than 450 have had their application approved at least once (Komatsu 2009).

The following points have been made regarding the educational effects of these GP projects:

- Awareness that education is an extremely important activity for universities has risen, and amongst individual teachers as well, there has been a dramatic increase in awareness that educational activities are as important as research activities (Yamamoto 2009).
- The greatest effect of GP projects is that, as relationships of trust deepen between academic and staff through various efforts, their consciousness changes and their awareness of themselves as a member of an organization grows (Hirayama 2009).
- Unique GP and a series of other educational GP have boosted interest in education within the culture of Japanese academic, which is strongly orientated towards research (Yamada 2009).

In addition to various GP efforts that have dramatically enhanced education reforms, including everyday educational improvements, because ‘systemization’ was a prerequisite for, and also the intent of, application, the GP project programme is designed to ensure the automatic systemization of academic development. In this way, academic development in Japan – especially since 2000 – has expanded rapidly through systematic reforms guided by government policy and the driving force of subsidy programmes.

**Challenges and future of academic development in Japan**

With regard to academic development, some challenges are pointed out based on the research by the Central Council for Education (2008):

- Most academic development programmes are taught through one-way lectures. They are not practical ones which correspond each academic needs and do not promote and support academic’s everyday trial for better teaching.
- There are few peer review initiatives, such as peer teaching evaluation or peer teaching observation.
• There are few incentives for better teaching because of weaker performance evaluation system in teaching than in research.
• Academic development is not located within the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) cycle of educational management. There is no system to use academic development for sharing and redesigning educational policies.
• There is a weak academic development management system for centers of teaching and learning, due to a shortage of professional staff for academic development, difficulties of cooperation with/between each department or school and few networks of academic developers at an early stage of development.
• There is not enough subject-based quality assurance system by academic societies and infrastructure for subject-based academic development.
• More attention needs to be paid to professional development for adjunct professors or professors in practical fields with growing development needs.

To overcome these challenges, the following recommendations were presented for future of academic development (Central Council for Education 2008):

Universities should:

• share the Diploma Policies (graduation requirements), Curriculum Policies and Admissions Policies (admissions requirements) among members and place academic development as opportunities for reflection of each professor’s teaching (not only one-way lecture but also interactive workshops, peer teaching observation and evaluation and use of students’ grades and course evaluation)
• consider various participants needs in implementing academic development programmes, such as seminars for newly hired academics, adjunct professors, and professors in practical fields. This includes seminars not only for instructional development but also for curriculum development.
• put in place the system to support each professor’s trial for better teaching, through individual consultation, teaching awards and support for excellent professors.
• evaluate not only research performance but also teaching performance in recruitments and promotion. This can be done through introducing job descriptions, self-evaluation including students’ course evaluations, publishing textbooks, teaching materials and participation for academic development programmes. Further efforts include introducing and using Teaching Portfolios, performance evaluation for various functions of professors and evaluation of the teaching experience for graduate students as teaching assistants.
• prepare future academic through programmes at graduate schools. This includes workshops for effective teaching methods, seminars for teaching assistants, giving credit for appropriate work and internships at other universities.
• prepare professional development opportunities for staff who can collaborate with professors and have professional skills and knowledge. This can be done through promotion and support for self enlightenment, appropriate performance evaluation, and ‘On the Job’ training programmes through involvement in organizational management.
Government should:

- promote the implementation in every university of independent academic development initiatives for improving academics’ teaching abilities, through staffing and training academic developers and asking each university to have opportunities to train newly-hired academics.
- set up frameworks for professional competencies for academics.
- support for academic and educational development based on the theory and practice (e.g. through a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education).
- support for the leading universities in academic and staff development and disseminate the information across the country. This includes support for professional development networks among universities that are run by national centers, academic developers and other related organizations.
- support for training the person who leads on academic development with dispatch abroad.
- promote research and development of subject-based academic development programmes through support for cooperation of universities and academic societies.
- examine possibility of setting up a national center for supporting higher education, including training academic developers at centers for teaching and learning in each university, coordination of subject-based education support network, use of e-learning and ICT in academic development, collection and dissemination of information about excellent academic development practices and innovative teaching methods.
- plan strategies for promoting staff development with related organizations and professional schools.

There are a lot of challenges and things to do with academic development in Japan. A question remains: ‘Who is in charge of educational reform to overcome these challenges?’.

In the UK, USA and other countries that are advanced in this area, educational/academic/academic developers act as strong drivers to promote change in teaching and learning. As the Central Council for Education recommended, training and organizing educational developers as professional staff is urgently needed in Japan. In 2009, the Japan Association for Educational Development in Higher Education was established as the first professional organization of educational developers. Most of the members are academics at centers for teaching and learning. They put high value on nexus between theory and practice. Educational developers can be agents of change for future academic development working together with government and universities’ leaders in Japan.

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The authors
Hiroaki Sato (sato.hiroaki.mk@ehime-u.ac.jp). Office for Educational Planning and Research at Ehime University, 790-8577 Bunkyo-cho 3, Matsuyama, Ehime, Japan.

Hiroaki is Vice Director and Associate Professor of Office for Educational Planning and Research at Ehime University. He has been involved in academic development since 2002. His current research interests include assessment of academic development programs, individual consultation and globalization of professional development in higher education.
Tsuyoshi Yamada (yamada@ehime-u.ac.jp). Office for Educational Planning and Research at Ehime University, 790-8577 Bunkyo-cho 3, Matsuyama, Ehime, Japan.

Tsuyoshi is Associate Professor of Office for Educational Planning and Research at Ehime University. He has been involved in academic development since 2005 and has studied learning and self-development of university students. He is interested in learning outcomes and institutional research in higher education.
Exploring the relationship between teaching and learning conceptions and questioning practices, towards academic development

Helena Pedrosa-de-Jesus and Betina da Silva Lopes

Abstract

Researchers in higher education claim an internal relationship between conceptions of teaching and learning and the teaching practices adopted. The study reported here aims at understanding the relationship between teachers’ conceptions, beliefs and motivations and their questioning practices.

Four Portuguese university teachers, lecturing biology to undergraduates, were observed during two consecutive academic years in order to investigate how they usually use questions during lectures and how they manage to implement alternative student-centred strategies suggested by a group of science education researchers. Data was gathered by participant and non-participant observation of the teachers’ professional activity related to lecturing, semi-structured interviews and also the application of a translated and validated version of the revised Approaches to Teaching Inventory (ATI-R).

This paper focuses on the discussion of data from teachers’ reflection on the questioning processes. Results show that lecturers with different conceptions of teaching and learning recognise distinct advantages and purposes for teachers’ and students’ questions. These expressed thoughts seem to be rooted in distinct conceptualizations of ‘question functionality’, leading to different questioning intentions. The questioning intentions were called: Product oriented questioning focused on teachers’ benefit and Process oriented questioning focused on conceptual sharing between teacher and students. These distinct intentions seem to be the reason for different teachers’ questioning practices, identified and described in a previous study.

It is believed that the explored knowledge can be useful for the design and implementation of interventional strategies for promoting academic development, and also for further research.

Towards academic development: exploring what teacher think and do

Research studies on teaching in higher education show an internal relationship between ‘teaching conceptions’ and ‘theories of action’ (Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead & Mayes, 2005; Oosterheert & Vermunt, 2001; Kane, Sandretto & Heath, 2002). Similar findings were reported by Kember and co-workers (Gow & Kember, 1993; Kember & Kwan, 2000), recognizing strong relations between the orientation (concept) to teaching and the teaching and assessment methods that are adopted. At a conceptual level, a teacher’s beliefs
(‘theory’) and instructional behaviour (‘practice’) seem to be interrelated (Barak & Shakman, 2008), and can therefore be used to make inferences about each other.

In considering the study of university teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning, analyses of self-reported practices have been very useful. Trigwell and colleagues, for example, have been investigating preferential teaching approaches (PTA) in the context of higher education. One of their first works (Trigwell & Prosser, 1993; Trigwell, Prosser & Taylor, 1994) focused on the phenomenological analysis of twenty-four interview transcripts of first-year lecturers. Findings allowed the characterization and description of five different approaches to teaching, each ‘type’ aligned with different teaching and learning conceptions. At the ‘Information Transmission Teacher Focused – ITTF’ pole, teaching is based on the transmission of content from the syllabus or the textbook, and learning is perceived as ‘information acquisition’, driven and assessed by external factors to the students. At the other pole, the ‘Conceptual Change Student Focused – CCSF’ approach, learning is discussed in terms of developing personal meaning through conceptual development and/or change, while teaching is perceived as supporting the students in this process (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). Considering this internal relationship, Trigwell and co-workers developed an instrument – the Approaches to Teaching Inventory (ATI) – that allows the identification of preferential teaching approaches, and, therefore, the associated teaching and learning conceptions.

Understanding the connection between teaching conceptions, teaching intentions and teaching practices is crucial to the design and implementation of successful strategies envisaging quality teaching and, consequently, learning at higher education (Weimar, 1997). Indeed, investigating the complex relation between theory and action may help to achieve better understanding of academics’ attitudes towards engaging in any form of staff development (Quinn, 2012; Díaz & Santaolalla, 2010; Mälkki & Lindlom-Ylänne, 2012). The move towards more student-centred approaches, although welcomed by many, is still regarded with reluctance and suspicion leading, in some cases, to resistance towards strategies envisaging teacher development (Díaz & Santaolalla, 2010; Quinn, 2012).

Teachers’ questioning practices (TQP) and preferential teaching approaches (PTA)
The promotion of a true spirit of inquiry can improve the quality of teaching and, consequently, the quality of learning (Chin, 2007; Chin & Osborne, 2008; Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Moreira, 2009). Several studies show that questions might help to scaffold ideas, organize tasks and encourage reflection (Watts & Pedrosa-de-Jesus, 2006).

Gunel (2008) defined teachers’ questions as a complex ‘pedagogical practice’ reporting a variety of behaviours that take into account complementary features, such as wait-time, cognitive level and body language. Indeed, teachers seem to use questions during classes in different ways. But why does this happen? Our intent has been to tackle this issue by investigating the internal relationship between teaching and learning conceptions and questioning processes.¹

The need for more sound empirical evidence led us to design and implement a naturalistic research project involving the observation of a group of four university teachers in ‘daily’
First findings identified a relationship between particular teacher questioning practices (TQP), and Preferential Teaching Approaches: ITTF teachers were identified as using lower percentages of self-answers than their CCSF colleagues, having also less success in obtaining student interventions, particularly student questions. More student participation with CCSF teachers seem to be related to the fact higher frequencies of a more cognitive stimulating questioning practice of these teachers (Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2009 and 2011).

This paper will focus on the discussion of the reasons beneath that relationship, by exploring the following questions: Why do teachers with different PTA have different TQP? What are their main intentions when they use questions to interact with students? How the identification and description of these intentions can be useful for the design of strategies envisaging academic development?

**The study**

*Contextualisation and methodology*

The work reported here is part of a broader naturalistic research project aimed at promoting teaching and learning quality in higher education, through the enhancement of questioning processes (Pedrosa-de-Jesus, Silva Lopes, Moreira & Watts 2012).

The main aim has been to investigate teaching and learning processes in natural settings, such as ‘real’ lectures, and a Co-researcher Model (Macaro & Mutton, 2002) was adopted, implying a close collaboration between science education researchers and a group of four university teachers (A,B,C and D) during two consecutive academic years (2009/10 and 2010/11).

Student-centred instructional practices, integrating the development of questioning skills, were collaboratively conceptualized by the project team and implemented individually by each teacher in the context of his or her own lectures.

The design of the global research followed a qualitative (Tuckmann, 1999; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003) or flexible (Robson, 2002) approach. Data was gathered mainly by:

a) direct observation of teachers’ professional activity related to lecturing; b) applications of a validated Portuguese version of the Approaches to Teaching Inventory to each teacher; and c) semi-structured interviews. In the following paragraphs, each method is briefly described with more detail.

**a) Teachers’ observation**

A mean number of eighteen lectures per teacher were observed throughout the collaboration time by one science education researcher. Each lecture had a mean duration of two hours. The researcher acted mainly as a non-participant observer. Only when the teacher asked would the observer collaborate in the lecture activities. Data were registered on an observation grid
specifically designed for this project. To allow further and detailed analysis, lectures were also audio-taped. The researchers held regular informal meetings with each teacher in order to discuss pedagogical activities and other issues related to the lectures. Considering the close and ‘daily’ collaboration between teachers and researchers, many opportunities emerged to gather data in a more ‘informal’ way, for example through the e-mail exchanges and ‘quick chats’ between lectures. Taking into account the richness and authenticity of this type of data, one science education researcher wrote a research journal (Robson, 2002) in order to keep a detailed record of these collaborative moments. Due to the continuous involvement with teachers, this researcher ended up fully immersed into the day-to-day life of the observed lecturers. These characteristics and conditions confer ethnographic features to the study (Robson, 2002; Tuckman, 1999).

b) Application of a validated Portuguese version of the Approaches to Teaching Inventory
In order to identify the teachers’ PTA, and the corresponding teaching and learning conceptions, each teacher responded to a validated Portuguese version of the ATI at the beginning of each academic year (2009/10 and 2009/10). The most recent version of this instrument, identified as the revised Approaches to Teaching Inventory – ATI-R (Trigwell, Prosser & Ginns, 2005), includes twenty-two sentences. Each sentence describes one specific teaching intention and/or teaching strategy. Although unknown to the respondent, each sentence reflects one of the two previously described teaching conceptualizations (ITTF vs. CCSF). When responding to the inventory, teachers were asked to focus on the specific lectures that were being observed and to place themselves for each item on a Likert scale from one (rarely) to five (always). PTA identification is based on the mean numeric response to the twenty-two sentences of the inventory for each pole (ITTF vs. CCSF).

c) Semi-structured interviews
Over the two years of collaboration, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher in order to gather some insights about their conceptions of teaching and learning and also their opinion about the importance of questioning for the quality of teaching and learning. In this paper, will be discuss the data gathered through one particular interview conducted during 2009/10 academic year.

This particular semi-structured interview was designed using a ‘task-based’ approach (Koichu & Harel, 2007). During this type of interview, the whole ‘interrogation’ process is based on the fulfillment of a particular task by the interviewee being highly conversational and in-depth in its nature (Maxwell, 1992). The intent was to create space for the interviewees to bring out different sides of the issues in their own terms.

For this study, the task was the categorization of the teachers questioning practices (TQP), by reading five lecture transcripts. The interview was organized in two main ‘moments’. First, the interviewer made clear the main purpose of the interview and the type of tasks that the teacher should fulfill. A written document integrating the description of the adopted TQP categorization system (Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2009) and the five lecture-dialogue transcripts was delivered to each teacher. After this, each teacher
was asked to read the first dialogue for himself and then to ‘think out loud’ during the categorization exercise (Figure 1). Based on the expressed reasoning, the interviewer asked specific follow-up questions. This process was then repeated with the remaining four dialogues. Teachers were free to express any doubt and to comment any aspect wherever they considered it important. Some interview questions were common to all teachers (such as: ‘In the dialogue transcript what is your comment about the way the teacher deals with the students’ non-answers?’, ‘How do you feel about the students’ silence after one of your questions?’), other emerged as a particular output of the ideas and meanings that were being shared during the interview process, as the excerpt in Figure 2 illustrates. All interviews were audio-taped to allow further discourse analysis. The mean duration of each interview was ninety minutes.

Figure 1. Example of a teacher questioning practices (TQP) categorization sheet used during the task based interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-student dialogue (topic – sterilization techniques)</th>
<th>Lign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T: Tell me, what kind of substance can be sterilized in damp heat?</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Culture media</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Exactly. You already talked about this in laboratory classes. Give me an example of a solution that has to be sterilized by filtering.</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: X</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: You don’t remember anything? Well I remember one thing, that you aren’t studying. Try to remember what was said in the laboratory session...</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: The solutions if they went to dry heat, it wouldn't... this is (teacher interrupts the student)</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: No. That we have already talked, for example sterilization of culture media. Now the solutions that are sensible to the heat can’t go, much lesser to damp heat, isn’t it so?! Give me tow examples of a solution.</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: X</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Or just one example if you prefer. What was the example I gave you?</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Vitamins and antibiotics.</td>
<td>XI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In my opinion the following TQP are present</th>
<th>Please put a cross (X)</th>
<th>Please identify the lign (eg. I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-initiation effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dialogic feedback (this is reaction to a student answer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dialogic reaction to a student question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other behaviour*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Please specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please specify
**Research questions, aims and data analysis**

Previous research developments, briefly described in the introductory section, allowed the identification of a relationship between Preferential Teaching Approaches (PTA), Teaching and Learning Conceptions (TLC) and Teacher Questioning Practices (TQP) (Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2011). However, much work is still to be done towards a better understanding of those connections. In order to deepen the level of interpretation and explanation of the already identified PTA and TQP patterns, we will discuss the findings that resulted from the content analysis of four interviews, each of them conducted individually with one of the four teachers, during 2009/2010, as indicated previously.

To guide the analysis, two research questions were asked:

- What are the main aspects stressed by each teacher related to teacher and students’ questions?
- Is it possible to establish a relationship between the questioning intentions expressed by each teacher and his or her teaching conception?

The four interview transcripts were subjected to content analysis, supported by N’Vivo 9 software. Since key-codes were chosen on a priori basis (considering theory and research questions) and from a previous data reading, the adopted analysis approach can be considered as a template approach (Robson, 2002). First we started by a global reading of the four transcripts, to get a holistic impression. Insights emerging from this ‘diagonal reading’ were annotated, a procedure designated as memoing (ibidem). The same procedure
was adopted along the entire process of analysis. A set of initial key-codes was defined through combining the initial reading with the literature findings, and integrating the conceptual framework of the study, namely the investigation related to the concept of PTA and TQP. Naturally, this template evolved throughout the reading and reflection process: new codes and sub-codes emerged and were integrated (see Figure 3 as an example). The establishment of new codes implied repeating the reading of the previous transcripts in order to minimize bias by excluding relevant thoughts expressed by the teachers. For instance, the adoption of a specific categorization during the reading of the third interview implied a re-reading of the first and second interviews in order to make sure that information that lead to the definition of a new code was not present in any earlier transcript, having been over-looked.

**Figure 3.** Content analysis of the interview transcript – an illustrative example of one key code and some sub-codes.

**Findings**

*Teachers’ expressed thoughts about questioning*

To enrich the analysis and increase validity (Garrison et al., 2001; Robson, 2002), the discussion of the interview data was crossed-referenced with the teachers’ mean numeric response to the Portuguese ATI-R version (Table 1). Previous research (Pedrosa-de-Jesus, Lopes & Watts 2008; Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2011) evidenced that the inventory results are indeed useful for infering teachers’ teaching and learning conceptions.
Table 1. ATI results of the four teachers participating in the research (2009/10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTA Poles*</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITTF</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSF</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Results based on the mean numeric response for each pole.

Discussing data just from one task-based interview per teacher, the ethnographic nature of this study, and the extended involvement of the researchers with this particular group of teachers, allowed trustworthy insights and knowledge to be gained, which guide and corroborate the discussion presented in this paper.

**Teachers’ questions**

Both teachers identified as having an ITTF approach, therefore conceptualizing teaching as ‘transmitting content’, stated that they ask the majority of the questions at the beginning of the lecture, in order to quickly review the content covered in previous lecture and to see if ‘students had done their work at home’ (Teacher A). They also stated that frequently they do not obtain any (correct) answer from students, because they are immature and ‘they just study at the eve of the exam’ (Teacher B). On the contrary, both CCSF teachers, and particularly teacher D, stressed that they try to question students over the period of the lecture, in order to ‘make them talk with each other’ (Teacher D). Teacher C went further in his reflection and stated ‘I use questions to crystallise students’ understanding... and to make the knowledge of one student concrete to other students... I would like that students would have always present the implications of what is said... which knowledge is related and... constitutes the basis of one short answer... where does it fit... what is beneath and beyond that answer... that particular reasoning’.

While ITTF teachers explained the low frequency of students’ answers by focusing on students’ characteristics, both CCSF teachers tended to focus their attention on the difficulties of resisting the temptation to self-answer the questions. Curiously, Teacher C, previously identified as using less self-answers (Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2011), was the most self-critical during the task-based interview. He stated: ‘I have always the feeling that I am self-answering my questions. Frequently, while I am lecturing, I think... ok there... I am answering myself again!... but sometimes it takes so long for students to answer!'

When concerning the feedback given to students after answering a teacher question, ITTF teachers again focused their attention on the scientific correctness of the student answer and the ‘possibility to check knowledge acquisition’ (Teacher B). Contrary to their CCSF colleagues, these ITTF teachers focused their attention on the teacher: ‘When the answer is correct I say. ‘That is correct’, when the answer is wrong I correct the answer and move on. That is what I do...’ The focus of teacher D was clearly on students: ‘First of all I try to arrange it that the students give the feedback, not me. Because when the teacher talks and says ‘I think this or that’... well then everybody thinks like me... because whatever I say seems to be understood as the ‘holy truth’. I don’t
like this. Sometimes I think I could say nonsense the entire lecture... nobody would say anything. One day I will make this experience to see how long it takes for one student to disagree with me. (laughs)’.

Students’ questions
All teachers emphasized the value of students’ questions, because they are considered to be an indicator of students’ interest and motivation. Both ITTF teachers emphasized their attempts to answer the question immediately, except when they do not really know the answer and have to do some research first. Interestingly, both teachers also ended up emphasising the ‘timing’, such that students’ questions were more frequent, namely on the eve of the exam: ‘because that is the moment where they finally started to study’ (Teacher B) and ‘they ask those questions mainly to see if the teacher ‘drops’ some information about the test’ (Teacher A). This concern was not verbalized by the CCSF teachers. However, both agreed with the interviewer when she asked if the students ask more questions at the eve of the exam. Indeed, these teachers do not value that particular student behaviour, considering it ‘normal’ (Teacher D). On the contrary, teacher A (ITTF) emphasised it repeatedly during the interview, expressing his frustration.

Teacher D also stressed the fact that he makes a ‘real effort’ to stimulate other students to answer to their peers’ doubts (instead of him), stating that students’ question are ‘very positive and useful to stimulate other students ‘to think and talk’. Teacher C, for instance, focused on the information that he was able to obtain through a student’s question and the corresponding reasoning he is making: ‘the reasoning expressed by a questions is more genuine because it doesn’t follow the traditional book format... some students’ questions are, year after year, the same... which is interesting to reflect on... what does this say about their previous knowledge, their understanding schemata??’.

Inferring teachers’ questioning intentions
The opinions expressed about the questioning process were coherent both with their conceptions of teaching and learning and the observed teacher questioning practices described elsewhere (Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2011).

Both CCSF teachers stated that questions are useful to accommodate students’ contribution and to understand, explore and elicit students’ thinking in order to construct, or at least recall, their ‘knowledge foundations’ (Teacher C). Questions were considered as an instrument for creating an opportunity to share knowledge and meaning, and as the starting point for teacher-student or student-student interaction. In this type of questions ‘functionality’ is strongly related with the learning concept ‘developing and changing personal meaning’.

On the other hand, both ITTF teachers tend to focus on the product not on the process. This is on knowledge acquisition: teacher questions should be answered by students, to be evaluated by the teacher, considering their scientific correctness. In this case, questions are therefore the endpoint of a teaching-learning process, since they are used to ‘verify’ (by the teacher) or to ‘accomplish’ (by the students) external demands.
Drawing on this outputs, we argue that questioning intentions can be conceptualized in two broad ‘typologies’ related with the teaching and learning conceptions, and therefore preferential teaching approaches: Process oriented questioning focused on conceptual sharing between teacher and students (CCSF) and Product oriented questioning focused on teachers’ benefits (ITTF).

**Concluding remarks**

**Exploring teachers’ reflection on questioning and its implication for academic development**

The study reported here is integrated in a broader research project aimed at promoting quality questioning in higher education. Our work has been focused on trying to understand how teachers use questions and why they do so. In order to intervene in a particular set of ‘behaviours’ (for example, questioning practice) we believe it is important to understand the motivations underneath these (for example, their questioning intentions).

In this particular report we were concerned to identify and describe the main questioning intentions of teachers identified as having ‘opposite’ PTA, therefore different teaching and learning conceptions. In order to accomplish this we have discussed qualitative data gathered through a particular ‘task based interview’ (Robson, 2002), conducted individually with four university teachers. Discussion was based on crossing their espoused theory about questions with their ATI results.

Globally, lecturers identified as having opposite PTA seem to have distinct intentions when interacting with students through questions, being those intentions closely tied to their conceptions of teaching and learning. The two lecturers identified as having an ITTF approach, indicating that they conceptualize teaching as ‘transmission of information’, described questions mainly as an instrument for and of the teacher. On the other hand, lecturers identified as having a CCSF approach, tended to focus their reflection on the fact that questions, whether teacher questions or student questions, constitute a joint instrument to explore concepts and that, during this process, it is possible to develop students’ awareness about their own reasoning abilities.

Besides extending the Preferential Teaching Approaches conceptual framework (Trigwell & Prosser, 2004), the work presented here has brought to light other fundamental issues which might be useful for the design of effective strategies supporting/envisaging academic development by:

1. **Describing a strategy which has created opportunities for teachers reflection:**

   This group of teachers strongly emphasised the positive contribution of the task-based interview methodology for making them think about their own teaching practice. They stressed the novelty of this experience, by creating conditions for reflecting through the use of ‘concrete’ examples of their own lectures and how it supported them in the reflection exercise. Self-reflection is not an easy task. Teaching and learning are complex pedagogical processes. Combining both (reflection on your own teaching and how it affects students) without a focused strategy can be time consuming, frustrating and non-effective, leading to feelings of resistance and reluctance. The knowledge we acquired from fieldwork led us to
argue that a focus on a particular behaviour (for example, questioning) and the use of real data from the lectures of each teacher in an organized way, seems to be an efficient strategy to enhance teachers’ positive motivation towards reflection on their teaching action envisaging an enhanced professional practice.

2. **Identifying alternatives for promoting teacher reflection:**
The teachers’ espoused reflection during the task-based interviews also allowed us to capture their strong reactions when reading episodes from teachers with different teaching and learning conceptions. Despite the fact of the (teachers’) authorship of each dialogue being unknown, it was clear that they did not identify themselves with the questioning practices of colleagues whose PTA did not match with their own teaching preferences. Each of them found contradictions and suggested alternatives, providing evidences of their own pedagogical identity. Therefore, we believe that discussion groups, selecting teachers based on the inventory results, might be an interesting research and/or intervention strategy. Thus, conceptualizing reflection within a larger frame of learning theory might draw upon Meziros’ (1994) work of transformative learning, where it is assumed that critical reflection is often triggered by a disorienting dilemma. This can be a situation or instance that makes one’s assumption problematic: an informal conversation between teachers with distinct PTA’s might have interesting outputs, since the possibility of confronting different teaching and learning conceptions is enhanced. Mixed discussion groups might enable these professionals to build more sophisticated understandings of teaching and learning and therefore lead to enhanced practice. There is already some evidence in the literature that strategies based on variety can be very successful, with participants learning enormous amounts from the group diversity (Quinn, 2012).

3. **Highlighting the importance of diversity and flexibility towards academic development**
Strategies envisaging teaching improvement, through reflection have to take into account the complex relationship between theory and action. The way each teacher manages to adopt or adapt a particular strategy is influenced by his personal motivation and ultimately his conceptions. Our work has shown that diverse (questioning) behaviours are rooted in distinct teaching and learning conceptions, since they influence the functionality attributed to questions. Extending this reasoning, the same strategy suggested to a group of teachers might have different outputs (ones more desirable than others), since the personal theory drives our motivations and intentions, and by implications influence our perception of the ‘outside world’, including the suggestion of particular teaching-learning-assessment strategies. Professionals aiming to enhance professional growth have to take into account the complex relationship between what teachers think, do and perceive, using this knowledge as a stepping stone towards successful academic development strategies.

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1Our understanding of the importance of questions in the quality of teaching and learning process is rooted on Clarks’ (1996) concept of ‘joint action’. In order to understand more deeply the pedagogical implications of questions it is important to go beyond ‘isolated’ interrogations, moving from questions to ‘questioning’. In this sense, it is important to analyse
not only the questions *per se* but also the behaviours that the formulation of one question induce on others. Consequently, it matters to look at the questions and the obtained *answers*. Behaviours that emerge when a solicited answer is not obtained are also relevant.

2 The five dialogues that were used correspond to excerpts of lecture’s dialogue transcripts of previously observed lectures from the same group of teachers. The same five episodes were used with all teachers. In none of the episodes the teacher involved in the episode was identified.

3 The teachers responded to the interview during the same week they participated in the task based interview. Therefore we believe that it can be assumed that the teaching and learning conceptions between these two moments have not suffered significant change. The fact that inventory results from 2010/2012 remain basically the same reinforces our perspective. For more information please read Pedrosa-de-Jesus & Silva Lopes, 2011.

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**References**


The authors
Helena Pedrosa-de-Jesus (hpedrosa@ua.pt). Department of Education, University of Aveiro, 3810-193 AVEIRO, Portugal.

Helena is Associate Professor, with Agregação, at Department of Education of the University of Aveiro, Portugal. Her main research interests are in learners’ questioning in education and training activities, with special emphasis on the role of questions in reflecting on learning and teaching, towards academic development.

Betina da Silva Lopes (blop@ua.pt). Department of Education & Centre for Didactics and Technology in Teacher Education (CIDTFF). University of Aveiro, 3810-193 AVEIRO, Portugal.

Betina holds a Masters degree in communication and education in science. She is currently studying for a PhD in didactics at the University of Aveiro. The PhD project aims to investigate the relationship between PTAs and questioning practices of biology university teachers.
The (hi)story of Maidstone meetings: An inspiring example of an informal learning community involving European academic developers in the ‘pioneer’ stage

Barica Marentič Požarnik and Oliva Peeters

Introduction
A group of university academic developers from different European countries met for the first time in Maidstone, Kent, England (hence the name) in 1978 and then every two years until 1997. The group was fluid – the size and composition of members varied, but the nucleus remained the same throughout the two decades as did the main goals:

- to meet for one week in a relaxed collegial but working atmosphere,
- to try out different methods and strategies and get collegial feedback,
- to share materials, experiences, principles, new ideas and also dilemmas,
- to reflect jointly on different aspects of the professional activity,
- to give support to each other.

There were no papers to be presented, no fixed programme in advance, no formalities, no projects, no funding, no publications or publicity; one member in turn had only to find a suitable ‘retreat’ – a quiet, inexpensive place in his/her country.

What was the role of this self-propelling initiative in developing the professional identity and expertise of staff developers in Europe? What were the central issues, topics and tensions addressed? Were they similar or completely different from today’s concerns and tensions? And did they have any impact?

How did it all start?
The first meeting was organized by UTMU (University Teaching Methods Unit, London) in the idyllic monastery ‘The Friars’, Aylesford, Maidstone in May 1978. David Warren Piper, Roy Cox, David Jaques (England), Brigitte Berendt (Germany), Eric Hewton (England) and Joan Conrad (Denmark), can be regarded as ‘foundling members’.

David Warren Piper describes (in an email dated 12.12.2011), where the initial idea came from:

‘I once attended a training event organized by a large multinational company. The event lasted several days and was held in a large country house. In the house there
was a large number of training materials of a very wide variety. There was also a quite extensive library of books germane to the participants’ training needs. …’

When we first assembled, it was explained to us by the organizers that there was no programme of events – everybody was expected to construct their own. The only rule was that, once every day, each participant had to appear before the organizer and his assistant and justify what he or she had done during the previous twenty-four hours, and what they intended to do over the next twenty-four hours. The review panel were quite penetrating with their questions. The whole thing worked very well. … I was so impressed with this that I attempted to reproduce it.

That was the first meeting in Maidstone. I invited many colleagues, mostly from Europe, all of whom were responsible for university staff development. We had a wide range of training materials and books in London which we brought down to the venue and we invited any colleagues to bring materials which they thought particularly useful.

The event did not go quite as I had hoped. Partly I think it was because I found it difficult to be as thorough in my questioning of participants as the organizer of the original had been. …The social dynamic was quite different. …So, it was a mixed result, I felt at the time, and I did not think that I had managed the event as well as I might… However, people liked it and it became a regular event in which participants were invited to bring ‘whatever they thought would interest others. …’

**The charm of ambiance – ‘Genius loci’**

At the end of every meeting, the convener of the next meeting was chosen, who had to find a suitable location and – with the help of an organizing committee – to outline the programme. So, the initial meeting was followed by meetings in Hamburg (1980), near Oslo (1982), in Strunjan – Slovenia/Yugoslavia (1984), near Hilversum, the Netherlands (1986), near Leap, Ireland (1988), near Salzburg (1990), near Helsinki (1992), in Berlin (1995) and in Maidstone again (1997).

Apparently, the first meeting, held in a charming monastic environment of the priory in Kent, influenced the choice of subsequent venues: they had to be affordable (the cost for 5-days full board, if I remember right, would not exceed about 250–300 Euros in today’s value). They were supposed to be a kind of retreat – quiet, free of distractions, with good working conditions. In my sensorial memory, they are connected with woods and water, like Myross Wood of the Sacred Heart Fathers in Ireland; and in the Netherlands, we lived in a wood – a former hunting area, populated by rabbits. Romerike Folkehogskole was situated near a lake north of Oslo, in tiny student cottages at Jarvenpaa were also at the lake, near the place that Sibelius had chosen to build his family home; in Austria it was near Wolfgangsee (the only meeting I missed) and in Strunjan, we stayed on the Adriatic coast near ancient salt pans.

If feelings and emotions affect learning, these environments were ‘affective’ and ‘effective’ at the same time. It was stimulating to live and work closely together in temporary isolation from
the outside world, sometimes in quite Spartan living quarters. We had long discussions during walks and enjoyed excursions to charming historical sites like the idyllic home of Sibelius, Blarney and Leeds Castle, Canterbury, illustrious castles in Potsdam, the Oslo fjord, a church in Hrastovlje (Slovenia) with 15th century frescoes.

Figure 1. David Jaques, Brigitte Berendt, Per Lauvas

Who were the participants?
The initial organizers invited their colleagues from UTMU (University Teaching Methods Unit, Institute of Education, London), further participants of the Bad Homburg Seminar of AHD (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hochschuldidaktik) in 1977 and (for the meeting in 1980) also participants of the 1979 EARDHE! Conference in Klagenfurt (President: Professor Dr Edmund van Trotsenburg). Later, ‘old’ members were encouraged to invite their colleagues; with the changing location different ‘locals’ joined in every time. To illustrate: the 1980 meeting in Hamburg was attended by 14 participants from Germany, six from England (not to forget one from Scotland!), two from the Netherlands and one each from Finland, Switzerland, Austria, Norway and Slovenia/Yugoslavia. There was a core of people who came most times with new people coming now and then. They were engaged in different centres or units for university staff development as trainers and researchers, eager to improve what they were doing and to share experiences. Many of them were well established and widely known researchers, authors of important publications in the field, but some were novices in the field; everybody was welcome.²

In one of our later meetings, I remember a discussion on the wide variety of our disciplinary backgrounds. Among us, you could find – besides two or three psychologists and educationalists – an economist, a classical philologist, a linguist, experts in literature, in theoretical physics, in agriculture, law, even music and ‘what not’. I remember being surprised by this variety, as in
my academic environment, only people specialized in education or psychology were regarded as competent to ‘educate’ others. We also had a lengthy discussion on where and how we had learned our ‘metier’ – from books, from colleagues, or by experience?

Someone coined the phrase that we were a kind of ‘failures of university socialization’ as we had not taken the usual career path toward the specialization in a narrow field of disciplinary research.

Figure 2. Group photo from the last Maidstone meeting in 1997

(From the left) David Jaques, Lewis Elton, Per Lauvas (behind), Gunnar Handal, Pat Cryer, Henk Wijfels (behind), Ulrich Ritter, Michael Heger, Barica Marentič Požarnik, Kirsten Lycke, Riekje de Jong, David Warren Piper, Roy Cox (Brigitte Berendt was taking the picture)

The purpose of the meetings
The main purpose was self-development, sharing of experiences, mutual learning and support. Ludwig Huber (from IZHD – Interdisziplinares Zentrum für Hochschuldidaktik in Hamburg), the convener of the 1980 meeting in Hamburg, stated the main purpose in the letter of invitation as follows:

‘To continue self-development for those actively engaged in staff or especially faculty development; in particular to study very closely and extensively the materials, instruments and methods each of the participants is using in his staff development activities and thus to allow for selection and adaptation of some of them for one’s own use and procedures’.

This framework, although slightly changing in details through the years, was maintained, as stated in a letter from 4th May 1984 (preparations for Strunjan meeting) by Roy Cox from
the former UTMU (later renamed The Centre for Staff Development in Higher Education) in London:

‘We want to maintain the workshop as an informal meeting of friends who feel they will benefit from sharing their problems. There are now many international conferences for giving and receiving information but few opportunities for extended discussions, trying out exercises and reflection-in-action with friends and colleagues from other countries. Although there is place for ‘finished’ papers and well tried activities, at our workshops the focus has been developmental, showing problems at the growing points of staff development activities in Europe.’

So, discussion on problems and dilemmas became gradually the focal point, beside trying out and demonstrating different materials and methods.

**How was planning done?**

As stated recently in an email to me from David Jaques: *‘Maidstone events were formed through anarcho-democratic processes’*. The initial idea with ‘no programme in advance’, as described by David Warren Piper, was later modified. The convener each time was responsible not only for securing living and working environment, but also for organizing the structuring of the programme. This happened in different flexible ways.

The participants were usually encouraged to send written suggestions in advance to the planning group about what they would like to offer or discuss — there were no emails at that time. For me this was a big novelty, in comparison with the usual conferences which had all the presentations, with every detail, fixed in advance, and with strict timing for presentations and discussions. I used this ‘participant-centered’ planning process later with success in a series of workshops for teacher trainers.

The Maidstone (1980) event in Hamburg – Haus Rissen provided an example of a pre-planned meeting. There was a planning group of nine members who outlined the full schedule on the basis of suggested themes and tasks sent in advance by the participants. We even received two issues of the so-called Pre-workshop Newsletter.

For the meeting in Norway in 1982, ‘planning syndicates’ were proposed by Roy Cox: groups of 4–6 members that had the task of devising effective learning sessions, based on the proposals, materials and interests of the members, and to structure the work of the week. They did it by prioritizing and clustering the requests and organizing the learning situations. In addition, time was set aside for small reflective groups (usually triads) as cross-groups between syndicates as well as time for informal problem sessions where anyone could raise problems or concerns beside the main programme, not forgetting the time for a half-day excursion. The format of planning syndicates was, with some modifications, retained in later meetings. At the end, there was a semi-formal evaluation. The workshops usually started on a Sunday and lasted till the following Friday noon.
The main topics and methods of work

From the very wide selection of topics, I have selected a few examples that illustrate the principles and processes with changes over time. They can be read with such questions in mind as: which issues are still of importance to-day, which dilemmas are solved and which still exist?

In 1980, themes were clustered around four main topics, suggested by four working groups:

1. **Initial, introductory courses for staff** – concerns, problems of new staff, what are the best learning situations – not just practical hints, but situations to ‘shake up existing concepts of their role and the role of students’, criteria for selecting contents; can they be content-free or specialized for members of different disciplines; how to advertise them,

2. **Course design** – curriculum development for staff development courses,

3. **Self-instructional materials** – how to produce them, to make them available, and transferable to different contexts,

4. **Staff development programme systems** (general scheme – length, certification, institutionalization; who is organizing or controlling the courses, who is participating).

Later, the topics were not grouped in advance. Some had to do with teaching in narrow sense, others with broader areas and different tasks and problems of university staff. A grouping 'a posteriori' can give an idea of the large variety (the names of the authors of the proposed sessions are added):

**Improving student approaches to study:**

- Course design for **big classes** – how to cope with large groups of students One solution: a working model, based on ETSI (Education Through Student Interaction) – alternating lecturing with independent study, group discussion and plenary clarification of difficulties (Brigitte Berendt);
- Helping students to improve their **approaches to learning** by exercises in mind mapping or concept mapping (Marcel Mirande);
- **Structured discussion** on required reading – a modification of the learning through discussion (LTD) model. (Barica Marentič Požarnik),
- Potentials of **internet** for virtual tutorials, fostering independent academic learning (Ulrich Ritter).

**Improving assessment:**

- How to **design workshops** in assessment (Per Lauvas, Barica Marentič Požarnik),
- How to construct **examination questions of ‘higher order’** in the field of professional decision making (David Warren Piper),
- How to make good exams (oral) (Riekje de Jong)

**Workshops for ‘special purposes’ or groups:**

- **workshops for supervisors (mentors)** in research supervision of postgraduate students, (Pat Cryer),
• **teaching supervision** – preparing and analysing visits to classes, feedback and video- self confrontation by lecturer, supervisor and students (David Jaques),

• **action research into own teaching** – a ‘research model’ instead of a ‘training model’ of staff development (Herbert Altrichter),

• a workshop for **teacher educators** (Marentič Požarnik),

• recruitment and professional development of **new staff developers** – forms of training ‘on the job’, master-apprentice, accreditation... (Brigitte Berendt),

• forms of continuing professional development of **senior staff** (peer teaching, individual consultancy, curricular innovations, action research…) (Lewis Elton),

• workshops to improve the work with **part-time students** by clarifying mismatches of perceptions, and expectations between students and teachers (Chris de Winter Hebron, Ulrich Ritter).

Quite a number of workshops treated socio-emotional dimensions of staff development:

• Developing and widening **inter- and intra-personal skills** of faculty, including affective component, awareness of self, sensitivity, empathy, flexibility, values and beliefs clarification...by different means, like learning based on effective ice-breakers, (video) triggers, critical incidents, role play, story writing, visualization, meditation, relaxation, anti-stress exercises, (Susan Weil, Riekje de Jong, Pat Cryer and others);

• **constructive use of crisis** for personal and professional growth, an opportunity to reconstruct beliefs, identity... in faculty and also in students; ‘Do not suppress crises that show during the SD courses – but do not deliberately create them!’ (Roy Cox),

• **energy** in teaching and learning- where does it come from, how does it flow? (Ulrich Ritter),

• **resistance** of students to learning – how does it show, how does university teaching encourage it, how to deal with it; also resistance of staff to change teaching – passive and active resistance strategies of us and our colleagues (David Jaques).

Many sessions had to do with **concerns and problems** of participants, which were very productive and helpful, as Patricia Cryer put it:

> ‘The problem solving format is useful to both givers and receivers. The givers, by delving into their own experiences, re-appraise and re-orientate these, so obtaining a better understanding of their own as well as the receiver’s situation.’

(from List of topics in 1997– internal materials).

**Some examples of problems and dilemmas**

• How to maintain the status of academic development units ‘in difficult times’, when they are treated like service units; when they are not supposed to do research, or when they are closing down...

• What strategies to use to improve the situation, to ‘become indispensable’, to run ‘respectable’ courses, to link with activities that are not only staff development, like managing research projects...

• How to secure transfer and long-term effects of staff development workshops (by support groups, projects, follow-up workshops...)?
• How to balance workload/commitment to the commitment to one’s own career interests – publication becomes an ‘endangered activity’, *there is no adequate time to reflect and write papers*;
• How to explore actual problems existing in oral examinations;
• Is staff development increasing the ‘protective side’ of teaching? Do we make it ‘too smooth’ – let the students talk, even if they talk nonsense?
• For staff development to have any impact on attitudes and behaviour, which is more important – to concentrate on the development of individuals or organizations?
• How to manage problems, immanent to content of teaching of different disciplines (structures, sequences…) within staff development while you are not expert in the disciplinary field of participants?

The approach to most of the topics was experientially-based. Experiences were well prepared, some of them quite deep and extensive – we took our time... I still keep some of them in my emotional and sensorial memory...

**Reflection and theoretical considerations**

Some of the topics may sound pragmatic, but every experiential session was followed by an extensive reflective discussion. There was ample time set aside for thinking about what the experience meant to different people, what beliefs and conceptions were involved, time for voicing different opinions, for helping others to reflect and solve their problems and dilemmas.

Already during the 1980 meeting it was pointed out that,

> ‘every design for a course in staff development, and especially every choice of materials, implies theories and assumptions about what teaching and studying at university means... for example that university is (also) a teaching institution, with modes of learning different to secondary schools; faculty members have a special role, not only as a model researchers but also as ‘instructional engineer’ and facilitators of learning... Such assumptions are more or less based upon the function of the faculty in learning situations that are ‘attractive and effective at the same time’. During the courses, ‘learning experiences should shake up certain concepts and also contain stimuli and situations which make people hungry – rather than feeding them just what they want’ (from the introductory paper of Ludwig Huber in 1980).

One of the recurrent discussion topics was: what qualification do university teachers really need; what is the role of theoretical knowledge (of learning theories etc.), of practical hints or algorithms that they expect (should these be completely dismissed?) and of personal sensitivity – which is difficult to arouse in academic staff who function more ‘in the head’ than in the areas of emotions and interpersonal skills?

For example, the discussion that followed the use of video-triggers, role plays and other such sensitive tools ‘triggered’ the discussion on the general role and possible, supposed ‘traps’ of experiential learning. Techniques that try to integrate thinking, feeling and doing, that help the individual to better understand emotions and beliefs and change practices, may not be
easy to use in an academic setting (even during one of our sessions, we had one very emotional outburst, difficult to control!).

The prolonged discussion on the role of crisis and how to handle it, how to make it productive, was memorable. For example, is it legitimate to create a crisis during a workshop (like to manipulate the student feedback – giving a negative feedback to a good lecturer and vice versa) or ‘use’ only existing crises and how?

For me, the most valuable and central activity was the discussion about ‘practical teaching theories’ (starting in the 1982 workshop), when I met the concept for the first time. It was a real eye-opener that put everything else in a new cognitive-constructivist and humanistic perspective, a radical ‘cognitive turn’ in dealing with professional training.

Per and Gunnar had just worked on a book on this topic that later became very popular and they presented the ‘three-level model of a counseling dialogue’ with members of staff: action level (what happened, what did you do?), level about the reasons and justifications for doing it and the third level about values – was it right to do it?

We had long discussions on how to move to higher cognitive levels in working with academics who expect only tips about how to do things better, and are not excessively interested in reflection on what they are doing and what values are implied, while the values represent the core, the filter for all other activities. How to help them to get aware of their personal theories, as well as prejudices and dissonances; to make explicit individual and also collective theories, ‘collective codes’ of teaching and learning and teacher’s role? We found out that this was not an easy process. Maybe something can happen during the process of innovation, when, for example, teachers generate a new course together and try to solve the dissonance between aims, teaching methods and assessment. These issues appeared also in the later Maidstone meetings and, as I see it, in our academic environment, they still remain largely unsolved.

Social context of academic development
In our considerations, the broader social context was not overlooked. Already in the preparatory materials for the 1980 meeting, we could read:

‘Workshops for staff should contain elements widening the horizons of the participants with respect to societal and political aspects of teaching and learning’ (Ulrich Ritter, Newsletter for the 1980 workshop).

It was also pointed out that future of the research and development in higher education was going to be influenced by critical tendencies, like crises of public confidence, financial crisis, decreasing attractiveness of higher education, the new wave of conservatism; and, on a more fundamental level, the crisis of stagnation and professorial senility, the crisis of rationality and loss of credibility of science, the crisis of irrelevance of teaching, learning and research in traditional universities. Parts of this text have a prophetic sound, except for the overly optimistic conclusion that if universities are going to take those crises seriously, they are going to realize that only through improvement and innovation in teaching and learning, the crises can be overcome...
In subsequent meetings, we heard news about closing down centres, staff developers taking new careers, like in computer-assisted teaching, and of course, there started a drop-out and retirement of some members. During the 1988 meeting, Susan Sayer coined the word ‘dinosaurs’ – meaning that people like us, with idealistic notions about our role, belong to a dying species.

One piece of advice was coined on solving the crisis of staff development centres:

Listen to Lord Byron:

\begin{quote}
*Never explain, never apologise, never retract.*
\end{quote}

And another piece of advice: *Be a guru, not a ken-guru*; in other words: try to become a respectable academic ‘guru’, not an expert jumping around like a ‘ken-guru’.

**What about the impact of Maidstone meetings?**

As David Warren Piper put it in a recent mail:

\begin{quote}
‘I think perhaps the most important outcome was that we formed a close knit group of colleagues across Europe who became good chums and learned a good deal from each other, and in some cases gave much emotional support. It was also most enjoyable.’
\end{quote}

Maidstone meetings represented an opportunity ‘par excellence’ for professional development through collegial learning. We also informed, encouraged and invited each other to join and cooperate in different projects, workshops and networks. Some of us (Brigitte Berendt, Ulrich Ritter and myself) joined the founding conference of ENSDHE (European Network of Staff Development in Higher Education) by UNESCO (1985 in Prague) and attended later biennial conferences organized by UNESCO/CEPES, also the one in Bucharest (1989) – at that time still ‘behind the iron curtain’. Many of us were also invited and involved in ISSED and attended conferences, organized by Chris de Winter Hebron in Newcastle.

Impacts on personal level are best captured in individual stories; two are presented below.

**‘Maidstone story’ by Oliva Peeters, Iowo, Nijmegen**

Although I only had the opportunity to attend a Maidstone conference twice (in 1986 and 1988) it did play an important role in my professional biography. I started my profession as teacher trainer at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands in 1982. An older colleague who organized the fifth Maidstone conference 1986 in Hilversum, challenged me to present a workshop there. My nervous feelings disappeared immediately after the first meeting with the international varied and relaxed company. Together we planned the workshops on big piece of paper on the wall and it was possible to choose among many topics of interest. The programme was very flexible and we exchanged our experiences from the
workshops in the so called cross-groups. The breaks, excursions and meetings in the evening were unforgettable. Here was a role play about motivation of students and a panel game about teacher evaluation. I still remember Susan Sayer from Ireland playing songs from every country on the piano. We sang and discussed together about the long – and short-term effects of staff development (still a topic for discussion). Every participant felt free to experiment with new methods. I remember the exchange of different ice-breakers in teacher training and how ‘risky’ some are in England and Venezuela compared with the Netherlands. My workshop about colleague consultation was a success and I felt much more self-confident when I returned to my job.

The Maidstone conferences made my educational views more open and it brought me a lot of international friends – colleagues. It was great to meet them (and new ones) again two years later in Leap (Ireland). I remember our discussion about the heterogeneity of students, still a hot topic now in our international classroom. Many of the Staff Development offices had already to economize and I remember the emotional discussions about how to survive.

Maidstone conferences made it easier to ask for advice and create international cooperation. I was honoured to be invited later on by Barica Marentič Požarnik to Slovenia as a guest lecturer for two Summer Courses and a winter course organized for the Staff of Higher education. I think that this kind of international exchange has been of great value and has the potential to contribute to the quality of higher education to a greater extent than many more formally organized events.

My story: Barica Marentič Požarnik, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

My professional background is a PhD in Educational Psychology and a PhD in Higher Education. At the university, I ran courses in psychology for student teachers and for students of education. The main area of my research and publication was effective learning and student learning strategies. My study in the USA (1966/67) gave me broader views on teaching and learning. My interest in higher education and staff development started in 1974 when during my study stay in Germany I visited among others IZHD (Interdisziplinares Zentrum fuer Hochschuldidaktik) and met Professor Flechsig and his ‘didactic models’. Encouraged by my mentor, I started short courses for university teachers (the first one in 1975) and wrote also a textbook (1978). The invitation to EARDHE conference in Klagenfurt just 70 km from my home town came at the right moment. I met the ‘Maidstone people’ and got much needed support for my ideas and activities that at that time I could not share with anybody in my environment. I welcomed the opportunity to learn and develop, especially in the direction of experiential learning and the notion of ‘practical theories’.

Among other gains, I got very helpful hints on how to design a workshop for teacher trainers, which resulted in a series of successful workshops in the period of 1987–2005. I was influenced by the whole Maidstone atmosphere, by being ‘immersed’ in this one-week unique experience of exchanging methods, ideas, hints. I transferred many of those in our context – in staff development workshops, summer schools and in my regular work with students; I also
designed a new course on Experiential learning that became very popular. I got much-needed emotional support when an EU TEMPUS project on improving teaching and learning in H.E. was ‘ruined’ and prematurely stopped by adverse circumstances.

I invited many colleagues (Lewis Elton, Oliva Peeters, Roy Cox, David Jaques, Brigitte Berendt, Ulrich Ritter) to give workshops for our staff, on topics like student assessment, group work, active learning, problem-based learning... They were great success. In financial terms, they were very affordable, a kind of ‘present’ to us; some colleagues even sacrificed their free time to come. (The discussion during the recent EFAD conference in London made me realize that today, matters about ‘sharing property’ are different). Also the idea to organize a joint ISSED conference with Chris de Winter Hebron at our seaside in 1989 was born during Maidstone. To say it in one sentence: Maidstone was the best thing that happened in my professional development.

The story does not have a happy ending, as in Slovenia at the moment; all activities in ‘academic staff development’ have for different reasons come to a stop. But maybe the seeds sown by Maidstone are going to bear fruit again some time in the future.

**Epilogue**

At the end of the last meeting in 1997, there was a discussion about continuation, about inviting younger colleagues, to ‘hand over our wisdom and at the same time to learn from the young’, but finally this idea was dismissed – we felt that the working culture we developed was ‘not easy to transmit’; also, times have changed – ‘let the young find their own way’. But I decided to write down this piece of history, because I believe it contains some food for thought on how to develop excellence in university teaching.

Let me conclude by the last part of our ‘hymn’ by Susan Sayer (sung to the melody of Summertime):

*Maidstone(!) time* – you play piano, we’re singing,
then you spread your smoke and almost fly to the sky.
*Plan the sunshine with a sprinkle of showers* –
she’s doin’ it good at Myross Wood.

*Susan say* – are you happy to-night?
*Your work is over* – it’s the end of the fight.
*We’ll all go home and won’t bother you longer*
*so hey Susan Sayer, don’t you cry...*
As EARDHE (European Association for Research and Development in Higher Education) may not be widely known any more, let me list the main aims of this organization that still sound quite up-to date:

- To promote educational research and development in higher education.
- To encourage the scholarly examination of phenomena and problems related to higher education.
- To contribute to the making by institutions of rational decisions about their aims, structures, curricula, teaching and evaluation, taking into account social and cultural changes and demands.

Let me also list those members that kept coming more or less regularly; the conveners are put in italics: David Warren Piper, Roy Cox, Susan Weil (London), David Jaques (Oxford), Brigitte Berendt (Berlin), Ulrich Ritter (Frankfurt), Gunnar Handal, Per Lauvas, Kirsten Lycke (Oslo), Terttu Grohn (Helsinki), Susan Sayer (Cork), Barica Marentič Požarnik (Ljubljana), Herbert Altrichter (Innsbruck), Lewis Elton, Patricia Cryer (Surrey), Marcel Mirande (Amsterdam), Chris de Winter Hebron (Newcastle), Dick Martenson (Stockholm), Oliva Peeters (Nijmegen), Henk Wijfels (Antwepen).

I regard Roy Cox as the member who played the role of the ‘wise man’, who helped us to maintain ‘the spirit of reflection’, reminding us in his soft way not to forget about the meta-level – where we are, what we intend to do, what was the meaning of different experiences... sadly Roy died in December 2007.

It is interesting to note that very similar topics emerged during the international NETTLE project – Network of European Tertiary Level Educators in 2005–08. How come these central problems were the same after so many years? Can we speak about a ‘spiral development’ in this area or do we move in a circle?


Recent discussions in Slovenia about the complete failure of Bologna reform of university study programmes show what happens if the participants see only the surface – ‘what to do’, like transforming the ‘labelling’ the courses with ECTS and introducing electives; but not reasons and justifications for it and not any corresponding measures to improve the culture of teaching, learning and assessing.

The authors

Barica Marentič Požarnik (Barica.marentic@guest.arnes.si). Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Barica, gained PhDs in Psychology and in Education and holds the title of Professor Emeritus in educational psychology. She is (co)author of 14 monographs and author of about 350 articles in the following areas: psychology of learning and instruction, learning styles, experiential learning, teacher education, improving university teaching, action research and environmental education.

Oliva Peeters (olivapeeters@hotmail.com). Radboud University of Nijmegen, Department OO, Erasmusplein 1, 6525 HT Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Oliva graduated in Social Psychology and Education in 1981 in Nijmegen. She worked 30 years at IOWO, consultants for Higher Education. She currently works as a certified coach and trainer for the support of teachers of the Radboud University in Nijmegen.
Training tutors for student teachers in primary and secondary school

Jean-Marie Weber

Introduction
The University of Luxembourg offers a Bachelor’s degree course for primary school teachers (BScE) as well as pedagogical training for secondary school teachers (FOPED). Since one simply cannot anticipate all the issues arising in actual classroom situations, teacher training cannot be based on an ‘applicationist’ or ‘technocratic’ model. Both the courses described here operate on a ‘post-technocratic’ (Herzog, 1995: 265), reflective paradigm, with the aim of training teachers capable of articulating theory and practice and of reflecting on their own practices. As the complex practice of teaching can’t be completely be (pre-) determined by the theory school-based training is consequently of high epistemological significance. That’s also the reason why one rightly speaks of the necessity of an alternating model of teaching training.

Ensuring the quality of teacher training requires the professional assistance of reflective tutors, and the school-based teacher educators; especially as the University of Luxembourg is considering the tutors as full members of the integrated program of teacher training. To assure a high level of professionalism, the University of Luxembourg has been offering a 20-hour intensive course for secondary school tutors since 2004. Given the obvious limitations of such a programme, as of 2011 the university has decided to offer two further degree courses that are also intended for tutors: a Master Coaching and Management in Education (120 ECTS) and a ‘certificate of pedagogy’ (60 ECTS). The university is reducing the latter to 20 ECTS. From the academic year 2012/13 onwards, the qualification offered is Certificate of Advanced Studies: tutoring/mentoring (20 ECTS).

In this article, I would like to identify the concept of tutoring underlying these courses of study; the tutoring competences aimed for, and the kind of courses aiming to achieve these aims.

Challenges for student teacher and tutor
Student teachers beginning their careers face a number of challenges, which I would like to present here from three different angles. The student teacher has to acquire the professional gestures concerning the transmission of knowledge, or rather the enabling of students’ construction of knowledge. Classroom management and the installation of learning situations require training and practice. In order to learn to act as each situation requires, a student teacher must develop in parallel ‘pedagogic tact’ (Herbart, 1964), empathy and intuition (Schleiermacher, 1983) and a certain capacity for improvisation (Gage, 1979). This challenge makes the novice ask him- or herself how they can expand their operational competence. Action requires planning and theoretical knowledge, but also (given the complexity and unpredictability of the classroom) the ability of observation.
and ‘reflection-in-action’ described by Hatton and Smith (1995: 46) as follows: ‘The professional practitioner is able consciously to think about an action as it is taking place, making sense of what is happening and shaping successive practical steps using multiple viewpoints as appropriate.’ A habit of reflexivity (as described by Perrenoud, 2001) does however take time to acquire.

Beginning teachers experience teacher training as a difficult and stressful time, being confronted in their own subjectivity, in their desire and pleasure with the demands of the other, here chiefly curricular and institutional discourse, but also with their students. Consciously or unconsciously, student teachers have to ask themselves how to integrate themselves into an educational system without having to abandon their individuality, a topic being investigated above all psycho-analytically and socio-psychologically.

Furthermore, the novice also has to face the question of whether he or she is actually suited to a career as a teacher, whether he or she can feel at ease in it and whether he or she possesses the required personal competences. According to Hegel (1973: 297), the subject only acquires its identity through action: ‘the individual can thus not conceive of what it is, until it brings itself into reality through action’. It is therefore perfectly normal for student teachers to have to confront the question of personal and professional identity in the face of emerging difficulties. In contention with school as an organisation, with the curriculum, with their classes and with their tutor, the student teacher as subject may encounter mental conflicts and ‘rotten compromises’. The symptomatic expression of these can take the form of temporary dysfunctions on the level of conception of teaching, the dealing with classroom situations, or more generally in the student teacher’s relation to their students.

The acquisition of the teacher’s professional identity manifestly determines the person as a whole and is thus highly complex in nature. One cannot therefore reduce teacher training to rehearsing a series of professional gestures. Quite the contrary, teacher formation frequently entails considerable transformations on the level of subjectivity, as has been established by a number of research projects. (Weber, 2011a; 2011b). The role of the tutor is to accompany their student teacher on this journey of formation. Research has shown that the relationship in this dyad constitutes in itself already a psychosocial, pedagogical and ethical challenge for both protagonists (Weber, 2008). Both of them are committed physically and emotionally in this process. From a discursive point of view, they can be considered situated agents (Combe and Kolbe, 2008: 870).

It is consequently of importance for tutors to resolve their own professional self-image as teachers and as tutors, as attendant and companion of practice. In addition, tutors should acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge and operational competence to assure the professional supervision and assistance of student teachers within the framework of their professional training.

**Competence profile (target state) for tutors**

The tutor has a crucial role in the training process of a novice teacher. Therefore we have to ask: what makes a good teacher? What are the skills and the qualities to develop?
Professional competence as a teacher

The challenges that the Luxembourg educational system presently faces, especially the multicultural and multi-lingual context, requires more and quick adaptation to changing needs. So we think, that a tutor should be aware of the complexity, the multidimensionality, the uncomputability, the historicity of education (Doyle, 1986) and the paradoxes (Wimmer, 2006) teachers are confronted with. He or she can detect, assess and develop the quality of teaching. He or she knows the different teaching models and forms of assessment. Finally the tutor can observe, conceptualise, reflect on and communicate their own teaching practices.

Competences in initiating and analysing teaching situations and processes with student teachers

The tutor is capable of accompanying student teachers in a respectful and responsible manner. He or she:

- can support them in devising their individual learning project and in planning and installing learning situations propitious for development.
- is able to professionally observe teachers in learning situations, to diagnose and communicate difficulties and to assist student teachers in their reflection in this regard.
- is aware of relevant research findings regarding professional aptitude, teaching expertise, stress factors and training methods for student teachers.

Competences in structuring and reflecting their own practices as tutors

He or she:

- can differentiate in shaping and reflecting on their own action in the context of the dyadic relationship and its reciprocity (Herzog, 1995: 273) and its inherent risks.
- knows how to communicate effectively and to collaborate with student teachers.
- is reliable, authentic and articulate in assisting student teachers and appreciative in dealing with them.
- is capable of engaging with their own learning biography as well as with the permanent shifting of roles from teacher to trainer.

Competences in supporting the reflection of student teachers regarding their function and role as teachers

He or she:

- is able to assist student teachers in integrating into their respective school community, in identifying with the profession and in the transition from teacher training to the occupation as teacher.
- is capable of supporting student teachers in reflecting on their own educational career and their relationship to knowledge and values.
- is skilled in formatively assessing and summatively evaluating the training process.

Course design

Tutors on the Master course take part both shared and specialised courses. The aims and contents of these are in part still experimental. Both courses conclude with a dissertation,
which allows students to share their research in colloquia with colleagues and instructors. The future students of the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) take only part focalised courses on tutoring/mentoring.

**Shared courses**
These courses are to allow students to conceive of their function and their actions in the context of the great discourses and research concerning education, world views, learning and communication, and to become aware of where they situate themselves within theses discourses. Social conditions of education in a process of change; comparative international education systems; ethical fundamentals of education; communication; conflict management; theories of learning in organised contexts and fundamentals of pedagogical diagnostics; teaching – facilitation and selection.

**Specialised courses**
These courses aim to cover key areas of the tutors’ professional practice and in doing so address some of the most important questions currently facing the trainees and the school-based trainers. More than half of the courses are geared toward specialisation in tutoring.

**Targets and contents of the courses**

**Philosophy of the teacher training courses in Luxembourg**

**Aims:**
Students are aware of the philosophy and structure of the certificate programme course. They should be familiar with key concepts and with the organisation of contemporary tutoring in primary or secondary school teacher training respectively and have a personal conception of their function. The social context changes quickly, and so do educational practice and policy. New ideas replace older ones and new problems emerge. Therefore it is important to present, discuss and to evaluate with the teacher educators the concepts of teacher training for primary and secondary school teachers.

**Contents:**
The core of the course consists in the tasks of a BScE ‘field trainer’ or secondary school teacher training tutor, the conceptual framework of professional teacher training and its integration into the BScE course and the ‘formation pédagogique des enseignants du secondaire’ (secondary school teacher training in Luxembourg). It also explains the philosophy and structure of the certificate programme.

**Awareness of the complexities of the teaching profession and of a classroom practices**
Generally we see only what we understand. For that reason it is important that the tutor has a great knowledge about theories and research regarding the complexity of learning and teaching situations. So the main concepts regarding the quality of teaching a lesson are to be elaborated with the students.

**Aims:**
The trainers must be conscious of the complexities of learning, teaching and the teaching profession. Tutors, being teachers themselves, are capable of conceptualising, reflecting on
and communicating their own classroom practices. They are able to grasp, analyse, evaluate and develop the quality of their lessons.

Contents:
The formulation and elaboration of a knowledge base of fundamentals as the pedagogical relationship and reciprocal action in the classroom; basic issues in the interplay of theory and practice; meta-theoretical models of lesson planning, lesson conduction and the orchestration of learning situations. Empirical data on lesson quality and on classroom management and on authority are presented and discussed.

*Observation of student teachers’ practice*
The observation of teaching and learning situations is a central aspect of teacher training. There exist many epistemological problems and psychological effects a tutor can’t ignore. It is a difficult issue for both observers and observed; especially when the observation has an evaluation as its goal.

Aims:
Students are in a position to observe the behaviour of teachers in a teaching situation, to diagnose difficulties and communicate them, and to assist student teachers in their reflection and in improving the quality of their teaching. These objectives are achieved through working on samples of actual practice. The tutors can conceptualise, develop and reflect on action as situated agents, which cannot be conceived of as ‘disengaged’.

Contents:
Firstly the concepts of professional observation and evaluation of lesson conduction and of teachers’ interaction with students are discussed. Different observation methods and instruments for variable situations, especially techniques of videography and methods for analysing classroom situations are practised. The tutors learn also how to instruct and assist student teachers in observing and analysing learning processes and pupil behaviour.

*Accompanying student teachers’ formative processes*
For the Luxembourg model of teacher training one of the goals is that the trainee develop her autonomy and the ability to take charge of her own training project. This requires special skills on the part of the tutors.

Aims:
Students are capable of supporting student teachers in integrating into their school, identifying with the profession and transitioning from professional training into the profession of teachers. They are able to professionally accompany student teachers in the development of their education project and in their formative process. They are in a position to assist student teachers in reflecting on their educational career and their relation to knowledge and values. They know to formatively and summatively assess the professional training process.

Contents:
The participants study the personality development and transformative processes in the transition from studying to teacher training and from professional training into the
pedagogical profession; the novice teacher in the face of competing ethical challenges, social expectations, institutional functions and professional imperatives. They practise methods of guiding the training of student teachers (project method, goal setting with progressive target stages, etc.) and exchange about ways and conditions of training situations that promote development and strengthen autonomy. Finally they are introduced to conceptualising their own practices as tutor, appropriate handling of role expectations, task- and situation specific role design.

Consultation and formative evaluation
Tutors have to support and to evaluate student teachers. These are difficult roles, which can conduct to a certain ambiguity and conflicts. For that reason a training of counseling skills is necessary.

Aims:
Students know how to communicate effectively and to collaborate with student teachers. They are reliable, authentic and articulate in supervising and assisting student teachers and appreciative in their interaction. They are aware of approaches and methods of consultation and formative evaluation. They are capable of applying them in practical situations.

Contents:
The different concepts of consultation, counseling techniques and evaluative interviews are presented and practiced: Conducting discussions about planning, advice and reflection and methods of formative and summative evaluation of formative processes.

Clinical analysis of practice
Teacher and teacher educators should be aware of the important influence of subjectivity, of desire and the affects on the teaching practice. For that reason a seminar in clinical analysis of professional practice of the tutors belongs to the programme.

Aims:
Students are able to differentiate in shaping their actions in the context of dyadic relationships and their inherent risks, and to reflect on them. Tutors are capable of engaging with their own learning biography. They are conscious that the professional development toward the teaching profession challenges a person as a whole. They are aware that one never fully knows oneself or one’s student teacher, and that subjectivity, individuality, plays a role in formative processes and is to be taken into account. They are capable of cultivating the ability of ‘perceiving personal feelings as an expression of a perhaps unconscious awareness of a social situation’, of making them conscious and articulating and exchanging them with student teachers in order to resolve them where appropriate. (Lehmkuhl, 2002)

Contents:
Taking part in this clinical setting, the tutors will analyse their own practices and their relationship with the student teacher. They will learn to recognize elements of unconscious transference and countertransference and to triangulate the relationship.
Methodological annotations regarding course seminars

Linguistic concepts and concepts of action theory, as separate viewpoints, form a common epistemological background for teacher training. It is therefore important for tutor training to proceed methodologically from teacher action and the different pedagogical and personal discourses.

By sharpening perception and with the help of appropriate concepts, these studies are largely based on and oriented toward learning from analysing case studies or in relation to situations that arise in enrolees’ practice, and also oriented toward improving the capacity for improvisation.

The development of operational competences is activated and pursued not through applied knowledge, but through reflection and constructed knowledge, according to Schön (1983) epistemology of practice, and Kolb’s experiential learning theory (1984). This equally applies to prospective or progressive tutors, who reflect on, evaluate and conceptualise both observed teaching situations of student teachers and their own ways of tutoring, as well as continually developing their own practices according to new hypotheses. Students enrolled in our tutor training courses are therefore given the opportunity throughout all offered courses and seminars to articulate their own practices with the help of theoretical concepts. A number of courses are specifically focussed on one’s own action and speech, as well as above all the clinical and psychoanalytical analysis of one’s own practices.

The entire programme is largely supported by research projects. The epistemological and ethical conditions and possibilities of working on filmed lessons with students, tutors and student teachers are being investigated by different teams of researchers from a variety of angles; as are the effects and difficulties of tutoring and of identity construction for student teachers.

Conclusion

Tutors are first and foremost agents in teacher training, who keep letting themselves be challenged time and again by unpredictable classroom and training situations and thus keep searching creatively for different solutions to enable knowledge construction for continually more heterogeneous classes, and improvement of practices for student teachers who learn from this attitude.

As teachers as well as tutors they are physically and emotionally engaged agents (Combe and Kolbe, 2008). What Heidegger (1971: 50) says of teacher and learner can here be applied even more onto tutor and novice: ‘The single advance and advantage a teacher has over their learners is that of having very much more to learn, and that is: letting-learn. The teacher has to be capable of being even more teachable than their learners. The teacher is thus much less sure of his own task and of himself than the learners are of theirs and of themselves.’ (translation)

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The author

Jean-Marie Weber (jean-marie.weber@uni.lu) University of Luxembourg, Faculté des Lettres, des Sciences Humaines, des Arts et des Sciences de l’Education, Route de Diekirch, L-7220 Walferdange, Luxemburg.

Jean-Marie has a Master in Theology (Freiburg), a degree in social communication (Louvain la Neuve), and a PhD in psychology (Strasbourg). His research looks at the relationship between psychoanalysis and pedagogy; and considers aspects of mentoring and tutoring.
Academic development in a Swiss university: a private or a public good?

Bernadette Charlier

Abstract
This contribution addresses questions raised by the experience of an academic development programme in a Swiss university: the University of Fribourg. Established in 2002, Did@cTIC is a hybrid learning programme whose goal is to develop professional skills for teachers at higher education level. In terms of its organisation, the programme is: focused on participants’ learning projects; open to many different experts from all over Europe; offers personal coaching; and is supported by a distance learning platform. As regards pedagogical outcomes, the impacts of this well established programme appear to be high in terms of individual development but low for the institution. This study will try to understand this situation by offering and analysing a synthetic record of evaluation and research concerning Did@cTIC conducted over a ten year period.

Introduction
According to Weller (2011) and Saroyan and Frenay (2010), academic development projects can vary according to institution, from having a rather limited focus on individual teachers’ development to comprising a coherent programme which addresses, via a systemic approach, the complexity of the H.E.I. This paper could be considered as a case study contributing to a better understanding of conditions affecting the implementation of a staff development project, as well as its impacts on individuals and on the institution. To this end, the paper tells the Did@cTIC story since its creation ten years ago at the University of Fribourg, and analyses reasons for its rather limited impact at institutional level.

In conclusion, the paper will suggest questions for research aiming to evaluate impacts of such a project, and will make recommendations for the future benefit of the university and all its actors. In so doing, we will keep in mind questions raised by Saranne Weller (2011) in her oral presentation at the European Forum:

• Are teaching qualifications a ‘private’ or a ‘public’ good?
• How do we integrate individual excellence into sustainable excellence?
• Do teaching qualifications have a normative or transformative function in institutions?

A project supported at national level
In 2001, the three Universities of Bern, Neuchâtel and Fribourg won the support of the Swiss federal government to foster their collaboration on common projects (BernNeuchâtelFRibourg: BENEFRI). Among others, the aims of the ‘Didactique Universitaire’ project were set out in the University’s journal as follows:

‘The BENEFRI project aims to reinforce the structural measures enhancing the quality of teaching. It will offer training modules to teachers.’ (Induni, 2001)
This project was financially supported for five years, after which the universities undertook to continue to support these activities and to maintain their collaboration. However, as was underlined in the Swiss University Conference (SUC) evaluation report, (Joye-Cagnard et al. 2009), there were different outcomes in the three universities: it was integrated in Fribourg, financially supported in Bern, but abandoned in Neuchâtel). These differences limited collaboration between the universities after the end of the SUC support.

This starting point, where conditions related to external support, and expectations that the focus should be on individual teacher qualification, may provide an initial explanation why the project’s developmental focus was limited to individual teacher training.

**A programme grounded on empirical research and a needs analysis.**

In October 2002, the author was hired as a professor to manage the University of Fribourg’s Did@cTIC project. Fribourg was the only university to choose this option. Other universities decided not to hire a professor and preferred to hire senior level collaborators directly answerable to a vice-rector. This choice had several consequences, namely the durability of the activity at the University of Fribourg and the important role played by research in the development of the project, as is outlined below.

First tasks were oriented towards realisation of a plan guided by five objectives, decided in agreement with the other universities:

1. To design an academic development programme;
2. To develop resources (texts, support materials);
3. To offer individual coaching to teachers;
4. To support pedagogical innovation projects;
5. To organise continuous training according to local needs.

(Did@cTIC Activity Report 2003/2004)

This plan, focused on different complementary activities, was in line with the results of a European study I had just led on the role and development of HE academic development centres in Europe (RECRE@SUP, 2002). It demonstrated the importance of activity being developed at different levels of a university (Rectorate, departments and teachers: individuals and groups). However, at the beginning, the main effort focused on the design and implementation of a staff development programme responding to the needs of teachers at the University of Fribourg and acceptable also by colleagues at the Universities of Bern and Neuchâtel. A needs analysis, conducted on line described by Moura (2003), revealed wide diversity among the academic collaborators in terms of their status, working conditions and professional development projects. The design of the staff development programme was thus conceived to be flexible and open as regards time, space, content, methods and objectives and was therefore adaptable to each individual project. Furthermore, it was conceived to be supported by individual coaching and oriented towards teaching projects related with reflection and research.

The programme adopted the design principles of a programme I had already implemented and successfully evaluated for four years in Belgium and was described by my partner for this programme:
‘The pedagogical and epistemological principles on which the activities are based are mainly social constructivism (e.g. Perret-Clermont 1979, Doise and Mugny 1981, Bruner 1996) and collaborative learning (Henri and Lundgren-Caroyl 2001). Our goal is to enhance an active pedagogy so that learners experience meaningful training linked to their project (Freinet 1977) and will be able to transfer and develop what they have learned in their professional life.’ (Denis 2003, p.115)

Thus the Did@cTIC staff development programme was born. It is a hybrid learning programme based on several organising principles: focused on participants’ learning projects; open to many different staff developers from all over Europe; offers personal coaching; is supported by a distance learning platform; and supports learning about teaching via reflection on practice and shared practice with colleagues according to a community of practice framework (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998). Its goal is to develop professional skills for professors at a higher education level, adopting the Staff and Educational Development Association framework (SEDA, 2012).

**A programme with sound individual impacts**

From the beginning, an evaluation framework was developed to provide information for participants and staff developers on the quality of learning in terms both of the participants’ learning experience, as recorded in learning logs and on-line questionnaires filled in after each training module, and of achieved learning outcomes via evaluation of their research projects. These data, discussed during collective debriefing sessions, led us to implement the following changes to the programme:

1. The addition of a learning outcome considered by participants as important in their learning experience, namely to demonstrate critical reflection on both their teaching practice and their professional development;
2. The addition of a compulsory module focused on professional development, institutional analysis and career management;
3. The addition of self and peer teaching practice observations;
4. The creation of a certificate in German (the original certificate was offered in French only);
5. The creation of a bilingual diploma (French/German).

After eight sessions, 104 teachers have successfully completed the 30 ECTS programme (900 hours) and 18 the 15 ECTS programme (450 hours). These numbers may seem modest for a university with 10,000 students; however this may also be viewed as a success, given that there is no obligation or incentive for teachers to participate. Furthermore, the participation curve has risen dramatically during the last two years, and we have evidence that the research projects conducted by participants have had impacts on their teaching and sometimes on their departmental teaching teams. (Moura 2005; 2006, Rossier and Platteaux, 2007; Rossier, 2008).

**A staff development programme complemented by research**

Along the years, two research programmes have been conducted to contribute to the development of the Did@cTIC staff development programme. The first of these aimed to understand effects of hybrid learning courses on individual learning and on the self-identity
dynamic. The second aimed to inform and sustain sources of non-formal and informal higher education learning, specifically via the development of communities of practice. These programmes have evolved through the influence of technological development and have integrated now a concern for understanding and developing students’ and teachers’ personal learning environments.

We have not enough room here to outline all of the research and publications related to the first programme (e.g. Charlier 2006, Charlier, Nizet and Van Dam 2006, Charlier, Deschryver and Peraya 2006, Collectif HY-SUP 2011) and will focus only on studies that have been directly related to our staff development programme. Among these studies, one Master thesis at the University of Fribourg (Rossier 2003) focused directly on the Did@cTIC programme and, more recently, the European HY-SUP programme has taken it as a case study.

Rossier sought understanding of relationships between Did@cTIC’s pedagogical characteristics and participants’ self-identity dynamics, and conducted a qualitative, longitudinal study over the course of one year, analysing discourse from five participants collected at three moments during the programme. The results suggested that certain characteristics were conditions for the programme’s ability to reduce identity discrepancies and for avoiding the appearance of new tensions, namely: the individualised nature of the programme; the offer of a variety of spaces and moments for individual meetings with the staff developers; the sharing of experience and reflections with peers; and the monitoring of the staff development programme itself.

The European HY-SUP project (2009–12) undertook an ambitious, mixed methods study aiming to describe and analyse impacts of practices employed on hybrid learning courses in six European universities. A sound theoretical framework underpins this research, which has already led to a typology of higher education hybrid learning courses (Collectif HY-SUP 2011) and to the proving of hypotheses concerning their specific effects on student learning, teacher professional development and university organisation.

In this study, Did@cTIC has been characterised as a ‘Type 6’ hybrid learning course, which means that the programme develops fully the main pedagogical dimensions that characterise a hybrid course: articulation between face-to-face and distance learning; media-facilitated learning; mediation, coaching and openness. These types of hybrid learning courses are also those where the most changes of teaching practice are mentioned by the teachers in charge of the course, and where the level of their commitment is highest, in particular with respect to collaboration with colleagues. Teachers designing and using these types of courses also mention a teaching approach centred on the learning of their students. Such hybrid learning courses also demonstrate impacts on student engagement. However, at the time of writing, the HY-SUP study is still running and more precise results will be published in 2012.

The second programme, aiming to inform and sustain sources of non-formal and informal higher education learning, through the development of communities of practice, also gave rise to a European study, as well as several publications (see project website, PALETTE 2009). Did@cTIC communities of practice, integrated in our staff development programme, also
served as a case study for this European research and development project. These groups were run for several years without any real effort to capitalise on the shared practices, making it thus impossible to re-use this experience. The PALETTE project gave Did@cTIC the opportunity to remedy this by enabling higher education teachers to articulate their practice in detail and to create reusable outputs from these exchanges.

Finally, collaborating with the University of Fribourg’s Department for Gender Equality, we obtained financial support from the Swiss Federal Programme for Equality. The EQUAL and EQUAL + projects (2008–12) had the following aims:

1. To introduce content and methods in our Staff development programme;
2. To enhance teachers’ sensitivity to gender inequalities in their teaching; and
3. To develop better understanding at an institutional level of teaching practices and issues by stimulating the articulation and sharing of teaching practice in teachers’ communities of practice and through an analysis of the results of the teaching evaluation questionnaires.

The Did@cTIC staff development programme was enhanced through revision of all resources: text notes, illustrations, language and each expert running a course in the programme received personal feedback based on participants’ questionnaires, observations and analysis of the teaching resources.

The third objective, focused on analysing institutional awareness of teaching practices and issues, has not yet been fully realised. To facilitate teachers’ communities of practice, a needs analysis highlighting their main concerns was organised (Dehler et al. 2009). Collaborating with the University’s evaluation team, we have also just finished analysing the evaluation questionnaires. Actions to be taken have yet to be decided with the rectorate and deans.

**Conclusions**

After about ten years, we can say that the quality of our staff development programme has been demonstrated through research and empirical observations. However, our main experience is that Did@cTIC appears to remain an enclave inside the institution (Saunders 1986, Charlier, Bonamy and Saunders 2003). This means that it is:

‘...a set of practices ... which intervene in an established set of practices (a school for example) for which they may be clearly distinguished and be, in some cases, oppositional. A feature of an innovation enclave is that it is accompanied by a strong rhetoric which allies participants and distinguishes them from non participants or outsiders.’ (McCabe 1986)

The reasons for this situation are difficult to find, especially for an insider such as the author of this paper. However, we have tried to address this issue in previous publications (Charlier and Vizcarro 2003, Charlier 2009, and Charlier 2010).
A first reason could be related to a widely shared, traditional vision of teaching as being the sole responsibility of individuals, whose duty as teachers is only to communicate their knowledge to their students (Charlier and Vizcarro 2003). In this case, teaching qualifications are conceived as a private good.

A second reason could lie in a structural division at the University of Fribourg between the staff development programme and the quality management system run by another service. This division is possibly based on different visions concerning quality of teaching management processes and evaluation criteria:

‘In professional development, the quality of teaching is often defined by teachers themselves and is more focused on the teaching process and, conversely, from an institutional management perspective, quality is defined by the management of the institution from a multidimensional and standardised perspective. Although this comparison seems rather a caricature, it could help to understand better some of the resistance and misunderstandings between actors.’ (Charlier 2009, p.3)

From this quality management perspective, teaching qualifications could have a more normative function.

A third reason may be the difficulty of taking into account voices of teachers and students and of integrating them into institutional visions, and in strategy operationalized in specific decisions (Charlier 2010). The question of how to integrate individual excellence into sustainable institutional excellence remains open. All these suggested reasons are hypothetical, and these interpretations need to be tested via evaluative research and comparative analysis with another academic development programme in Europe. The European Forum on Academic Development could provide space for such a study.

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The author
Bernadette Charlier (bernadette.charlier@unifr.ch). University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Between 1974–79, Bernadette studied psychology and educational sciences at the University of Liège (Belgium). Between 1979–84 she was Professor at the Ecole Normale pour enseignants du secondaire I Saint Barthélemy in Liège, and from 1984 to 2000 at the multimedia centre at the University of Namur. In 1996 she gained a PhD in educational sciences at the Catholic University in. Since 2002 she has been Professor in the Centre for Higher Education didactics of the University of Fribourg.
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