

FDTL VOICES
DRAWING FROM LEARNING
AND TEACHING PROJECTS

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INTRODUCTION

DEREK YOUNG AND RACHEL SEGAL

The overriding theme at the heart of every FDTL project has been the desire to achieve some form of positive and meaningful change that will make a difference to student learning. Change was planned at a range of levels, from the individual, to the discipline, to the institution, and focused on practice, understanding, procedure or policy. Whatever the level and focus of individual projects or phases of FDTL, there exists compelling evidence to demonstrate the significant impact and value added of individual projects, phases and the FDTL initiative as a whole. This book shares some of that evidence and offers insights from the perspectives of colleagues who have engaged with, been responsible for, or benefitted from FDTL outcomes in some way.

By their nature, developmental projects are not characterised by a smooth linear process. The contexts in which they operate are constantly changing and project teams need to remain flexible and willing to consider positively new routes as well as unplanned developments and opportunities. It is often precisely the unanticipated outcomes of projects that prove the most interesting and the most insightful. By moving beyond the traditional 'deliverables' driven descriptions of project activity this publication focuses on what we, as a learning and teaching community, now know, understand, and can evidence about HE learning and teaching that we didn't know before.

This publication is not intended to present a linear narrative of the course taken by individual FDTL projects. Rather, it draws on insights and experiences from individuals and teams within learning and teaching development projects in higher education. The book considers lessons learnt from the processes, outcomes and tangible outputs of the projects across the spectrum of the FDTL initiative, with the intention that colleagues can draw on and benefit from this experience. This is but one of the many ways in which the FDTL programme leaves a legacy and has the potential to influence future developments in teaching and learning.

The FDTL programme has benefited from the consistent emphasis on collaborative development, from the staff of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund National Coordination Team, of the Higher Education Academy, and of projects. The FDTL

approach – collaboration in context, underpinned by high levels of initial training, support and guidance – has nurtured the potential for further development of practice, for capacity building and growth, and for the promotion of knowledge exchange. Accordingly, this publication and the process of its development has been collaborative throughout.

Central to the writing has been a variety of reflective contributions of a large number and broad range of colleagues from the wider FDTL community. In turn, examples of positive developments have emerged - with respect to changes at sectoral and organisational level, conceptual change, personal and professional development, and partnership and project management. These four central themes have been identified jointly by Academy staff and project colleagues as germane to all FDTL projects, and form the structuring principles of the book. Each of the four main sections is organised around a key theme and consists of an introduction by a commissioning editor and three chapters, each written by colleagues involved in FDTL. These themes are not intended to be mutually exclusive and there is productive overlap between sections in the book.

The first section, on *Sectoral and organisational change*, incorporates aspects of legacy building – moving from a developmental/creative grouping into policy and beyond; the impact of communities of practice, and the role of FDTL projects (individually and collectively) in furthering and addressing both national policy objectives and subject review issues.

Section Two looks at *Conceptual change* in terms of trajectories for individuals and communities of practice; the moment of theorisation as a critical point; and notions of change and risk.

Section Three addresses *Professional and personal development*, including tools and methods for the professional development of staff; the extent to which engagement in FDTL has changed individual career trajectories; the ways in which developers capture their own learning and development; and the notion of FDTL as a testing ground for models of academic leadership (while distinguishing between leadership and management).

The fourth and final section considers aspects of *Partnership and project management* relating to models and principles of an effective project legacy; the notion of change and evolution within a project; capturing and capitalising on ‘side effects and accidents’; and learning from ‘failures’. It also offers insights into effective team building, looking at its impact on collaborative development and project outcomes, and reflects on processes and implications of negotiating and managing changes in personnel.

Many of the findings expressed or represented in this publication will be of relevance and interest to those responsible for, engaging in, planning, supporting or aspiring to make a positive and meaningful difference in higher education learning and teaching.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and students involved in and around FDTL, for their commitment to the enhancement of learning and teaching. They continue to make a positive and meaningful difference for the benefit of students, colleagues, disciplines, institutions, and for higher education. Thanks also to the contributors and commissioning editors of this book, all of whom have contributed to this addition to the FDTL legacy.

FDTL BACKGROUND

DEREK YOUNG

This chapter provides an introduction to the Fund for the Development for Teaching and Learning (FDTL) programme. It uses examples drawn from across the range and lifespan of the FDTL programme to highlight and demonstrate the concepts inherent within it.

Established in 1995, FDTL was intended to support projects aimed at stimulating developments in teaching and learning in higher education and to encourage the further dissemination of good teaching and learning practice across the higher education sector. The programme was launched and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI) (the latter now superseded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI), with responsibility for higher and further education in Northern Ireland).

FUNDING

Bids for FDTL funding were invited from higher education institutions (HEIs) that could demonstrate high quality in their educational provision, as judged by the teaching quality assessment exercise. Funds were awarded to those projects that demonstrated the potential to contribute to the development and improvement of learning and teaching through the transfer of information and ideas. This was viewed as an innovative move insofar as it was the first time that funding councils had directly linked the results of the quality assessment process to the allocation of project funding in the higher education (HE) sector.

Since 1999, FDTL has formed part of the disciplinary strand of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) (discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four). Initially, day-to-day management of the programme was undertaken by the FDTL National Co-ordination Team (NCT) based at the Centre for Higher Education Practice at the Open University. However, the NCT was absorbed into the Higher Education Academy ('the Academy') during the latter's inception in 2004 along

with the LTSN subject centres, many of which had worked collaboratively with early FDTL projects. Consequently the Academy assumed responsibility for day-to-day management of the programme with the role of supporting, advising on, and monitoring the projects and assisting in maximising the impact of project outcomes.

In order to ensure the programme was kept at a manageable level, from both a funding and administrative point of view, it was broken down into five phases: phase one – 1996; phase two – 1997; phase three – 2000; phase four – 2002; phase five – 2004. In each phase a set of different discipline areas were designated for funding and projects were intended to run for three years. Overall, the Fund has supported 166 projects since 1995.

FIVE PHASES OF FDTL FUNDING

Phase one funded 44 projects at a cost of £8.5 million covering 15 subject areas: anthropology; applied social work; architecture; business and management studies; chemistry; computer sciences/studies; English; environmental studies; geography; geology; history; law; mechanical engineering; music; and social policy and administration.

Phase two covered eight subjects: chemical engineering; sociology; linguistics; French; German and related languages; Italian; Iberian languages and studies; and Russian and Eastern European languages and studies. Nineteen projects were funded under phase two at a cost of £4 million.

A total of 33 projects were funded in phase three, at a cost of £6.8 million, covering 16 subjects: agriculture, forestry and agricultural sciences; food science; mechanical, aeronautical and manufacturing engineering; civil engineering; electrical and electronic engineering; general engineering; materials technology; building; town and country planning and landscape; land and property management; American studies; Middle Eastern and African studies; East and South Asian studies; history of art, architecture and design; communication and media studies; and drama, dance and cinematics.

38 projects were funded through phase four, at a total cost of £7.8 million, covering 13 subject areas: medicine; dentistry; veterinary medicine; anatomy and physiology; pharmacology and pharmacy; molecular biosciences; organismal biosciences; nursing; other subjects allied to medicine; physics and astronomy; psychology; mathematics, statistics and operational research; and art and design.

The fifth and final phase covered 11 subject areas: archaeology; business and management studies; Celtic studies; classics and ancient history; economics; education; hospitality, leisure, recreation, sport and tourism; librarianship and information management; philosophy; politics; and theology and religious studies. 32 projects were funded at a total cost of £6.9 million.

SCOPE AND RANGE OF PROJECTS

One of the primary factors emerging from the FDTL programme is that those projects selected for funding, even from the relatively early days of phase one (1995), have consistently raised, highlighted and engaged with issues which have always been current within the higher education sector. This includes many issues and topics which were 'before their time' in as much as they are now reaching sector-wide prominence and focus; issues such as transferable skills, assessment, and learner feedback.

There is not the scope within a short introductory piece to highlight every FDTL project, particularly since some projects are described in greater detail within the following chapters of the book, but it does afford the opportunity to take a brief look at a representative range of projects.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

In tandem with the current drive to increase participation in higher education there has been a corresponding increase in alternative entry arrangements through access courses, prior experiential learning, summer schools, HND provision and the relatively recent adoption of Foundation degrees in England. In order to equip learners entering from non-traditional routes, the higher education sector has learnt to adapt and develop the means to embed those skills required at undergraduate level which are traditionally taught in fifth and/or sixth form tertiary education. As a consequence, transferable skills have increasingly become a defining issue within higher education, whether at undergraduate level embedded within the curriculum or at postgraduate level driven by the annual surge of Roberts funding. Transferable skills has been a recurring theme and FDTL projects have, over the length of the programme, addressed these issues at both a subject/discipline and generic level.

At the subject level, for example, the *Geography for the new undergraduate (GNU)* project developed a first year undergraduate seminar programme to facilitate the teaching of personal, interpersonal and transferable skills within a geographical context. The specific aim of the project was to assist the successful transition for non-traditional entry students by encouraging the development of effective independent learning. Although funded under phase one, this is an area which has gained in prominence across the higher education sector as it responds to the increasing demands placed on it by the expansion of higher education provision.

Also at this level, in the field of engineering the *TRANSEND (Transferable skills in engineering and their dissemination)* project identified exemplars of student support and guidance methods for the development of personal and professional transferable skills. Similarly, the *TransLang (Transferable skills development for non-specialist students of modern languages)* project sought to improve practice in teaching,

learning and assessment in modern languages by enhancing the role of transferable skills in programmes of language study for non-specialists. The *ERA (Experience-rich anthropology)* project was set up in order to enhance the teaching and learning of anthropology by encouraging the development of analytical and skills when dealing with primary sources.

At the wider cross-discipline level, the *Hertfordshire integrated learning project (HILP)*, based at the University of Herefordshire, worked on the integration of academic skills development in higher education covering eleven disciplines ranging from environmental sciences to history and from engineering to music. The *IMAGE (Interactive mathematics and geoscience education)* project, based within the Department of Geological Sciences at University College London, focused on the development of essential skills which would be applicable to geosciences education, in particular the subdivisions of mathematics and fieldwork.

On a more generic scale, the *Personal and academic development for students in higher education (PADSHE)* project, led by the University of Nottingham, involved over 8000 students and their tutors within seven partner UK universities and focused on a number of skills, including the promotion of recording achievement, transcripts, key skills, employability and reflective, independent and lifelong learning.

ASSESSMENT

Particularly current and highly relevant are the areas of assessment and feedback, specifically in light of current debate fuelled by results from the National Student Survey (www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/nss/data/2009). From the beginning FDTL projects were engaging with these issues.

The phase one *Assessment and the expanded text* project, although generic in nature, examined assessment in the discipline of English. The project aims included ensuring learner understanding of the purpose of assessment; embedding effective feedback; ensuring that both the methods and the process of assessment derive from the specific learning objectives of the discipline; developing assessment as a teaching tool; ensuring a combination of the traditional and the innovative, the formative and the summative; and ensuring that assessment processes are equitable and transparent. All of these issues are highly relevant today, perhaps even more so in an era where higher education is increasingly listening to the needs, if not the demands, of the learner.

The *Self-assessment in professional and higher education (Saphe)* project was concerned with developing students' learning to help them plan, monitor and evaluate their work by linking self-assessment techniques more closely with course content by developing a range of peer and self assessment tools.

In contrast to the wider generic examples above, the *Assessment strategies and standards in sociology* project focused on one discipline in order to raise the profile of debates about assessment and standards within sociology.

PLACEMENTS

The issue of placements is one which covers a wide range of subjects – engineering, education, nursing, etc – and, while FDTL projects in the main operated at a discipline level on this issue, the studies and resources were overwhelmingly transferable both across and between discipline groups.

The *MaPPiT (Mapping the placement process with information technology)* project was concerned with integrating the managed work placement into the curriculum and with providing a wide range of materials which would assist institutions in preparing, vetting, appraising, supervising assessing and accrediting learner placements. In parallel with this, a number of projects – *RAPPORT: residence abroad*, *SIP: sociologists in placement*, and *The interculture project* – took the issue of learner placement further by supporting the development of learner placements abroad through the identification of best practice and the development of a website to support learners when abroad.

In a similar vein, although the *EQUIPE (Educational quality in placements in engineering)* project was designed primarily to encourage the development of good practices in industrial placements in engineering, it went further by evaluating and disseminating information on good practices for managing industrial placements within a range of other disciplines. The project widened the debate surrounding the use of placements by generating dialogue and discussion between a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, students, universities and professional bodies.

IT IN EDUCATION

The FDTL programme was an early advocate of the possibilities presented by the use of information technology (IT) within the field of education. The *PADSHE* project, led by the University of Nottingham, was an early phase one project which explored the use of communications and information technology to build upon existing good practice in personal tutoring and student support and guidance. Similarly, based in what was then the English Department of Anglia Polytechnic University, the phase one *Speak-Write* project promoted the acquisition of advanced written and oral communication skills amongst undergraduates studying English UK-wide. This was achieved through the development of a range of innovative teaching and learning materials which are available in a variety of media, including books, video and the internet. A third phase one project, the *TALESSI (Teaching and learning at the environment-science-society interface)* project, based at the University of Greenwich, focused on promoting active learning for critical thinking and values awareness within higher education and developed a substantial portfolio of online teaching and learning resources in the form of self-contained teaching packages. These packages were variable in size and scale but were written to a standard format (which included aims, learning outcomes, learning activities, stimulus materials etc).

GTA TRAINING

In recent years graduate teaching assistant (GTA) training has come to the fore through the discussion surrounding the professionalism of teaching in higher education. Whilst training for new and existing part-time and full-time lecturers has increased in order to promote a positive change within learning and teaching, the training available for GTAs is still relatively hit and miss. GTAs are routinely expected to attend those training courses which are available and open to them at their own cost with no time off given for attendance. However, the issue of GTA training and personal development has been a constant theme within FDTL projects.

The *Science education enhancement and development (SEED)* project was a collective undertaking consisting of 17 projects in areas such as ‘Fieldwork, Lab Work, CAL, Automated Assessment, Employer Links and the training of Science Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)’. The project also helped to launch new courses in GTA training – with over 1000 students using materials developed within the project. Similarly, the phase two *Development of postgraduate and language assistants (DOPLA)* project was set up to address the inadequate provision for training and induction of GTAs. In tandem with a comprehensive training pack, the project developed a five-day initial teacher-training course which linked initial training and related activities. Approximately 400 FLAs (Foreign language assistants) and PGTAs (Postgraduate teaching assistants) from 36 institutions across the UK attended training using the *DOPLA* materials. This was either on courses run by their own institutions, or on regional programmes run in conjunction with other local universities.

Other issues such as communities of practice, enquiry-based learning, learning space, and educational leadership are dealt with in greater detail in later chapters, but the projects briefly highlighted above serve to give an overall ‘flavour’ of the FDTL programme.

PROGRAMME LEGACY

Has the FDTL programme achieved what it set out to do? Can we determine the impact of the programme? In many ways that is what the chapters in this publication hope to achieve by highlighting in greater detail a number of FDTL projects which have not been mentioned in this introductory chapter. If we return to the initial aims of the programme, which were a) to stimulate developments in learning and teaching, and b) secure the widest possible involvement of institutions in the take-up and implementation of good practice, can we determine whether or not they have been met? The concept of legacy is investigated further in Chapter Three but a number of specific points can be highlighted here.

CROSS-DISCIPLINE WORKING

One key feature of all projects has been the desire to embed good teaching and learning practice. There is a natural link between many of the projects working in the same subject area, and many projects have come together because they are working on similar educational themes such as assessment and/or widening participation.

The *Online assessment and feedback project (OLAAF)* is a prime example of cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration fostered through FDTL funding. The project had partners at seven HEIs: Birkbeck College, University of London, Cardiff University, London Metropolitan University, and the universities of Birmingham, Brighton, Kent, and Plymouth. Staff involved within the partner sites were working within the fields of biological & chemical sciences, dentistry, health sciences, nursing and midwifery, biosciences, and biological sciences. This generated a 'mix' which ensured that cross-institution and cross-discipline collaboration was embedded within the project process from the outset.

The project also generated an interest group from a further nine institutions which also further widened the range of disciplines involved to include osteopathy, education, life sciences, computer sciences, earth and ocean sciences, civil engineering, applied medical sciences and sports studies, and equine studies. The project also formed links between institutions in England and Northern Ireland and within the wider education field, at college level. The *OLAAF* project provides an ideal template for collaborative and cross-discipline practice.

CROSS-PROJECT AND CROSS-INSTITUTIONAL WORKING (THEMATIC)

The *Mathematics for economics: enhancing teaching and learning (METAL)* project – based at Nottingham Trent University in partnership with the University of Portsmouth and Brunel University – describes itself as a resource created by practitioners, for practitioners. The programme was designed to provide practitioners and learners with access to a selection of free learning resources created to develop the enthusiasm and engagement of level 1 students in mathematics for economics.

This example of discipline-specific working has utilised the expertise of a wide range of discipline practitioners from a wide range of non-partner HEIs, including those in Scotland (not a direct participant in the FDTL programme), in order to enhance the project, make best use of the available subject expertise, and to develop an output that can be valued across the discipline irrespective of geographical borders.

WIDER SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

As highlighted previously, FDTL has supported 164 projects throughout England and Northern Ireland. This in itself is a considerable number. However, since most of the projects have worked with multiple partner institutions and a correspondingly wide

range of staff, the number of departments involved runs into the hundreds. Some projects have collaborated with a large number of HEIs – for example, the *DOPLA* project collaborated with 36 HEIs.

Other projects, across the span of the programme, have sought to expand the stakeholder base. The phase one *Model for professional development* project involved a range of professionals from over 80 businesses and organisations while the phase two *EQUIPE* project widened the stakeholder base to include employers and professional bodies.

The phase two *CoBaLT (Community-based learning teamwork)* project looked at the impact of community-based learning on community organisations and conducted a dissemination programme through community service volunteers – again reaching a wider and more diverse audience than had perhaps been envisaged at the onset of the FDTL programme.

WIDER SECTOR REACH

One project, *PROFILE*, based at the University of the West of England, which aimed to create a flexible, generic system to support the assessment of academic credit of work-based learning, won for its work the accolade ‘e-tool of the year 2006’.

The FDTL4 project *Managed environments for portfolio-based reflective learning – integrated support for evidencing outcomes* is another example of a project which has developed into a wider programme of research and development. Led by the University of Newcastle, it also included collaboration with the University of Leeds, the University of Sheffield and the University of Dundee. The Medical School at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, took the innovative step of joining the project as a ‘self-funded’ partner, further disseminating the process beyond the envisaged participative sector. The project involved the development of web-based portfolios to support reflective approaches for evidencing the attainment of programme outcomes. Originally based on medicine, the concept has merged with others to expand to include dentistry and contract research staff.

The output of these products is not restricted by the geographical borders of the funders. The *DOPLA* project engaged with 36 institutions, ran courses in Dublin and Limerick in the Republic of Ireland, and received requests for materials from as far afield as France and South Africa.

Although there was no direct involvement by the funding councils of Wales and Scotland this did not exclude them from participating in the programme. As we have already seen, the University of St Andrews joined with the FDTL4 project, *Managed environments for portfolio-based reflective learning – integrated support for evidencing outcomes*, as a ‘self-funded’ partner.

In Wales, the University of Glamorgan was a partner in the FDTL4 nursing education project *IN-CONTEXT* alongside the universities of Huddersfield and Sheffield; its students and staff contributed to the development of the project’s work with its virtual hospital ward and the use of anonymised case studies.

CONTINUATION

One aspect of the FDTL programme has been that projects do not necessarily stop when the funding cycle ends. Many projects have continued in one form or another, supported at an institutional level – either by funding or by embedding the project within the structure and framework of the institution – in whole or in part. Other projects have been supported by the academic community who value the projects and the outcomes.

One such example is the *STAR (Student transition and retention)* project which was funded under FDTL4 and was based at the University of Ulster in partnership with the University of Brighton, Liverpool Hope University, the University of Manchester and the University of Sunderland. The project focused on “the identification, analysis, dissemination and uptake of good practice in supporting students during periods of rapid transition from one learning environment to another with an underlying aim to increase student retention”. This work continues and is increasingly being utilised by other practitioners.

HELM (Helping engineers learn mathematics) was another FDTL4 project undertaken by a consortium comprising the universities of Loughborough, Hull, Reading, Sunderland and Manchester. The project produced a wide range of resources, including workbooks, which are still in use today and which were highlighted and recognised by the student evaluation and assessment theme, one of the first initiatives in the Scottish Enhancement Themes programme – thereby rolling out the development to higher education systems which were not in the funding process but were able to benefit from it. This is not the only FDTL project which has been ‘absorbed’ by the non-participant sectors.

The work of the University of Nottingham-based *PADSHE* project, initially funded through phase one, has been extended and continued as a core function of the Centre for Integrative Learning CETL at the University of Nottingham.

CONCLUSION

Within this publication evidence has been gathered detailing the impact FDTL projects and the initiative as a whole have had within teaching and learning in the disciplines and across the sector. It is clear that FDTL projects were, are, and will continue to be engaged in a wide and diverse range of activities related to teaching and learning.

In terms of institutional legacy, projects and their outcomes have been embedded within institutional discipline and sector learning and teaching practice. In the wider sector, dissemination of the projects’ outcomes continues to take many forms: training events, workshops, production of training materials including text and CD-ROM web-sites, email discussion groups, conferences and newsletters.

There has clearly been a wide range of development work initiated through and within the FDTL programme. More importantly, a large section of that development has been sustained either through institutional support, further external funding and through a number of CETLs evolving from the FDTL programme.

In terms of continuation of teaching and learning development, a number of FDTL projects have generated the basis for successful CETL funding bids. In many instances the expertise, both project management- and discipline-based, gained by FDTL project team members was directly involved in the forming of CETL bids and developing the work of the FDTL projects further within the CETL programme.

The FDTL programme has clearly achieved what it set out to do. It has developed a skills and knowledge base which has engaged with every corner of the UK higher education sector, whether at the individual, subject, discipline or sector level. Furthermore, the programme has succeeded not only in stimulating development during the lifespan of the funding but, through widespread engagement, has ensured that the value within the FDTL programme will continue beyond the initial expectations and the lifespan of the dedicated funding period. Perhaps that is its greatest legacy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Phase one funded projects

www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/1998/98_33.htm

Phase two funded projects

www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/1998/98_34.htm

Phase three funded projects

www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED456685&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED456685

Phase four funded projects

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/networks/fdtl/phase4

Phase five funded projects

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/networks/fdtl/phase5

Higher Education Academy web pages for FDTL programme

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/networks/fdtl

HEFCE web page for NSS data

www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/nss/data/2009/

SECTION ONE

SECTORAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTOPHER STOKES

This section describes the experiences of FDTL project members effecting change in their host institutions and in the wider educational sector. It benefits from being able to be retrospective, and through its contributors describes experiences of efforts to effect change both during projects and also after the formal funding and evaluation periods have ended. Project impact can be assumed to exist on a number of levels, ranging from an individual level up to encompassing the entire higher education sector.

The section focuses on examining impact within larger units, which include institutions, organisations, professional groups and the wider HE sector:

- for the institution, impact can be demonstrated by change within teaching and learning across programmes, both subject-specific and generic, and through change within curriculum development;
- subject sector impact can be at the level of cross-institutional change;
- higher education sector impact can involve cross-sector transferability through generic development.

In this context, effecting change can be seen as synonymous with a project's impact. In compliance with current funding prerequisites, project impact is all too often measured simply in terms of outputs that can easily be counted over the duration of the evaluation period (e.g. how many workshops, meetings, papers etc.). While arguably harder to measure, a truer measure of a project's value is the level of change generated. We need to accept that dissemination does not automatically equate to change, although this is often difficult since dissemination is a readily identified deliverable, while impact is a variable measure of change.

Impact evaluation should be measured at a number of instances across the lifespan of a project, be undertaken by a variety of methods, and be developed as an

ongoing process. In this fashion, impact evaluation can determine whether projects are directing, following or paralleling sector change, are initiating or following current sector trends, and determine whether assumed project impact might be a reflection of ongoing sector change driven from elsewhere.

The topic of Sectoral and organisational change has been categorised into three themes, each addressed in the following chapters. These are: influencing change through collaboration; change through communities of practice; and an analysis of change that has occurred after the projects have officially concluded. Authors who participated in FDTL projects will draw upon their experiences of influencing sectoral and organisational change to explore each of these themes.

EFFECTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATION

This chapter draws from the findings of impact studies, highlights the contributions of the FDTL4 health-related projects and describes some models of collaboration that have been effective. The authors and contributors share their experiences of effecting change, capturing impact, raising awareness, embedding change and change through collaboration.

Although the FDTL4 health-related projects have been successful in achieving educational change over the project lifetimes, at this point the longer-term impact of the funding stream is unclear. Many project leaders noted that the real challenge is about sustainability and long-term change.

The chapter concludes that experience from the health-related FDTL projects suggests that practices have been changed by FDTL, not only within the HE sector, but also among those who work alongside or in partnership with the sector such as clinical staff or healthcare organisations. The ability and capacity for people and organisations to work together more collaboratively, to share and co-create what has often been tacit knowledge and skills, and to develop and implement effective health education interventions is possibly one of the real and long-lasting legacies of the health-related FDTL4 projects.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN FDTL

This chapter explores the impact a community of practice can have in effecting change within an organisation. If communities of practice can be indicators for collaborative learning and organisational development, were they evident during FDTL projects? How did they develop? Did the FDTL programme facilitate the growth of these communities of practice? Through analysis of project outputs and the experiences of the contributors, FDTL communities of practice are investigated.

The chapter concludes that as communities of practice (CoPs) are transient, and

although some dissolve as the defining need that created them is met or removed, some project communities have also grown to become formal projects by obtaining further funding. FDTL reports appear to indicate that CoP formation is in some way cyclical. A CoP forms out of a need, and then may gain sufficient support to become a funded project, may influence change that means the need is met, or may continue relatively unobserved. The reports indicate there are still many groups within the FDTL community which maintain an interest in a project, and it is these that keep the legacy of projects going.

LONG-TERM IMPACT: LEARNING FROM THE LEGACY OF FDTL

This chapter explores the long-term legacy of FDTL, looking in particular at changes effected after the formal project evaluation was completed. A process of data-mining online resources was followed by contacting project members directly from FDTL projects in phases one to four, and this chapter contains many accounts from project members describing success in effecting a change at sectoral and organisation levels.

In analysing the responses to the appeal for information about long-term impact, it is clear the structure of FDTL, (providing as it did a test bed away from the pressures of research activity where experimental teaching and learning could be developed), has led to much innovation and enthusiasm. Long-term impacts also occurred from the projects building links with the subject centres. The initiatives were managed by the Higher Education Academy and its subject centres in such a way as to encourage legacies, and the chapter concludes by describing some examples of good practice that are applicable to any project aiming to effect change.

A summary of this section in the form of bullet summaries of the key lessons learned is provided in the Appendix.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Contributors to this section are listed below, together with information about the FDTL project they were involved with.

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I.

EFFECTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HEALTH-RELATED FDTL4 PROJECTS

HELEN BULPITT AND JUDY MCKIMM

BACKGROUND

In the fourth round of FDTL (FDTL4), which began in October 2002, 16 of the 38 funded projects identified themselves closely with health and social care, and one allied to veterinary medicine. Two other projects, although set in the context of medical education, had as their focus assessment processes or the development of learning technologies. Two subject centres, Health Sciences and Practice (HSaP) and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine (MEDEV), provided support for these projects in the form of assisting with development, networking, dissemination, advising or attendance at steering group meetings or other events. Evidence collected at such events consistently reflected a common challenge faced by projects undertaken within the field of health and social care: the challenge of engaging and liaising with multiple layers of relationships between stakeholders, including students, service users, institutions, funding, professional and regulatory bodies and employers, such as the National Health Service Trusts.

In a context within which approximately 50% of a student's learning takes place in practice placements of some kind, there is a persistent need for higher education institutions to form educational partnerships with the clinical area, including NHS Trusts and Health Authorities. One of the challenges inherent in this is the need to develop diverse and innovative teaching methods and methods of assessment along with wide access to learning resources for students who spend much of their time off-campus. Ongoing support and liaison with colleagues in practice is also essential. In addition, professional and regulatory bodies are involved in the

delivery of qualifications, as many of them have their own requirements and criteria for registration. This too has a major impact on the way courses are delivered and accessed in higher education, and requires a large amount of liaising and working in partnership. Having identified that many of the projects were facing similar issues related to the complexity of these networks, it was decided that the two subject centres (MEDEV and HSaP) were well placed to undertake small-scale impact studies to identify some of the real and perceived impacts of these projects, drawing from data gathered from interviews with each of the stakeholder groups. The impact studies were undertaken in the summer of 2006, and it is worth noting that policy and regulation related to the delivery of education programmes in this sector have continued to change in subsequent years.

This chapter draws from the findings of these impact studies in highlighting the contribution that the FTDL4 health-related projects have made to organisational change within the sector and analysing some of the models of change that proved effective.

FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPACT

Several of the projects found it difficult to provide evidence for the impacts they described. It was commented that measuring impact takes time; that what to measure is not always known until towards the end of the project when insufficient time remains to do so. This was particularly true for unanticipated impacts, which, for some projects, were “probably the most powerful thing that came out of it” (HSaP report, p3). In addition, it was also noted that it was extremely difficult to establish a cause and effect relationship between the project and the perceived impact.

There was considerable comment on the significance of individual champions as change agents (see Land 2001). These included individuals working as partners within the project, but also included influential management personnel within an HEI as well as other stakeholders. A champion is someone who has a genuine personal commitment to the project and its aims. Champions were recognised as being responsible for many of the impacts of the individual projects. This could potentially cause a problem when a champion moves on, unless new champions have been recruited to replace them. This could then have had a knock-on effect on the project’s impact. Conversely, where projects had sought to gain wide representation on steering groups, some people were nominated representatives but did not necessarily have the personal commitment of a champion. This was perceived to have a detrimental effect on the impact of the project.

Champions were seen as being integral to the sustainability of the outcomes of the project. This did not seem necessarily to correlate with whether the project applied for, or received, transferability funding. The issue was just as likely to be relevant for those projects that did receive transferability funding. Several of the projects were very clear and specific about more work that needed to be done in

order to maximise the impact of their particular project, and others feared that the impacts would be all but lost once the funding had run out. This did seem largely to depend on the commitment of the champions of the project:

There is also an issue about the extent to which my name and the project have become interchangeable ... you make a brand more acceptable to people if you personalise it ... especially when concerned with a difficult concept for many people ... having my name on reports means that I have had to take personal responsibility for the contents (MEDEV report, p5).

EFFECTING CHANGE: CAPTURING THE ZEITGEIST

The impact studies identified three overlapping but distinct areas where impacts were identified: the product, the people and the processes generated by the projects. In terms of the 'product', a number of contributions were identified including the creation of materials, the raising of awareness, the changing of practice, new knowledge that was generated and the capturing of the mood of the time: the zeitgeist. Arguably, those projects that succeeded in effecting the most substantial change were those that in some way captured a prevailing trend. Fullan (2001) suggests that if educational change leaders can manage to combine moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence-making, within an approach that embodies enthusiasm, hope and energy, they will gain commitment of members to change. The results are that "more good things happen and less bad things happen" (2001, p4). For example, several project reports and interview respondents demonstrate impact relating to emerging educational policy agendas or trends. Specific 'hot topics' related to the development of new assessment practices, collaborations and partnership working, inter-disciplinary working, the use of portfolios and simulations, and the focus on leadership development across the public sector.

This is a point that has great relevance for longer-term projects: that the external environment, particularly relating to health- and social care-related disciplines, is constantly changing. The timescale between putting the original project proposal forward and achieving realistic outputs can be as long as two or even three years, and the external context can have moved on a lot in that time. Project teams need therefore to be vigilant as to the possible risk and impact of external change, which may be external to the institution (if a project is locally focused) or external to higher education.

For one of the projects, the external environment became more receptive to the outputs and goals of the project and the project was therefore able to capitalise and build on this, achieving much more than was anticipated. For two of the projects, almost the reverse happened in that some of the planned outputs of the project began to be developed and established on a national level; these projects were then in danger of being 'left behind' by other agencies as the external changes raced ahead. Both project

teams responded creatively to this challenge and developed links with external agencies to try to develop collaborative activities. However, it is difficult to measure the impact of the projects when other bodies and organisations are also involved in the area.

AWARENESS-RAISING

Many theoretical models of change assert the need for awareness-raising as a prerequisite for a commitment to lasting change. (Fullan 2001, Protcheska and Di Clementi 1982). Several respondents from within both the projects and stakeholder networks recognised the important role that the projects played in raising awareness among a subject community, or among academics or practitioners in an institution. Obtaining funding for a nationally recognised project gave credibility to the project team, legitimacy to issues or topics that perhaps were not there previously and allowed debate and engagement with the subject:

The project has raised awareness about assessment and about professional development in ... [subject community], something that people hadn't engaged in before (MEDEV report, p10).

CHANGING PRACTICE

Having succeeded in raising awareness of the issues and the potential of the projects, several of the respondents reported seeing practice change and develop. Some of these changes came about more easily than others. As well as contributing to the content of the curriculum, five projects reported that their work had actually informed and changed the curriculum in the light of their work. These projects had succeeded in highlighting new possibilities for ways to deliver the curriculum, as well as what could or should be included in the curriculum.

Twelve of the schools have now changed their assessment practices in a number of ways, not just using our project systems but also in the way they look at assessment (MEDEV report, p10).

It has had a revolutionary effect on examining professional skills ... it has been embedded into all exams and is fully embraced by academic and clinical teachers ... all the other schools have visited us and you can see change happening (MEDEV report, p10).

The materials themselves have been used as a pedagogical tool to help deliver the curriculum, as well as to inform the curriculum (HSaP report, p7).

EMBEDDING THE CHANGES

Respondents note that the changes are much more likely to be sustainable where they are embedded, either within an institution's policies and practices or at national level:

There have been changes in my own school – it has become embedded. Modules have changed ... the real impact is that it is embedded (HSaP report, p8).

I think some of the changes will stay because we helped them rewrite their assessment guidelines ... So they will be using those (HSaP report, p8).

These (project outputs) are completely embedded now as new assessment practices and we have taken this even further in that the project is seamlessly being incorporated into the CETL's work. This will make sure it happens as we have written them into the CETL's aims (MEDEV report, p12).

On one occasion, these changes became embedded to such an extent that a project partner noted:

We perhaps even have raised the bar of what is considered to be required ... I think that's about improving standards and professional standards (HSaP report, p8).

One of the difficulties experienced by the projects in embedding change was staff changes in the practice and academic environments. Permanent change is dependent upon staff changing their practice or expectations, which may be harder to achieve in the clinical environment. Funding and resource restriction and the finite timescale of the projects also inhibited the extent to which change could be embedded.

Some changing practices are concerned with the curriculum or curriculum components such as assessment methods; others are more concerned with 'fuzzier' concepts such as educational leadership or diversity, and it is much harder to measure the impact in the short or medium term of these projects. However, for some projects the impact is clearer. A benefit of having a project located in HE is the ability legitimately to work with the sector and to provide a voice for students. A key impact is on changing practice not only within the HE sector for academics and students, but also for clinical and other staff in healthcare services.

There are inherent difficulties in embedding change due to staff changes in the life of the project, the time limited nature of project funding and the wide-ranging, clinical focus or national nature of some of the projects. This means that ownership is dispersed and projects have to work across a number of different institutions.

We are in a field in practice learning that is about collaboration and yet we very rarely collaborate. I do think that the collaborative response that the team took enabled more work to happen than if we had all gone away and reinvented the wheel on our own (HSaP report, p13).

CHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

The quotation above indicates how one of the key ways in which change was effected through the health-related FDTL4 projects was through collaboration and partnership working across HE and NHS boundaries.

A wide range of individual staff members and other stakeholders involved in projects gain from involvement in the process of engaging in project activities (in both intended and unanticipated ways)... project processes also establish effective working relationships (some of which go on after the life of the project) as well as provide a locus for individual champions ... it is this wide group of people who will be the effective change agents of the future (MEDEV report, p31).

The linked concepts of collaboration and partnership working are deemed fundamental to public services, and in particular to the model of integrated services that underpins health, social care, education and other public services. Collaboration can be seen as emerging from deep within systems when conditions are favourable; it is often informal and is an emergent process, whereas partnership working tends to be more formalised in nature. McKimm *et al.* suggest that “real partnership is collaboration in action” (2008, p29). Examples from projects included those where “individuals with diverse loyalties: to their institutions as well as to their professions, coming together to form an interprofessional group, where distinctions were blurred and successful collaborations achieved” (HSaP report, p13).

Health education leaders working across complex health and education systems need “to embrace uncertainty and emergent realities, allow for autonomy and creativity, and position themselves as a part of interactive networks” (McKimm *et al.* 2008, p28). Many projects demonstrated the capacity to allow and nurture emergent change and thus achieve sometimes unanticipated additional outcomes. This highlights the need for collaborative leadership as a core element of change agency that focuses on a commitment to partnership working for good of the end user, whether staff, students, patients or service users. “Collaborative leaders are personally mature. They have a solid enough sense of self that they do not fear loss of control” (Turning Point Program 2003). This ability can be demonstrated in the way that the projects enabled (and in many cases required) organisations actively to seek out partners from other HE organisations, from clinical, practice-based settings and from professional and regulatory bodies. Some projects chose to work outside the funding bodies’

remit (not only in Scotland, Wales and internationally, but also with NHS and professional bodies) and “this had a positive impact which did not detract from their main target audience” (King 2007, p28).

Effecting change through collaboration may also involve different ways of working such as networking and working within communities of practice (CoP) (Lave and Wenger 1991). “The project gave people permission and a facilitated space in which to explore these issues and discuss them openly” (MEDEV report, p10). Involvement of wide and diverse groups from outside HE in projects facilitates clinical educators and others to participate in creating new communities of practice. Through membership of a CoP, an individual has the opportunity to engage in active participation both professionally and socially, forming networks and building professional identity (Andrew *et al.* 2008, McKimm *et al.* 2008). The social learning at all levels which comes through involvement in a CoP is often informal and unacknowledged in the workplace. However, workplaces enable people to use the new knowledge from CoPs, and they can act as change agents, find new ways of working and feel empowered to challenge and develop practice. The concept of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) provides more than an observational lookout post: it crucially involves participation as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the culture of practice (Davis 2006, Lave and Wenger 1991).

The support of the subject centres was important, not only for practical support and advice, but also for providing a focus on the subject discipline itself. The concept of subject disciplines enabled project teams to maintain a legitimate focus on the needs of a specific community with distinct cultures. Attention to aspects such as agreeing common language, cultures and goals all help projects work within and co-create communities of practice involving those working in service as well as education:

We had a group of educators with a common purpose, this will have impact on patient and client care ... the diversity of the different disciplines gave a huge valued added to the programme. They could debate the issues transparently and come to new understandings ... and shared practices (MEDEV report, p23).

Working in this way also reflects national public service agendas, which emphasise inter-professional, cross-boundary and integrated working.

The impact of collaboration on staff development of both academic and practice-based staff “is arguably the greatest and most sustainable impact to derive from this group of projects... It’s impacted enormously on the people that were involved with it, phenomenally ... and of course that will carry on impacting wherever we all are, won’t it?” (HSaP report, p11). This quotation raises a fundamental question about how (and whether) long-term, wide-ranging impact can be measured.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the FDTL4 health-related projects have been successful in achieving educational change over the projects' lifetimes, at this point it is unclear as to the longer-term impact of the funding stream. Many project leaders noted that the real challenge is about sustainability and long-term change:

One of the sad things is that there is always an issue of continuity, lost expertise and having to retrain new people. One of the frustrating things for educational projects is that when the initiatives are finished the expertise and knowledge can easily be lost (MEDEV report, p6).

There are concerns over the long-term impact of projects, but there is also hope that there will be such an impact. Many of the concerns relate to a change in the external environment or to a product that is not always sustainable (usually because of cost) in the longer term without supporting funding.

This theme links with that of the high level national support mentioned above and is mentioned in other reports such as the TQEF evaluation (2005). The projects will have greater, long-term impact if the knowledge transfer and products from projects across subject disciplines and institutions (and even across sectors given the nature of the health-related subjects) are actively managed on a national basis. Examples of knowledge transfer include products, systems and processes, research, changes in practice, curriculum development and human capacity development. Project teams do not always have the power, skills, knowledge, networks and time to do this for themselves. However, change does not always have to be radical to be effective; indeed, many writers (Plsek 2003, Kanter 1982) believe that the most effective change is non-linear, emergent and incremental. This view suggests that these projects should be seen as part of wider cultural movements and shifts; for example, "the FDTL project was a seed that allowed us to aspire to greater things through the CETL" (MEDEV report, p30).

Experience from the health-related FDTL projects suggest that, like a ripple effect, practices have been changed not only within the HE sector, but also among those who work alongside or in partnership with the sector such as clinical staff or healthcare organisations. The ability and capacity for people and organisations to work together more collaboratively, to share and co-create what has often been tacit knowledge and skills, and to develop and implement effective health education interventions is possibly one of the real and long-lasting legacies of the health-related FDTL4 projects.

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2

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN FDTL

CHRISTOPHER STOKES

BACKGROUND

FDTL projects that were successful in the bidding stages were so partly because of an element that made them valuable to the teaching and learning community, either generically or within a discipline. This element would be shared, and from this sharing it is reasonable to expect that networks would develop. These networks would be formal, in that they had been deliberately established, and also informal and flexible as individuals engaged and collaborated with projects, and as projects engaged with each other (such as for joint conferences). It has been argued by researchers (such as Lave and Wenger) that this interactive environment is ideal for learning and development, and the model of situated learning through the process of engaging with communities of practice has come from this work.

If communities of practice can be indicators for collaborative learning and organisational development, were they evident during FDTL projects? How did they develop? Did the FDTL programme facilitate the growth of these communities of practice? Through analysis of project outputs and the experiences of the contributors, FDTL communities of practice are explored.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

People working together will often form interest groups, While these can be separate from an organisation's formal structure and exist unrewarded or even opposed by the host institution, more often they are supported in some form. Communities of practice (CoPs) are usually defined as small groups of people that collaborate over a period of time and, through extensive communication, develop a common sense of purpose to share work-related knowledge and experience.

Seely-Brown and Duguid (1991) use the term in their description of non-canonical (i.e. unofficial) learning, developed through social exchanges as a matter of need, as the organisation structure and support was itself insufficient to enable workers to be good at their job. They refer to 'work-related social groups' as communities of practice.

In the literature the definition and nomenclature we use today for these interest groups in education has mostly come from the work of Wenger who states:

These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense, therefore, to call these kinds of communities 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1998, p45).

FORMATION OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

While many communities or practice would perhaps have arisen independently of the FDTL programme, the bidding process for FDTL projects encouraged multi-organisation bids with a single aim or theme, which in turn provided an ideal environment for CoPs to emerge. It is generally accepted that CoPs emerge of their own accord, with groups of people drawn together by a shared need or other driver that is both social (communication) and professional (work-related). The members profit from using each other as sounding boards, teaching each other and collaborating to achieve goals not achievable by an individual. As CoPs are not formal entities within an organisation, it is possible that the FDTL funding initiated a process of supporting and growing of these networks, and gave them credibility. As the FDTL projects became established, the CoPs were able to grow in size, using both the structure and funding of a central project hub as a framework for the many communications a successful CoP needs to be self-sustaining. Conversely, some CoPs within and across FDTL projects may have operated more as informal groups, setting their own goals and not reporting to a larger entity, especially as the projects were funded in a way that lent them some independence from their host institutions, and the relatively light-touch management and reporting to the National Co-ordination Team (and later the Higher Education Academy) was more an issue of reporting progress in educational development and not a formal, required goal.

An analysis of the outputs of FDTL projects was conducted to look at their long-term benefits (see the following chapter for a complete explanation), and through the process evidence of the existence of past and current CoPs emerged. A common theme is that many CoPs mentioned as being part of FDTL did not adhere strictly to the 'water-cooler' groups described by Wenger *et al.*, but existed in some part online; a result of the FDTL multi-institutional theme and the time pressure of delivering a project in a set time frame.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN FDTL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The FDTL projects have engendered multiple examples of communities of practice, and many of them used (or still use) online methods to communicate, through pressures of time, funding or because it is the most efficient way to share and communicate. An attempt to explore the potential of developing a wiki-based community of practice to specifically support the non-specialist teacher can be found in the FDTL5 *BioLab* project.

Biomechanics is considered by many as a difficult subject to teach: it lacks dedicated laboratories, qualified technicians and experienced teaching staff, but nevertheless is an essential element of sport and exercise science. The FDTL5 project's main aim had been to improve accessibility and enhance the quality of biomechanics teaching and learning within sport-related courses by producing and evaluating a Biomechanics Toolbox [*BioLab*] aimed at enabling tutors to enhance their teaching. The resource gives tutors access to a range of content, from PowerPoint presentations to high speed videos, and provides guidance on using the resources via sample lecture notes and lab sessions. On completion of the Toolbox materials, the potential of using a wiki as a means of developing a community of practice to provide additional support for the non-specialist teaching biomechanics was explored and evaluated, though on a relatively small scale.

This coincided with a project strand being developed to examine generic problems, support issues and coping strategies associated with non-specialists teaching a range of specialist subjects. The developmental cycle, captured in many models of teachers' professional development that trace the journey from novice to expert, is not always experienced linearly or at the same speed, and there may be elements of regression within the cycle if, for example, the teacher is tasked with teaching a subject with which they are unfamiliar. We have been steadily moving away from the idea of the typical academic being a subject expert, who teaches students and is research-active, and non-specialist teaching is becoming more accepted practice within HE (Briggs 2005). Support for the non-specialist appears to be patchy and in some cases non-existent. Data collected from tutors teaching various subjects found that non-specialist teaching was recognised by them as an "implicit expectation" of the lecturer's role and a cause for tension in how they perceived themselves as HE professionals and perceived their academic identity.

At the same time, any support mechanisms available tended to be informal and unstructured. New and experienced teachers reported low confidence associated with the (lack of) ownership of knowledge and being 'outside their comfort zones' when teaching a subject in which they were not a specialist. Those teaching staff given a demonstration of the *BioLab* Toolbox were encouraged to critically consider the potential of the resource in their own fields, which included psychology, tourism and leisure, accounting and finance, and creative arts. The Toolbox was generally well received and its applicability appreciated; it was seen to be a potentially useful tool that would enable teachers to draw on ready-to-use and flexible source material should they be tasked with teaching subjects unfamiliar to them.

Time precluded measuring the potential impact of a wiki as a means of developing a community of practice outside of the small evaluation group consisting of specialists and non-specialists who had been already involved in earlier evaluation exercises during the Toolbox's development. While some of the target group were aware of the existence of a sustainable listserv for specialist biomechanists (Biomech-I), they did not use the service as it was perceived to exist for the specialist community, and their lack of knowledge was seen as a disadvantage and would prevent their participation in the listserv activities. While outside the scope of the project to pursue and develop in any depth, we decided to create a wiki and explore its potential to support a sustainable community of practice where non-specialists, just as for the apprentices referred to by Lave and Wenger (1991, p93), would "learn mostly in relation with" other non-specialists. They could post their questions and ideas without the fear of them appearing too basic, and they could hold conversations with other non-specialists.

When the subject of a wiki was introduced to the non-specialists in the evaluation group and they were asked about the possibility of taking part in use of a wiki to form a community of practice, overall there was a positive response. Reservations were noted by some due to their lack of familiarity with wikis. Given the asynchronous nature of a wiki, the technological aptitude of the users and the uncertain nature of their workloads, it was decided that opening up the wiki to the group over an unspecified period of time would dilute its use, and there could be a significant time lag between questions or queries being posted and responses from group members. It was therefore decided that a 'wikifest' would take place over a one-week period (in May 2008) where everyone would agree to use the wiki whenever possible. This had the advantage of providing a focused event over a set period of time thus reducing likelihood of lag and disengagement. Fifteen lecturers from HE and FE institutions contributed and some completed reflective logs also enabling us to gain further insight into how the wide range of experience and knowledge base in the teaching of biomechanics by non-specialists would receive and utilise the Toolbox, and how such experiences would be shared within a community of practice.

The instructions to access and use the *BioLab* wiki site were detailed, supplemented by screenshots and explanations of wikis including: "The most famous wiki site is Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org>) which is a free online encyclopedia. From its own pages, it describes a wiki as: 'a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites'. Don't worry about the term 'markup language', you use a type of Word document to create it, so it isn't difficult – honest". Feedback indicated such guidance was particularly well received; comments included: "Your instructions were easy peasy!" and "First time I have used a wiki, the instructions were very helpful." Importantly, the wiki was portrayed as a relaxed and 'chatty' forum, in order to differentiate it from the more formal, specialist communication conduits such as Biomech-I.

The main wiki contributions ended up being the sharing of web-based resources and 'free flow' conversations mostly based on: the Toolbox content itself; the structure,

motivation, timescales and differentiation of the overall course at each institution; and how students were being encouraged to become involved in the subject by contextualising it within the real world. Actual pictures were occasionally used to help with the conversations, a capability that wikis have over listservs/mail lists. Feedback from participants was ongoing and comments on the structure were received and implemented as the week progressed. For example, a request for a search function elicited positive feedback: “I just noticed the search function – fab! For example, putting ‘projectiles’ in the search fields pops up all entries mentioning such. VERY useful to quickly grab resources and see if people are struggling with similar problems.” Potential problems noted included: “I think this is a great idea as long as we all stay vigilant and not let it get too cluttered.” It appeared that the users wanted the wiki to work like a website, but to retain the ability to add/change content themselves and on the whole, they thought the wikifest was a success; for example: “I am sure it can become a valuable resource both as a repository of useful additional materials but perhaps more importantly as a support for teaching” and “A successful week’s trial of the Wiki ... I would say I’ve nicked some good bits and bobs.” Several recommendations were developed and reported from lessons learned during the wiki’s development and usage that are applicable to any attempt to develop and then maintain a community of practice among geographically dispersed subject non-specialists.

The need to let the community drive the wiki rather than impose a set of topics or areas of discussion from a central control (potentially an issue if specialists were involved) emerged. If specialists were to be involved it was felt that they needed to provide support and guidance only, rather than use the service and explore issues more relevant to their level of experience. Initial training in the use of the wiki followed by provision of ongoing support and moderation was seen as key to enabling users to continue to use the wiki and be part of the community of practice. Yet, at the same time it was recognised that the initial set-up and support of any developing wiki-based community of practice requires a great deal of effort, commitment and time, though it is less resource-intensive after a critical mass of users has been obtained and it becomes self-sufficient. In this example, because of the way the project took shape and developed, time and necessary resources were not available after the completion of the project to continue facilitating the development of that initial community of practice.

Bearing in mind the limited nature of the exercise, it was concluded that given the right mix of factors, developing and maintaining a wiki can certainly prove valuable in enabling the non-specialist to potentially embrace the subject material when preparing and enable more social interactivity, supporting and scaffolding their learning. Such a wiki does have the potential to provide a means of support and communication between non-specialists in the informal and user-driven manner it had been created. If related to the concept of Salmon’s five stages of e-learning (Salmon 2002), however, then what was achieved within the project reaches only stage two/three and would need to be further progressed in order to achieve its potential usefulness, requiring consolidation and the continued application of Salmon’s model (communities can go back a stage as well as forward).

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE – INFLUENCING CHANGE

It is difficult to define how communities of practice may influence change, as their very nature of not being within the institutional structure can mean they are not always visible to outside view. There is evidence of formal groups coming out of FDTL, especially through interest groups in the subject centres, and also in projects that are pursuing a route that runs counter to institutional bureaucracy or structure.

Communities of practice forming out of projects can also have influence nationally. The FDTL4 *APPLET* (*Advancing the provision of pharmacy law and ethics teaching*) project aims to make a step change in the scope and content of law and ethics teaching in the pharmacy curriculum to support the pharmacists' changing role from supplier of medicines to clinical practitioner; an area where teaching is mostly provided by non-specialist, part-time teacher practitioners. From the responses that have come back from the FDTL community, it is clear that one key impact required was to influence institutional policy. Despite a host institution transition after the project's final report being filed in 2005, the project is still active and is now in position to lobby to the new regulatory body for pharmacy (the General Pharmaceutical Council) for minimum qualification standards for those teaching law and ethics to students. *APPLET* is in this position, sometime after the project's completion, due to both the persistence of the project team and a restructuring of *APPLET* as an interdependent network of all UK schools of pharmacy. From its FDTL origins, the *APPLET* Network is positioned nationally to contribute to the development of standards and criteria in professional pharmacy-related education and support educators to implement professional requirements into educational practice.

The relative freedom that FDTL projects were given to explore is one example of how they could be perceived as different to other funded projects, especially as they looked to build on the networks they had built. One project's community of practice has helped sustain it after its host institution failed to realise the momentum that had built up during the funded period:

[A project] has been successful post-funding and it is still in use at [institution] to accredit placement learning, and its use has extended to research governance. It was also adapted to monitor [students] in their training period. At one time, [FDTL project] was used by 22 groups spread over numerous UK universities. Its use was greatly affected adversely when the management of [the institution] sent out letters saying that [the project] was not going to be supported by [the institution] after its funding period ended. The project has been instrumental in getting a number of other related projects off the ground and the project teams are highly grateful for the funding to develop this system.

Communities of practice are transient, and although some dissolve as the defining need that created them is met or removed, some projects' communities have

also grown to become formal projects by obtaining further funding (for example, CETLs). From the reports from FDTL it appears that CoP formation is in some way cyclical. A CoP forms from a need, and then may gain sufficient support to become a funded project, may influence change that means the need is met, or may continue relatively unobserved. The reports indicate there are still many groups within the FDTL community who maintain an interest in a project, and it is these who keep the legacy of projects going.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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3

LONG-TERM IMPACT: LEARNING FROM THE LEGACY OF FDTL

GIUSEPPE CANNAVINA, CHRISTOPHER STOKES
AND MARY DICKINSON

BACKGROUND

The volume and variation of the FDTL projects make describing them as a homogenous group a practical and conceptual challenge. Similarly challenging is evaluating the long-term impacts they have made on their host institutions, their wider disciplines and teaching and learning sectors.

Each FDTL project had its own aims, and in the near-term (within the project life cycle) was measured against these aims as part of the evaluation process. Earlier in this section, some of these aims and their outcomes for the projects within the remit of health sciences have been described by looking at the final project reports, but in order to evaluate long-term impact sufficient time must pass before the project can be truly put into context. This chapter aims to look at what impact the FDTL projects had on their greater environment (their organisations or the higher education sector) *after* the funding had ended, and presents some observations on how long-term impact at this level could be maximised within future endeavours.

LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF PROJECTS

Beyond the short-term reporting period of projects such as those in FDTL, there may often be further value associated with the project that is delayed and only recognised by the organisation or stakeholders after the work of the projects has been completed. The work may later be reported or referred to in presentations, papers or books, but can equally be more tacit, manifesting itself as a shift in professional attitudes or practice, or as a stepping stone to further projects. This information is harder to measure, and often takes time to manifest.

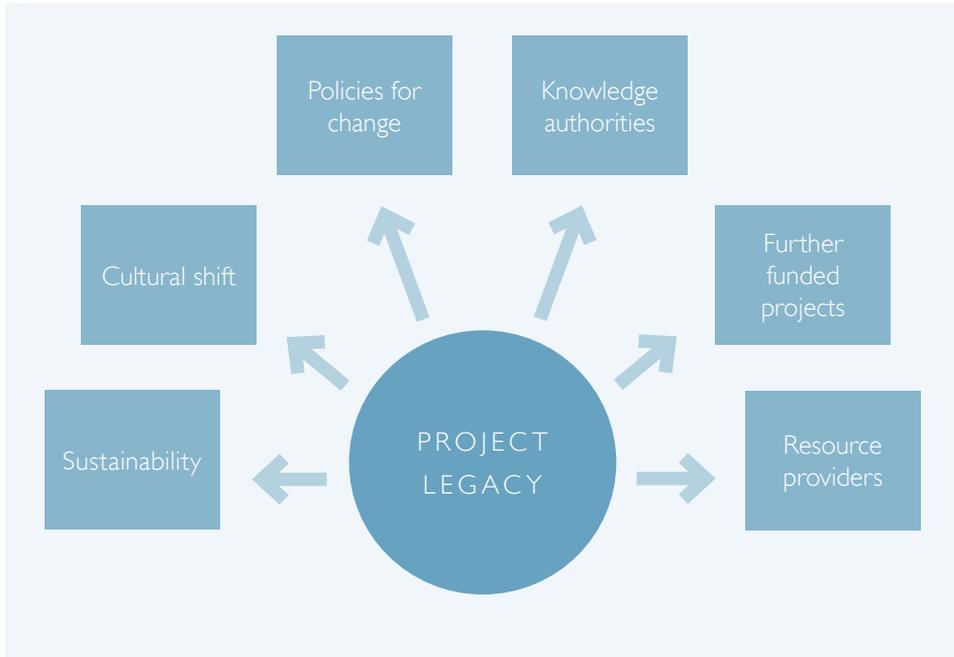
In preparation for writing this chapter, the authors took the view that long-term project impacts should have some identifiable traits that resulted from their original aims. Project aims were researched from as many projects as possible, and from these it was possible to identify broad categories of anticipated project impacts that should exceed the funded duration of the projects.

These categories were:

1. *Sustainability* – projects aimed to become financially self-sustaining at the conclusion of the funded project phase. In this case sustainability is used to mean a project or initiative that requires very little or no resources from its host institution in order to continue.
2. *Resource providers* – projects that aimed to produce resource packs, question banks, teaching materials etc.
3. *Cultural shift* – projects that aim to change the attitudes to accepted processes, such as applying new teaching concepts within a department or discipline.
4. *Policies for change* – projects that had an aim (explicit or implicit) of changing teaching and learning policy either locally or nationally.
5. *Knowledge authorities* – projects that had aimed to collate and synthesise knowledge or resources for the long-term benefit of their audience.
6. *Further funded projects* – projects that used FDTL as a means to test a proof of concept, or had an unexpected outcome that could benefit from further investigation. Differs to sustainability as the project requires further funding commitment from an outside source.

These outcomes will collectively be referred to as the ‘project legacy’.

Figure 1: The project legacy is made up of broad categories of anticipated project impacts that should extend beyond the funded project period.



An initial research exercise was conducted using a structured internet searching method. FDTL projects from phase one to four (phase five at this stage having been concluded too recently to offer a fair comparison) were searched by project name, number (e.g. FDTL4 WILeN was 162/02), host institution and project team names to identify a project website or description. Across phases one to four, 60 identifiable active sources were found using the three most popular internet search engines: Google, Yahoo and MSN Search (Nielsen Netratings 2008). From this list, possible contacts were approached by the authors to enquire about the long-term impact of their project. From these responses, further enquiries were distributed until a network of responses had been collated, and the responses were mapped to the anticipated long-term impacts identified from the projects' documentation. A summary of the project legacies obtained from this work is presented below.

SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

For a project to be self-sustaining, it must generate income or resources in order to cover its operating expenses. FDTL projects were funded typically for two or three years, and some have successfully made the transition to self-sustaining entities. Their survival in a competitive market could be seen as both a vindication of their project aims, and also evidence of a sustained project legacy.

One such example is the FDTL4 project *A core question bank linked to learning outcomes for undergraduate medicine*. Following the funding ending in December 2005, *UMAP (the Universities Medical Assessment Partnership)* immediately became a self-sustained entity, continuing to be hosted at the University of Manchester. The five partners that originally signed up to the grant proposal agreed to pay an equal fee to continue. Within two to three months the five-partner membership had doubled and membership continued to grow slowly thereafter. There are now 15 schools on the verge of a national collaboration, which would lead to a stakeholder group of 30 medical schools and a fundamental shift in the process of assessment in undergraduate medicine.

The *UMAP* project has continued to grow amassing a bank of over 6,000 items, with over 1,400 of the questions being used each year. The project team put their success down to planning for self-sustainability, and having a good product: “Our question writing and quality assurance structure has arguably reinvented the notions of robustness and defensibility of assessment practice.”

RESOURCE PROVIDERS

The legacy of some FDTL projects has been as a resource, locally, nationally or internationally. In comparison to a project in the ‘self-sustaining’ category, these projects need not be active, but are hosting a resource for access or download.

One example is the FDTL3 *SLICE (Student-centred learning in construction education)* project, which formally ended in 2004 when the funding finished and the team went their separate ways:

Of the eight packs produced I would say that Building Pathology and Quantity Surveying have proved to be the most popular. During the five years that have elapsed since the end of the SLICE project, these two have stood the test of time. I think that they are techniques that do not change i.e. dry rot will always be dry rot and how to recognise it and deal with it will always be part of the building surveyor’s required skills. Likewise the measurement of quantities will always be required by quantity surveyors ... I’ve been told that it is really useful for lecturers teaching the subject for the first time who are not quantity surveyors (SLICE team member).

There are many reasons why some of the resources have been more useful than others, including changing legislation making information no longer relevant, and others being of only minimal interest to the sector as a whole (not being taught on all the degrees in the sector). Although this data is anecdotal (based as it is on the number of remaining resource packs stored under a project member's desk), it is a valuable insight for project teams embarking on creating a resource for a subject or discipline.

The website of *The interculture project (ICP)* is often commended verbally and by email by colleagues from the UK and globally. Its materials (including quizzes and databases or resources) have not dated and are used in a number of different universities. "It could be said to have acted as something of a benchmark in the development of intercultural learning within the context of modern languages degrees in this country and abroad" (*ICP* team member).

The final example in this section is from the *FDTL4 Helping engineers learn mathematics (HELM)* project. The project website offers downloadable workbooks and resources, and the project director reports that some five years after the formal funding period ended, registered *HELM* users span 91 institutions, mostly in the UK but some overseas, and *HELM* continues to get requests for the resources.

Anticipating demand for the project resources is difficult, and past methods of handing out leaflets or CD-ROMs meant that getting it wrong could either be costly, or risk losing out on an opportunity to disseminate widely. The online revolution has changed this, as many materials can now be placed on a website and are delivered on demand, but this ease of dissemination brings new challenges of making sure your project is visible among the all the others. This issue is discussed further later in the chapter.

ADDING TO THE EVIDENCE BASE AND POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY

The FDTL projects were a programme of activity that aimed to stimulate developments in teaching and learning and to promote and disseminate good practice throughout the higher education sector. They were not research projects, and so did not have the explicit aim of publishing evidence-based material in peer-reviewed journals; however, many projects have done so either during or after the funding period.

The majority of output from the FDTL projects, across all the phases, seems to be located as web pages, newsletter articles, project publications and formal reports. These materials are easily accessible by the project's target audience while they are running, but once the project is completed it may be difficult to obtain these outputs (evidenced by the many broken links on the web). In contrast, publishing in peer-reviewed journals offers an established structure that makes the materials easier to find, even after the project has finished. So should projects aim to get peer-reviewed articles published in order to maintain a longer project legacy? This may depend on the nature of the materials produced by the project: if they are designed to influence institutional and sectoral change, the materials may only have a short-term

relevance, but projects can equally produce outcomes that become benchmarks or popular resources that continue to be of value. Considering the likely shelf-life of the project outputs is therefore necessary when considering the most suitable means for disseminating. Projects can be successful due to their timelessness, or equally their timeliness, and recognising in which category your project belongs can influence how it can be effectively disseminated.

The first example is from the FDTL2 *SMILE (Strategies for managing an independent learning environment)* project. The project has managed the feat of being seen as a common reference point when talking about learner autonomy:

In most conferences on independent learning and learner autonomy, there is always a section on the issue which project SMILE addressed regarding skills and the training of staff (SMILE project).

Other projects (e.g. FDTL4 *STAR (Student transition and retention)*, FDTL2 *DOPLA (Development of postgraduate and language assistants)*) have successfully balanced achieving a lasting legacy (in this case by publishing books), while still maintaining accessibility to the project's core deliverables without losing sight of its target audience:

We have published two and a half books aimed at particular target audiences. These are not 'scholarly works': they are designed to influence practice (STAR project).

STAR is still receiving requests for copies of project resources, and communication with the stakeholders and users of the project suggests that the resources are still very much in use. *DOPLA* also published a book of its findings and a further publication of its teacher training materials. Although FDTL programmes did not typically have publications as their aim, the nature and accessibility of the examples above does fit the overall FDTL aim of disseminating good practice.

INFLUENCING POLICY WITHIN INSTITUTIONS AND THE SECTOR

With the aim of promoting and disseminating good practice, some projects have had success at influencing policy within their host institutions and the wider sector. Projects have been particularly successful in changing previously inefficient institutional processes, and others have defined new job roles in the teaching and learning sector.

The *DOPLA* project has helped confirm the training of foreign language assistants and postgraduate assistants as a fixture in the academic year in its host institution. The *SMILE* project helped define training for a new emerging role in HE institutions, that of the language learning adviser:

There is now a qualification and a profile of the role, whereas there was no qualification or job profile available prior to this project. The context in relation to learner autonomy, Independent Learning Environments (e.g. open learning centres/ self-access centres) was very patchy (SMILE project).

As seen in the previous chapter, the FDTL4 APPLET project clearly promoted good practice at a number of levels: discipline, sector and nationally through registering authorities.

The FDTL4 FAST (*Formative assessment in science teaching*) project led change within its host institutions, but not in its initial funded phase:

An outcome of FAST was the Assessment for Learning Initiative to support (re) validation processes, particularly to 'ensure' (having a wider view of what was happening in other faculties and across the university), that learning outcomes/ assessment criteria were aligned, assessments were appropriate for the level of the course, and how feedback would be delivered to students. Centrally we have been major players in the re-writing of our regulations, basically making them more student-centred (and understandable), to allow more flexibility for individual module/course teams to provide more appropriate and flexible assessment packages, and making assessment for learning the prime concern, rather than assessment of learning. Some faculties have developed different strategies to deliver feedback more efficiently, supported by programmes of staff development to make the feedback more effective – I suppose improving quality, rather than just giving more (FAST project).

FURTHER PROJECT FUNDING: USING FDTL AS A STARTING POINT

The FDTL community reports many successes in using FDTL projects as a starting point for obtaining further funding.

In 2003 the *ViperLib* team were successful in winning a £75,000 award from FDTL4 to establish a library of images concerning the study of vision and visual perception. The website (www.viperlib.com) went live in August 2003 and by 2006 it had over 4,200 registered users and over 2,300 images all contributed by the vision community around the world. In 2005 it was further expanded by an award of £11,000 by the Higher Education Academy Psychology Network to introduce 'Viper2go', a series of 25 ready-made PowerPoint tutorials that can be downloaded from the site, and has since attracted further funding grants from Microsoft and JISC:

The success is attributed to good project management early in the project, a new focus on building the community around the project by disseminating information to potential users and donors, soliciting material from individuals and publishers,

protecting intellectual property, and perhaps using ‘creative commons’ licensing of our material in order to ensure that Viperlib not only survives but also grows in the future (ViperLib project team).

The *interculture project* provided the foundation for a further project funded by the ESRC, which has provided in-depth data of aspects of communication between language teaching assistants and mentors in French and English schools. It has also acted as a reference point for the work on intercultural communication promoted by the Subject Centre for Languages and Area Studies and the *LanQua* project of the European Commission.

FDTL projects have evolved into other projects at all scales of funding, and within the Higher Education Academy remit some FDTL projects have evolved into, or were the springboard for, successful Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning bids (CETL). For example, the FDTL4 *LeAP* project was the foundation for a successful bid to the CETL scheme (the work of *LeAP* – the development of PBL– continues in piCETL at the University of Leicester and with the University of Reading, an original FDTL partner) and the FDTL4 *ePortfolios* project has been brought into the much broader CETL4HealthNE.

LESSONS FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT FROM FDTL

The issues of project long-term impact explored in this chapter can be divided into the impact for the stakeholders involved in the project, and for those searching out the projects or their expertise later.

The process of searching for FDTL project legacies revealed that anybody researching for resources from the FDTL projects has a rich accessible resource that covers all the phases of the funding. The initial web-based research revealed some similarities between the more visible projects that are in position to inform, influence or network new visitors today.

- A project web presence is useful for maintaining interests and access to any outcomes of the project. Many FDTL projects maintain websites (even from as far back as phase one) to provide a useful starting point for research. The ease of finding the projects during the initial searches did vary, with projects later in the FDTL phases typically being more aware of offering an acronym or identifying phrase that would make the project easier to find. Earlier projects, and those using generic language, are very difficult to find.
- Projects that have published books or appeared in peer-reviewed literature remain visible among the many resources available on the web. The established structure for cataloguing peer-reviewed literature means the

material is accessible long after the project has completed. This outcome must be balanced between delivering project outcomes during the project such as workshops and newsletters, as the formal publication process can be too long for it to be of use in disseminating a new project.

- Consideration of the audience, and knowing who the audience is, can mean some resources or initiatives can be long-lasting. This chapter has given examples of projects still receiving requests for materials long after conclusion of the project as the outcomes have been sufficiently generic and timeless. In the examples given this success has been achieved by careful consideration of the needs of the stakeholders, but also by accident, and successful projects have been quick to capitalise on these successes.

In analysing the responses to the appeal for information about long-term impact, it is clear the structure of FDTL, providing as it did a testbed away from the pressures of research activity where experimental teaching and learning could be developed, has led to much innovation and enthusiasm. Long-term impacts also occurred from the projects building links with the subject centres, and from the information gathered the partnerships that formed have been a large factor in project sustainability.

The initiatives were managed by the Higher Education Academy and the subject centres in such a way as to encourage legacies, such as those discussed. The light touch with which the projects were overseen allowed for creativity to thrive, and with this has come a sense of ownership of many of the projects that has meant that they are still contributing to the HE teaching and learning community. It has meant that long after the funding has ended, people are still keen to discuss the learning and achievements that came from the projects and that FDTL is more than another funding grant on a CV.

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SECTION TWO:
CONCEPTUAL CHANGE
INTRODUCTION
TONY BROWN

This section takes a broad view of conceptual change, although some authors pin down this idea and use it in particular ways in their writing. For colleagues working beyond the immediate environment of projects it can be difficult to gather ideas, study key themes and explore the contribution to learning and teaching that these projects make. Although reading about individual projects will offer the reader insights into the thinking, activity and transformative experiences of the project and the teams, much of this material is buried deep in individual reports and much of the process learning is unavailable from project writing; hence the desire of the editors of this volume to try alternative ways of providing access to the creative life of the FDTL project process.

As new teams come together many projects metamorphose, developing beyond the original definitions and descriptions set out in bidding documents. The emergence of distinct project teams promotes discursive processes – often intense and wide-ranging – with the potential to push thinking in novel ways and provide powerful new contexts for learning for team members. Dialogue and negotiation create the conditions for cognitive and affective shifts, roles are established and shaped, and teams build distinctive relationships that serve to define the group and the project in ways that ensure their preservation throughout the entire project life cycle.

Beyond the immediate team and project boundaries, discursive engagement is often crucial in influencing the power base and scope of the work: not only in formal ways with funding council gatekeepers over ‘permissible’ activity, and the reporting of findings and definitions of progress, but also with colleagues and students operating just beyond project boundaries, defining legitimate peripheral academic activity. In relation to institutional gatekeepers, much of the engagement is about negotiating the interaction of project and institutional boundaries: accessing the project’s and the institution’s resources for mutual benefit and recognition. A further feature influencing project success derives

from what Foucault has called extradiscursive dependencies (Foucault¹ 1978, p13) between the project discourse and external conditions or factors within the institution and beyond, such as social or political changes, the consequences of which, either accidentally or deliberately, render the project more or less successful.

Conceptual changes occur as part of a group's *coming to know* – often in tacit ways resulting from in-group collaboration, both planned and accidental. These discursive practices heighten opportunities for conceptual shift within project teams; where knowledge, skills and new thinking may remain dispersed between the team members rather than being individually owned. Much conceptual change is dependent on behavioural and affective shifts, rather than being an expressly cognitive process. An individual team member's rapport with the group is often the key driver that allows for group knowing to scaffold conceptual change at an intrapersonal level. Coming to know promotes transformative conceptual shifts, forcing individuals to reconceptualise their professional world in ways that can have a profound influence on their individual academic self-perception. Through a recursive loop this can then feed back to the team thus contributing to further project development, influencing professional trajectories (from project to project, through to national and international recognition and reward): a process that makes project membership a crucial, though sometimes indiscriminate, force for promotion and future opportunity. This dynamic interplay at different levels of discourse leads to project change through an evocation of group forces including love and hate, attraction and resistance, passion, subterfuge, transparency, secrecy and denial. Members of project teams learn to manipulate these processes to their own ends and to promote project success. They learn to take advantage of opportunities, defend against attacks, work around barriers, negotiate permissions and arrive at tacit understandings that promote sought-after advantages for the well-being of a project and the individuals involved.

An important purpose of projects is to have a predetermined end point: this allows the project to be distinguished from the less time-bounded preoccupations of teaching and research groups and their departments. Often, too little attention is given to endings – by funders, by project teams and by the departments that contain them. Preparation for project endings is conceptually and effectively problematic: they are organised and managed effectively by only the most able and experienced project managers. As Mark Stone exemplifies in this volume, some of the most effective strategies for managing endings, such as reflective diaries, are established at the outset of a project. The most effective managers give attention to the relationships between the different modalities of discourse, managing the expectations of individuals, teams, departmental groups and funders in relation to personal and project goals, with the best managers achieving this even-handedly.

1 Foucault, M. (1978) "Politics and the Study of Discourse." *Ideology and Consciousness* 3.

Most funding bodies insist that projects should have a relevance that goes beyond project teams and the departments and institutions that host them. What is not so clear is whether that relevance can be planned to any great extent and which groups can best influence sectoral change. The sector lacks a broad embedded understanding of the best strategies for ensuring that projects speak to the sector and vice versa. Historically project teams were expected to meet their obligations of relevance to the sector, and much of the responsibility for achieving this has rested with them, being explicit in the requirements for reports, dissemination strategies and resources. However, since HE policy places a clear responsibility on the sector as a whole to raise the status of teaching, learning and curriculum enhancement in the disciplines, we could ask to what extent those not directly involved in national projects also have a responsibility to enhance learning and teaching by working to extract, absorb and integrate knowledge and understanding flowing from projects. Elsewhere² I argue that the old polarised views of teacher and learner with their separate responsibilities need to be replaced with a dynamic that sees learning as always relational. Following this argument, it is helpful to avoid constructing project teams or colleagues working beyond project boundaries as uniquely responsible for the learning that can come from projects. It is more productive to explore how learning can be derived from projects in terms of what project teams and extra-project colleagues can do as a result of effective interaction across the spatial, temporal and conceptual distance that exists.

If conceptual change involves shifts in attitudes and understandings, as Rachel Segal claims in this volume, then we need to explore what shifts in attitudes, understandings and processes need to be made by project teams to enhance their effectiveness in relating to colleagues across the sector who need to learn from them about pedagogy. Equally we need to explore what shifts are necessary for colleagues who are external to projects to engage more effectively with project processes and outcomes.

Acquisition strategies as well as dissemination strategies are important areas for development. Better strategies are needed – perhaps through exploitation of Web 2.0 technologies – to support project teams and colleagues external to projects in establishing engagement. A better understanding of more general rules of knowledge acquisition and application could help to support project structures and processes so that projects can spread to those beyond project boundaries – by becoming viral in some sense. Viral infection is a topical and dynamic metaphor for exploring and describing project legacy and sectoral inoculation.

- What general rules still need to be developed to enhance the potency for sustaining conceptual change in post-project contexts?

2 Brown, T. (2008) Education and after-education: exploring learning as a relational process. In: Gibson, S. and Haynes, J. (eds.) *Perspectives on Participation and Inclusion: Engaging Education*. London: Continuum.

- How do quality assurance, quality enhancement and quality degradation articulate with the legacy of national projects, and who, if anyone, is best placed to shape change?
- What processes of knowledge infection are efficacious and what can be learned from biological models of viral activity?
- Which mutations could be beneficial to the sector, which might need to be guarded against, and who is best placed to exercise judgment?

Neil Johnson of the University of Miami runs a research group in complex systems; discussing swine flu he commented: “there is a close link between the spread of ideas and the spread of a virus”³. However, at the moment the focus is on individual behaviour and risk. A future step is to focus on group dynamics (of organisations like schools and universities). Johnson’s work suggests that project teams could benefit by the addition of latecomers (in the same way that members join street gangs) and that an optimum size can be determined, at which point breaking up the group by terminating the project maximises the opportunities for individuals to influence the broader community. Although Johnson would be working to minimise the influence of viruses and gang members, the same modelling could help educational project planners to calculate maximum impact, and group dynamics modelling may have something to tell us about that.

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3 Blincoe, R. (2009) Criminal Behaviour – it’s all in the game. *Guardian*. 29 July. Available from: www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/jul/29/world-of-warcraft-crime [16 September 2009]

FDTLI *Leeds University music in education initiative (LUMEN)* project with a network of 18 HEIs and was a consortium member of another, based at the Royal College of Music. In 2001, she became National Co-ordinator for the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), as part of the TQEF National Co-ordination Team, based at the Centre for Higher Education Practice, Open University. At the NCT, she worked in Graham Gibbs' team in researching and publishing on institutional Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies: the institutional strand of the TQEF. She has also been the Senior Adviser for the individual strand of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) and the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL).

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CONCEPTUAL CHANGE: FDTL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TQEF

RACHEL SEGAL

This short piece shares a personal view from the perspective of an individual engaged within, and later responsible for, the management of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning. It involves some reflection from a variety of perspectives on the initiative and a degree of post-hoc rationalisation, the latter of which seems fitting in light of the constantly shifting context of higher education enhancement agendas. That fluid context may itself be construed as a manifestation of conceptual change – the phenomenon on which this chapter will reflect. It is worth acknowledging that the detail of the rationale for changes at policy level may prove elusive and largely a matter of conjecture.

There are several definitions of the notion of conceptual change⁴; for me, it involves at its most basic level shifts in attitude and understanding⁵. This, in turn, can effect changes in behaviours, processes and structures. This is a particularly relevant phenomenon to the understanding of FDTL, on a number of levels: conceptual change about and around learning and teaching enhancement at national policy level (particularly with regard to the policy context within which FDTL has been located), conceptual change as manifested in the initiative as a whole (and between and within the five different phases of the initiative), and conceptual change within the more immediate context of individual projects.

4 Although most of the literature on conceptual change is rooted in the hard sciences, there is a range of examples, e.g. Carey (1985), Katz (1979), Hempel (1952), and Nersessian (1989). See also the EARLI (European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction) Conceptual Change SIG at www.earli.org/special_interest_groups/conceptual.

5 Conceptual change is generally defined as learning that changes an existing conception (i.e. belief, idea, or way of thinking) [cf. Joan Davis at the University of Georgia].

THE CONTEXT OF THE FDTL PROGRAMME

The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) was officially established by HEFCE in 1999, in order to support a range of developments in teaching and learning. There was, in Government and within the funding councils for HE, a concern about the quality of learning and teaching in UK HE, the perception of which contrasted sharply with that of disciplinary research. With an invitation for phase one bids in 1995⁶, FDTL predated the TQEF and, as the 2005 summative evaluation of the TQEF pointed out, “TQEF followed – not preceded – HEFCE decisions to support subject initiatives through the FDTL”⁷. Nevertheless, FDTL came to be described retrospectively as a core strand of the TQEF – part of the disciplinary strand of the Fund (the others being the institutional strand, via institutional learning, teaching and assessment strategies, and the individual strand via the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme); CETLs formally became part of the TQEF only after they had been launched – a logical retrospective positioning and possibly another instance of post-hoc rationalisation.

Graham Gibbs, one of the founders of the National Co-ordination Team (NCT; latterly the TQEF National Co-ordination Team), articulated from the outset that, in light of the perceived teaching quality deficit in the mid- to late-1990s (Gibbs 1998, p2), there was mileage in applying the conditions that supported and facilitated research quality in HE to teaching in the sector. He identified 11 activities – routine features of disciplinary research environments – that could be employed in teaching, the last of which is particularly germane to the ethos of FDTL: “an emphasis on ‘going public’ which shares knowledge, builds on past knowledge, and provides platforms for both debate and peer esteem”⁸. These became core features of the early phases of FDTL in particular, primarily as a result of the theoretical underpinning for the NCT tender for the FDTL contract. This demonstrates an evidence-informed conceptual shift that built on the original driver of the initiative, as proposed by HEFCE and DENI, and had tangible impact on the nature and ethos of FDTL (HEFCE 1995,

6 The invitation to bid for phase one of FDTL (Circular 29/95) specified the initiative’s aims “to stimulate developments in teaching and learning; and to secure the widest possible involvement of institutions in the take-up and implementation of good teaching and learning practice”. This circular invited institutions to bid for funds under phase one of FDTL for the 15 units of assessment considered by the HEFCE Quality Assurance Division between February 1993 and June 1995.

7 See CHEMS Consulting (2005), point 1.5.

8 *ibid.* Other activities cited by Gibbs as contributing to ongoing quality included: “training researchers; employing (only) well trained researchers; retaining, rewarding and promoting (only) excellent researchers (through peer review); (institutional) funding of research development work (peer reviewed); funding research (peer reviewed, highly competitive); publication of the outcomes of work (peer reviewed, competitive); peer review of overall research for future funding”.

introduction). HEFCE's original invitation to tender for project support for FDTL specified that the Fund had been "established to support projects aimed at stimulating developments in teaching and learning" in HE and to "encourage the dissemination of good teaching and learning practice" across the sector.

The initial relationship between the funding body and those supporting and managing the initiative (HEFCE/DENI and the NCT, then the Academy, respectively) was an important component. Opportunities for the specialist co-ordination team to feed back directly into discussions at HEFCE provided the chance to feed emerging themes and evidence from projects and phases (and the initiative as a whole) straight into policy developments and debates at HEFCE, and offered the potential to support conceptual change. The NCT could in itself be seen as a project in co-ordination and knowledge management – a team of committed academics with educational development and/or pedagogic research experience and expertise.

CONCEPTUAL CHANGE AND THE FDTL PROGRAMME

Although not explicitly stated as such, conceptual change was undoubtedly one of the principal elements of FDTL. In the case of individual projects, examples of planned conceptual change might include: the design of programme structures and their impact on student learning; attitudes towards pedagogic practice; or engagement with pedagogic research. A central question here is how conceptual change is planned, designed and achieved (a perennial challenge for change agents such as institutional leaders, and educational and academic developers), but also whether a project-based initiative such as FDTL could be expected to effect conceptual change. Unsurprisingly, there were and still are sceptics and those with high expectations: "The kind of change that is needed is much more radical than anything the FDTL can bring about. ... What is needed is a marked shift that results in that kind of research being regarded as a natural part of academics' work, so that research and teaching become part of the same job"⁹. The same article in the then THES acknowledged the need for 'cultural shift' without which "FDTL can only tinker with the problem".

9 Institutional interviewee, as quoted in Utley (1998).

THE EVOLUTION OF THE FDTL PROGRAMME THROUGH THE FIVE PHASES

Each of the five phases of FDTL has been organised around a cluster of subjects corresponding to the subject review process of HEFCE's Quality Assurance Division, responsibility for which later passed to the QAA. Changes in the criteria for each successive phase of FDTL – some subtle, some less so – have communicated different attitudes to the initiative that in turn reveal evidence-informed conceptual change at policy level. One of the criteria for eligibility to bid in FDTLI was a high score in subject review and, in the case of consortium-based projects, the lead or host institution had to have a highly scored department in the relevant discipline(s) to be considered at all¹⁰. An opportunity to develop, share and stimulate practice already deemed to be excellent was essential, but this criterion was loosened in later phases as more instances (practice-based evidence) came to light of helpful and useful brokerage between high-scoring and low-scoring departments, particularly with regard to the objective to disseminate in order to ensure uptake.

From the academic practitioner's perspective, in 1995 before the formal establishment of the TQEF (i.e. in the first two phases of FDTL), the decision to engage openly in learning and teaching development work in HE (particularly in research-intensive institutions) represented for many a choice likely to be detrimental to their careers¹¹. It had also been acknowledged that individual academics identified most readily and meaningfully with their disciplines¹². In 1999 the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN), largely comprising the 24 subject centres, was established and became, along with the FDTL, part of the disciplinary strand of the TQEF. By the time the fourth phase of FDTL was to be launched, different policy imperatives had come to reshape the TQEF context. For example, the Government's widening participation target of 50 per cent participation and the concomitant necessity to diversify student intake came to be reflected in the second phase of TQEF (2002–03 to 2004–05, see

10 See HEFCE (1996), 'Learning and Teaching related' section.

11 For some this is still perceived to be the case. With regard to recollections of common perceptions in the mid-1990s, qualitative research I carried out three years ago with ten project managers and directors of projects from the first two phases of FDTL bear this out. In asking them open questions about their own perceptions of their career trajectories in HE, there were common self-declared characteristics that they identified and believed to have been necessary for their successful engagement in learning and teaching development work. Among those characteristics included behaviour perceived by colleagues and particularly managers as 'maverick'. Some regarded themselves as pioneers, working in spite of the normative conditions of HEIs rather than as part of that context. That engagement in learning and teaching in HE was characterised as 'otherness' is significant.

12 cf. Becher (1989), Becher and Trowler (2001), and Gibbs (1998).

HEFCE 2002), which corresponded with the third and fourth phases of FDTL. The thematic priorities included “widening participation; ensuring fair access to higher education; maintaining and improving retention rates; employability; and encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice”. This placed FDTL, as a core component of the TQEF, in a differently nuanced context, driven by different political imperatives.

REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE FDTL PROGRAMME IN ACHIEVING CONCEPTUAL CHANGE

There is a range of compelling evidence supporting the claim that FDTL has not only evolved in a context of conceptual change but has also effected conceptual change, and at a variety of levels. Much of this evidence resides with the ever-growing number of staff who have designed and delivered collaborative FDTL projects. The significant correlation of both personnel and thematic work between the FDTL, NTFS and CETL strands of the TQEF demonstrates a compelling picture of growth and development of experience, skills and expertise in learning and teaching development and associated activities. There is now a critical mass of colleagues who understand how to identify and address the levers for change at local and institutional levels, to manage learning and teaching development projects and processes in HE, people who are committed to the enhancement of student learning. This is not a matter of empty rhetoric – it is carried and promulgated by each and every FDTL team member, people who really care about their students and their students’ learning and who have chosen to make a commitment to some kind of meaningful improvement for them, often in the face of departmental policy that may reward and value research and administration over teaching.

Manifestations of this have included conceptual change for those directly involved in the delivery of the various projects – different understandings gleaned through their immediate experience of planning, managing, achieving and supporting positive and meaningful change in a number of contexts. FDTL teams have helped to effect everything from modest to radical (and sometimes fundamental) conceptual shifts primarily in the attitudes of their HE practitioner colleagues: to their students, or to their pedagogic practice, or in terms of their awareness of and willingness to engage with pedagogic research, for example.

One FDTL5 project director, a lecturer based at a research-intensive institution, described a fundamental shift in his conceptual understanding both of his own pedagogic practice and the potential role of the project he led. His starting point was the disciplinary canon and his route to FDTL was through a commitment to protecting that first and foremost, through his experience as a teacher of the subject who had never before engaged with pedagogic theory other than in a purely perfunctory way. As the project developed, he realised that aspects of

pedagogic and educational development theory underpinned precisely the kind of pedagogic practice he was trying to develop – somewhat of an epiphany for him and an element that helped him to make a compelling, evidence-informed case to others in his field. The subsequent difficulties of ‘being in a prophet in one’s own land’ present an entirely different set of challenges for him, but his story still demonstrates the potential for conceptual change at individual level.

It is interesting to note how FDTL, as a core component of the TQEF intended to operate primarily at the level of the discipline, in fact managed to effect change, particularly conceptual change, at the same range of levels as the broader initiative within which it was located.

Engagement in the design and delivery of learning and teaching development projects such as those that characterised FDTL can bring significant learning opportunities for members of project teams. The time that has now elapsed since the completion of the first three phases of FDTL allows us at this point to consider particularly the impact of personal engagement in projects on individual career trajectories. My own experience, as project manager of one FDTLI project and a consortium member of another, provides an example of an early career academic operating at junior lecturer level still on the conceptual periphery but ontological centre of learning and teaching, in a research-intensive department. While a junior member of staff running a single-discipline project, I came to understand that I had the capacity to manage a successful collaborative project that had the propensity to improve the offering for students in my discipline, and that I had also acquired knowledge and skills in identifying and activating levers for change and helping to make a difference (especially with recalcitrant senior staff in my own department). For example, working with immediate colleagues and those in other institutions, I helped to develop a new way of supporting UK students studying in conservatoires abroad, supported colleagues in formative assessment of group work, and led a team creating a tangible resource to support students’ subject-specific study skills.

FDTL has been successful in achieving conceptual change for a variety of reasons. Its project-based nature allowed busy and overcommitted colleagues and/or those anxious about overt engagement in learning and teaching in the mid-1990s to commit to a project with a finite timescale and, for those outside the core project team, to dip in and out of activity and development. The project-based nature of the initiative also meant that it was legitimate for the work to take conceptual understanding and/or practice from one point to another without having to metamorphose into an endless, ongoing programme. The shorter, fixed timescale, although representing very real logistical and knowledge management challenges, also facilitated intensive bursts of activity and development, and collaboration of colleagues with a clear and common goal including production of tangible outputs; the timescale also allowed the project to be topical within the limitations of the project bid, which formed the basis of the contract but were subject to change in consultation with NCT staff.

FDTL also allowed highly focused and carefully defined work, looking at very specific pedagogic ‘problems’ (Bass 1999) or issues and initially within specific disciplinary contexts. Different change trajectories may have focused on practice within their own departments, their institutions, or others’ departments and institutions and could range from new or different ways of focusing attention on learning and teaching, to better ways of achieving consensus on a particular aspect of the curriculum, to a better understanding of how they can address in their practice the needs of students who have to overcome learning obstacles. Whatever the focus of individual projects, their success depended on the facilitation of conceptual change.

The fact that FDTL is one of the few initiatives of its kind that was allowed to run through five different iterations, over almost 14 years and with an investment of over £37 million, demonstrates that the funders acknowledged the value of FDTL. The limitations of funding regimes were likely initially to have prompted the fixed-term project base of the initiative but the primary driver was the quality enhancement imperative, linked to quality assurance, which involved working through all disciplines covered by subject review in turn. However, HEFCE and DENI (now DELNI) could have chosen a different non-project-based route for phases three onwards, following the evaluation of FDTL1 and 2. By the time that FDTL3 was operating, I would conjecture that it was likely to have been clear to funders that conceptual change (moreover via discipline-based projects) was a key component of the initiative’s success with respect to achieving the kinds of stimulation of learning and teaching development and wider uptake for which they were hoping.

Conceptual shifts occurred not only for those of us who delivered the project, but also for those who engaged with it as the outputs were developed and rolled out, or who chose to make use of the resulting models or materials produced at the end of or beyond the project. I would contend that, aside from direct testimonials from those who recognise and are prepared to articulate the changes of attitude and understanding that occurred for them, evidence of engagement with project outputs can be said in turn to provide evidence also of conceptual change of some kind. Changes in practice will only ever be effected if they are preceded by some kind of conceptual shift in the minds of the potential adopters, and this is particularly true in the case of academic colleagues. In simple terms, unless there is clear articulation and acceptance of a theoretical or conceptual reason for change, whether a potential solution to an acknowledged problem or the introduction of a better way of conceptualising a particular facet of practice, the practical engagement in or realisation of that change, no matter how tentative, is unlikely to occur. This recalls the cliché of winning hearts and minds – a central component of conceptual change by its very nature.

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FROM FDTL TO CETL: REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY

MARK STONE AND REBECCA TURNER

In 2000, the *Student progression and transfer (SPAT)* project was funded through HEFCE's FDTL3 programme. It initially focused on the progression experiences of Higher National Diploma (HND) students moving from partner institutions of the Universities of Plymouth and Ulster on to the final year of Honours degree courses. Students' experience of transition can exert a significant impact on their academic achievement; when this experience is negative it has the potential to undermine a student's future performance, whereas when it is carefully managed it can provide a solid basis for their academic development (Harrison 2006). Commencing university study has been referred to as a "life passage" for some students, in that their arrival at university is intertwined with a series of expectations, new social and educational interactions and identity changes (Terenzini *et al.* 1996, Jackson 2003). Those students progressing from a HND face additional pressures of entering the established social and academic communities of their fellow students. However, adequate preparation of students and lecturers at the source and receiving institutions can alleviate some of the pressures these students may experience (Greenbank 2007). The Teaching Quality Audit had recognised the expertise of a faculty of the University of Plymouth in working collaboratively with partner colleges to provide this support within the context of land-based disciplines. The SPAT project consolidated, disseminated and built upon this expertise through external collaborations and cross-disciplinary working.

This chapter outlines the leadership and management approaches of the project director (Mark Stone) that were developed in the SPAT project, and which became central to the design and operation of the Higher Education Learning Partnerships (HELP) CETL. An educational researcher and developer (Rebecca Turner) working for the HELP CETL then discusses how the developments and learning made during the FDTL project informed the approach she has taken to supporting higher education (HE) practitioners working in further education (FE) colleges. The chapter concludes with an overview of technique employed by the project director to

capture, consolidate and reflect on his experiences of managing these projects, and how these reflections have informed his leadership practices.

REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY OF A PROJECT DIRECTOR

For a director of two large teaching and learning projects working in a challenging and dynamic area of HE provision, there is a need to take and manage risks, handle conflicts and support a growing number of colleagues. This is set against a backdrop of considerable policy developments regarding the future of HE within England (e.g. NCIHE 1997, DfES 2003, HEFCE 2003a, 2003b). The project director of *SPAT* and the *HELP CETL*, Mark Stone, took an active, situational leadership approach to facilitating the individuals within his teams, to focus them on the initial outputs and structures as a way to build towards complex meta-level outcomes (Hersey and Blanchard 1994, Wood 1988). To perform this role effectively requires the ability to work as an active reflector, drawing on the principles of Schön (1993); using a reflective approach has helped to Mark to articulate professional values, priorities and preferences. This has in turn assisted in the provision of effective leadership, especially when faced with negotiating tough challenges or ethical choices.

PROCESSES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

Rather than focusing on building a list of published outputs to demonstrate the impact of the *SPAT* project, the team concentrated its efforts on capturing and capitalising on the experiences of students, practitioners and managers in undertaking and supporting the progression and transfer process. Initially the experiences of these different groups within the project's host institutions (the Universities of Plymouth and Ulster) were collected through a series of questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Contact was then made with other researchers and practitioners identified as having experience in this area through a literature survey and early dissemination activities. The data collected at this stage informed the development of a suite of resources to support student progression and transfer (e.g. planning of induction and/or programmes of study). These resources were designed in a 'vanilla' format – plain and ready for easy customisation; to maximise their applicability to a range of audiences they were not tied to a specific discipline or context. The further development of these resources drew upon the principles of experiential learning (Kolb 1984). As outlined below, they underwent a continual cycle of implementation and evaluation with practitioners and institutions who tailored the resources to meet the needs of their students:

Resources were made available to existing contacts and offered to new collaborators. However, prior to the use of the resources, practitioners/collaborators were encouraged to adapt the resources for use within their own context/subject discipline.

Practitioners/collaborators were then requested to provide feedback to the *SPAT* team regarding:

1. Which aspects of the resources were added to and/or condensed;
2. The format in which the resources were presented in their own contexts/disciplines;
3. How the resources were integrated with institutions' existing support for students' progression and transfer (e.g. where there were existing materials to facilitate this process, the *SPAT* resources were simply used as an external checklist to review their materials against);
4. Stakeholder feedback following use of the customised *SPAT* resources.

The *SPAT* team then periodically revised the 'vanilla' resources in the light of this feedback, and collected examples of the customised resources in use. In the production of the final version, a team of experts with experience of HE in FE/student progression and transfer was brought in to undertake a final evaluation and ensure editorial consistency (Carter et al. 2003). This final set of resources included advice and guidance on the customisation and embedding of the progression and transfer process.

Therefore, while the physical outputs of the project were limited to a project report, a CD-ROM of resources, and a website, the outputs represented the collective experiences of approximately 200 university and college staff.

WORKING WITH AND FOR OTHERS

By placing emphasis upon process and outcome, collaboration and cross-discipline working were central to the operation of the *SPAT* project. This was exemplified by the flexible approach to dissemination taken by the team. In order to maximise opportunities to work with practitioners and develop resources, the team was willing to contribute to events and conferences organised by external agencies, and also worked outside the original subject focus of land-based provision. As a result, over the duration of the project the team worked with colleagues from 83 universities and

colleges, creating links with a diverse community of practitioners. The *SPAT* team did not plan this number of engagements. Instead, these collaborations grew organically, as the team either met or was connected to colleagues with interest in student progression and transfer. This approach echoes the literature on the service of leadership (e.g. Bass and Stogdill 1990, Greenleaf 1970) whereby the leader or whole project team place themselves in the service of their staff and partners, ensuring project success is shared between team members and collaborators. Operating in this manner suited the complex environments within which the team was working and allowed risk taking within a trusting culture. It also identified recruitment and retention of high quality staff and a flexible approach to collaboration as key to the success of this approach.

WORKING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT AND THE UNEXPECTED

While the external working of the team was exceeding expectations, the profile of the *SPAT* project within members' own institutions was initially limited. While the University of Plymouth had a longstanding commitment to the provision of HE in FE colleges, this provision had developed opportunistically. During the initial stages of the *SPAT* project, HE in FE was supported through a growing partnerships office. However, recognition of the strategic importance of this work by the institution was confirmed in 2003 when the University of Plymouth Partner Colleges (UPC) Faculty was established. The work of the *SPAT* project in supporting students and connecting practitioners formed part of the evidence base for UPC. This organisational change coincided with a shift in education policy as an increased emphasis was placed upon the role of HE in FE in the future development in English HE (NCIHE 1997, DfES 2003). These developments were not envisaged at the time the *SPAT* project commenced; however, due to the close working relationships established across HE and FE institutions, UPC was in an advantageous position to respond to these policy changes. These close relationships were what also made the time-consuming and detailed work of preparing a CETL bid possible.

BEYOND *SPAT* – THE HIGHER EDUCATION LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS CETL

Although the operation of the *SPAT* project had prioritised collaborative working, it was only as the project neared its end that the relationships between team members and external collaborators matured. It was at this time that discussions moved beyond the initial trigger points (e.g. development and evaluation of resources) to considering, at a more sophisticated level, partnership working and

the implications for students, practitioners and institutions. The sustainability of partnerships is an issue facing fixed-term, funded projects. The end of the *SPAT* project coincided with the successful bid for the HELP CETL, allowing continuity of the team and its ways of working. This continuity of staff has enabled the HELP CETL to continue working strategically with many external stakeholders, with members of the team now being called upon to advise, consult and inform other teaching and learning projects.

In reflecting on the relationships built during the *SPAT* project the HELP CETL team has noted that while practitioners and students played an integral role in developing the final resources, the initial point of contact by which these links were established was often institutional, centred primarily on senior managers. Although the *SPAT* project had resulted in resources that could support practitioners and students through the progression and transfer process, there was limited opportunity for practitioners to innovate and develop their own expertise. Drawing on the work of Lave and Wenger (1998), the HELP CETL brought together groups of HE in FE lecturing and support staff with relevant stakeholders (e.g. members of the Higher Education Academy and Foundation Degree Forward) into communities of practice established to encourage dialogue, including the sharing of ideas and experiences. In UPC these communities are serving to overcome the isolation individuals can feel working within an emerging sector and across a dispersed partner college network (Turner *et al.* 2008, Turner *et al.* 2009b). Nurturing communities of practice was integral to the operation of the HELP CETL and the long-term sustainability of the investment it enabled within the UPC network. The reward and recognition strategy implemented by the HELP CETL has been able to nurture the expertise of practitioners in the UPC to enable them to explore innovative HE practices in their disciplines in a way that was not possible in the *SPAT* project (Turner, 2008; Turner, 2009). As demonstrated below, four years into the HELP CETL the impact of this reward and recognition strategy upon practitioners within UPC has been far-reaching, varied and profound. Not only have practitioners been given the space to develop their practice, they have been provided opportunities to explore their identities as HE in FE professionals, as indicated by Liz McKenzie, a lecturer in Education at Truro and Penwith College who has been working with the HELP CETL since September 2005. Liz has been working toward a doctorate in education investigating trainee teachers' experiences of reflection, and, for Liz, the support of a wider network of HE in FE professionals and recognition from the HELP CETL has been invaluable. The following text was written during a writing retreat where HE in FE lecturing and support staff were supported to develop their academic writing skills:

Stevens (1996) suggests that metaphor is central to the ways in which we experience the world; similarly Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that metaphor pervades our very existence, structuring our perception, thoughts and actions. When I returned from my walk and sat down to write, I realised that climbing the hill represents a metaphor for achieving my doctorate. That's how I've been seeing it in my head – a hill I have to climb, and it was only through physically climbing the hill today that I realised the significance of what I was doing. My seemingly flippant comment about wanting to be 'up there' has much deeper significance. I want to be 'up there' in my academic life, I want to achieve my doctorate, that's at the top of the hill. Saban (2006) considers how metaphors structure our view of the world and Stevens (1996) comments that metaphors may either illuminate or obscure our understanding. My realisation of the operation of the metaphor in my thinking has helped me to understand my experience and enabled me to move forward.

Hunt (2006) refers to 'way markers' providing guidance through unfamiliar terrain and the HELP CETL Scheme has provided a series of 'way markers' for my development as a researcher. Just as I set out on a walk with a group other award holders and the company of a couple of them took me towards my goal, making me realise it was achievable, so the Award Holder Scheme has supported me in my journey towards my doctorate. I remember how I felt when I heard I had been successful in getting my HELP CETL award, the first stage 'way marker'. Just getting the award made me feel that what I was doing was worthwhile and that external validation gave me the confidence and courage to continue. Meeting other award holders from different colleges, hearing about others' research interests and feeling part of a research community was tremendously valuable. That community support has kept me going with my research, and supported me to attend and present at conferences, each of which represents another 'way marker' in my development as a researcher (McKenzie 2009).

This change in focus from the FDTL to the CETL necessitated the exploration by the project director of a hybrid role that brought together educational research and development. Although creating this dual staff role was initially a risk, as an educational researcher and developer from the HELP CETL now reflects, this hybrid role has allowed her to effectively support practitioner-led scholarship and undertake research into the impact of the expansion in HE in FE provision on those responsible for enacting government policy (e.g. Turner *et al.* 2008, Turner *et al.* 2009a, 2009b).

WORKING TO SUPPORT THE PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HE IN FE PRACTITIONERS

In line with HEFCE's (2005) rationale for the CETL initiative, the Award Holder Scheme was introduced to recognise lecturing and support staff working within the University of Plymouth's Partner College network (UPC) and reward their contributions to learning and teaching through personal and professional development (Turner 2008). Following the Dearing Report (NCIHE 1997) and the introduction of foundation degrees, considerable changes have taken place in the working practices of college lecturers who were teaching and/or supporting HE (Turner *et al.* 2008). HEFCE called for these individuals to be provided with opportunities to explore their HE role through relevant staff development activities, which should include opportunities for scholarly activity and research (HEFCE 2003). Research was an activity primarily associated with universities and not usually associated with the FE sector (Harwood and Harwood 2004, Huddleston and Unwin 2002). In 2005 when the HELP CETL was established, such opportunities within the FE sector were limited. Given this, the Award Holder Scheme was used as a mechanism to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning within HE in FE.

The implementation of the Award Holder Scheme drew on the experiences of other reward and recognition schemes nationally (e.g. National Teaching Fellowship Scheme) and internationally (e.g. Carnegie Scholars Programme) (Frame *et al.* 2006, Skelton 2005). Annually until 2010, the scheme offered UPC staff four grants ranging from £500 to £10,000, available through a competitive bidding process, to support their continuing professional development (CPD) and/or engagement with scholarly activity and research. In contrast to the SPAT project, the Award Holder Scheme placed an emphasis upon working with practitioners rather than institutions or managers. It was designed to be a 'grassroots' initiative whereby individual practitioners decided for themselves whether or not to put an application together. Applicants chose and developed an idea of interest to them that was also relevant to their practice and, if their application was successful, retained ownership of the project.

The Award Holder Scheme is now in its fourth year and has supported 75 lecturing and support staff from across the UPC network. A diverse range of CPD activities has been undertaken including course and conference attendance, institutional visits and the provision of time to write up and/or explore good practice (Turner 2008; Turner 2009). Research and development projects have been carried out into a range of areas relevant to the teaching and supporting of foundation degrees and HE learners, such as work-based learning, employer engagement and blended learning. Award holders who have completed their CPD activity or research have gone on to present their work at local, national and international conferences, contribute to practitioner-focused publications and implement changes to their teaching practice as a consequence of their work.

The award holder experience was designed to extend beyond a CPD activity or research project, and in practice this has worked. While some award holders have returned to an unchanged role within the college, for the majority of the group this was unimaginable, and has been referred to by one award holder as “going back into the darkness”. The impetus of these individuals has led to a phrase used within the HELP CETL team “once an award holder, always an award holder”, and for many award holders this is true. The award holders have become an established community of HE in FE lecturing and support staff, facilitated partly by events organised by the HELP CETL, but also by the energy and dynamism of this group of individuals. Becoming part of this community has served to overcome the professional isolation these individuals felt within their colleges and also working across a dispersed partnership:

“Just simply the opportunity to move out of your institution and collaborate with others who have similar issues, you feel so isolated sometimes especially in certain subject areas, as an HE in FE lecturer.”

Gaining the award and the associated recognition from the university gave many award holders a great confidence boost, not just with regard to conducting research or developing themselves, but also in relation to participating in activities they associated with universities (Turner et al. 2009):

“I’m always on the outside reading about stuff, or going to conferences and hearing about it and then there’s nothing actually going on here that I would be able to tell other people about so in so far as you’re doing something which means you can talk to other people.”

“I always thought that (research) was a bit above me but actually I’ve seen a lot of presentations and read papers and thought ‘I can do that’. I won’t claim I’m the best of presenters or the best of writers, but I don’t think I’m out of my league either.”

There was a sense from the award holders that the award gave them the permission, the legitimacy, to ask questions, explore areas of interest and implement changes that they had previously not had the opportunity to do, partly due to a lack of time, but also for many due again to a lack of confidence:

“It gave me knowledge which I had not previously had, as it was an unknown club that I wasn’t part of. Although I taught on HE I was never privy to meetings or any of that stuff, the paper work etc. was kept secret. Knowledge is power as they say, I was allowed to go and ask as I was doing research.”

As a consequence of the increased confidence individuals have experienced and their newfound knowledge, award holders have become agents of change within their colleges, the UPC network and also the university. They have had the space to link

their initial ideas to wider policy, theory and strategic developments within HE in FE. The influence of the work of the award holders is not restricted to the University of Plymouth. They are achieving national recognition, being called on by organisations such as the Higher Education Academy to speak at national events, rather than the HELP CETL team being asked to report on the work of the Award Holder Scheme.

As the Award Holder Scheme enters its fifth year and planning is taking place within the university for the post-HELP CETL era, staff have begun to reflect on the scheme. At the time of writing this piece, Rebecca Turner, who had been running the scheme since October 2006, had not envisaged the impact it could have on the lives of the participants. They have all acknowledged the impact it has had on their personal and professional development through the changes in their roles, the communities and groups they have become involved with and the people they have met:

“Personally, oh gosh, it makes me smile so it must be good, being an award holder has allowed me to meet some very excited, like-minded people in the HE environment. I have made some not (just) friends but good contacts with other lecturers and other award holders.”

When Rebecca began running the Award Holder Scheme it was hoped it would engender a culture of research and scholarly activity within the colleges from which award holders were drawn, but as has been demonstrated it has done so much more. While a culture of scholarly activity and research is still emerging within UPC, it is growing, and there is a firm belief that it will continue to do so partly due to the influence of various policy initiatives and imperatives, but also due to the motivation of HE in FE lecturing and support staff (Turner *et al.* 2009). The role of the HE in FE practitioner is gaining recognition within UPC and key characteristics of this role are a commitment to teaching and learning, developing and supporting learners, and engaging in HE-related staff development to ensure students have what UPC lecturers perceive as an HE experience (Turner *et al.* 2008).

POSTSCRIPT: LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENTS OF A PROJECT DIRECTOR

While elements of the practice developed through the SPAT project had been built into the CETL bid and work-plan, in preparing for the role of CETL director Mark spent time reflecting on lessons learnt from SPAT. The opportunity to take forward lesson learning on the SPAT project into the CETL seemed a unique opportunity, not least of which was the possibility to plan for a more deliberate capturing of experience. Therefore, from his perspective as an active reflector Mark developed a systematic approach to capturing his development as a project director by recording critical incidents. Both positive and negative critical incidents that triggered Mark to reflect on his practice, learning and knowledge were regularly captured. Mark used a template to capture these incidents that enabled him to describe the incident, reflect on the incident at the time of writing, and

also, if appropriate, to revisit the reflection. This has provided him with the opportunity to connect incidents and learning throughout the CETL, and capturing these critical incidents has become part an integral aspect of Mark’s leadership behaviour. He feels working in this way provides him with the structure to reflect, learn, make decisions and move on from situations, including those of a stressful nature. In turn, he feels this has given him greater capacity to support his team.

These critical incidents have now built up into a considerable body of work, and therefore Mark is in a position to document significant personal and professional developments that have been made managing the HELP CETL (see Table 1). As these examples demonstrate, the learning Mark has undergone and captured, has become central to the operation, and success, of the HELP CETL.

Table 1: Management practices informed by critical incident reflections

<i>Management lessons/practices</i>	<i>Overview of learning that has informed practice</i>
Networking	Seek out and collect good people – these people have enabled the formation of effective and multi-talented teams. They represent a source of advice, guidance and route to other good people.
Building and sustaining partnerships	Successful strategic working often necessitates the crossing of institutional boundaries and/or getting results from individuals that are either more senior, or not within your line management responsibilities. Key to this is effective listening, being straightforward, reliable, demonstrating an ability to work with different cultures and having fun.
Managing change	Communication is essential to manage change, particularly when these changes cross sectoral/institutional boundaries. Managing change is assisted by having a clear and achievable focus, building trust in the vision and demonstrating the capability to deliver. Such trust is built up through steps taken along the journey together.
Dissemination	Stakeholders value focus, brevity, clarity and consistency. It is important to be outward facing, to get to the influential first, to build recognition and buy-in, not wait for interest to grow or pundits to discover your work.

None of these lessons is uniquely valuable in isolation. However, taking time to think about the practice of project direction allows the project director to provide support at critical times while giving members of the team the freedom to develop their own areas of the projects, as demonstrated by Rebecca’s reflections. In the long run this allows more time to focus on the strategic work of directing and planning the next steps. The director’s work has to be built around strategy; providing wins for all and allowing individuals to play to their strengths. This in turn promotes the firm belief that providing academic leadership is not a position one attains through promotion, but a capability developed through practice and evidenced through influence.

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6

EMERGENT CONCEPTIONS OF ENQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

PAUL TOSEY, JULIET MCDONNELL AND DAVID AIREY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is based on a project that had three main aims:

- to improve student learning by deepening the learning experience to emphasise intentional ‘learning to learn’, so enabling students to become self-directed learners;
- to support staff as they evolve conceptions and practices in teaching and learning that are enquiry-based, and to map lines of development between current and more enquiry-based practice;
- to enhance knowledge of how to transfer educational developments through an evolutionary approach to introducing enquiry processes.

In this chapter we will outline the project, explore the way that conceptions of ‘enquiry-based learning’ (EBL) evolved during the project, and comment on the impact of the project at the University of Surrey and learning about educational change.

*Learning to Learn (L2L)*¹³ was a two-year project¹⁴ at the University of Surrey starting in January 2005 under the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning phase 5 (FDTL5). The project was centrally concerned with developing enquiry skills

13 www.som.surrey.ac.uk/learningtolearn

14 It was extended and became a 30-month project. The project delivered its final amended report in November 2007.

among undergraduate students. It promoted innovation in educational practice through supported EBL by seeking out examples of existing creative and dynamic teaching at Surrey, then further developing the ways in which students were encouraged to enquire, thus supporting them as they ‘learnt to learn’. Specifically, the project sought to embed learning to learn in five modules across three disciplines: health and medical sciences; biological and molecular sciences; management. The modules were diverse, yet shared an emphasis on developing skills of professional practice.

ENQUIRY-BASED LEARNING: INITIAL CONCEPTIONS

EBL¹⁵ and related pedagogic theories and practices have become prominent in higher education. Discourses of EBL appear nationally and internationally, for example in the Boyer Commission report (1998) and in disciplinary contexts such as health (Price 2001, Bebb and Pittam 2004). Several of the Centres of Excellence for Teaching and Learning (CETLs) established in 2005–06 that had an explicit EBL focus formed a ‘Learning Through Enquiry Alliance’ (LTEA)¹⁶, which included the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTRE)¹⁷.

EBL takes diverse forms, and its definition and relationship to other educational practices (notably Problem-Based Learning, or PBL) are contested. This project began with a distinctive notion of EBL that was broadened for the *L2L* project, yet remained influential and held particular challenges for mainstream teaching and learning (and vice versa). The source of this conception was an innovative, experiential Master’s programme for post-experience facilitators, coaches and consultants, called the MSc Change Agent Skills and Strategies (CASS) that began in 1992. It was the inclusion of this programme in the Subject Review of Education at Surrey in 2000 that qualified the (then) School of Educational Studies to bid under the FDTL5 scheme.

The roots of this programme lay in a tradition of humanistic education at Surrey initiated in the 1970s by the philosopher John Heron (Heron 1999). Hence the CASS programme had a humanistic ethos with an explicit goal to develop self-directed learners and practitioners (e.g. Tosey and Gregory 1998). Its teaching and learning strategy was predicated on experiential enquiry between peers and on the intentional development of skills of learning to learn. There was a strong emphasis on developing the ‘emotional competence’ (Heron 1992) of participants. The CASS programme also utilised a radical form of face-to-face, self- and peer assessment

15 Whether IBL (inquiry with an ‘I’) or EBL (enquiry with an ‘E’) appears to be arbitrary.

16 The Universities of Manchester, Sheffield, Reading, Surrey, Warwick and Gloucestershire, and Oxford Brookes University) www.ltea.ac.uk.

17 www.surrey.ac.uk/sceptre

that had been developed as a tool for professional education at Surrey over many years (Gregory 2002).

In short, it was significant that the CASS programme's notion of enquiry predated contemporary usage in HE. It was taken instead from a radical discourse of research known as 'human inquiry' (Reason and Rowan 1981) that, in its emphasis on (for example) self-knowledge, first-person enquiry and action research, appears in tension in various respects with economic and quality assurance-driven imperatives of HE today. For the *L2L* project, this conception was linked to a discourse of complexity. Thus the bid document referred to a "world of practice in the 21st century ... characterised by uncertainty and complexity" and "increasing emphasis in HE on the need to develop self-directed practitioners who can engage in enquiry, in order to navigate their way through such complexity and take meaningful action". EBL is also relevant to debates about research-based teaching (Jenkins *et al.* 2003), although the *L2L* project acknowledged rather than elaborated this connection.

In summary, the stance taken by the project was to describe certain characteristics of EBL, and to encourage leaders of the selected modules, in particular, to enhance these features.

EVOLVING CONCEPTIONS OF EBL

When *L2L* began we felt the need to provide a working definition of EBL. This became:

... a process of learning in which the learner has a significant influence on or choice about the aim, scope, or topic of their learning; AND attends intentionally to, learns about, and is guided or supported in, the process of learning. This process of learning draws upon research skills and study skills, but enquiry is not reducible to either research or study (Tosey and McDonnell 2006).

We resisted the temptation to define EBL as a singular practice, however, preferring to delineate a framework of characteristics (Tosey and McDonnell 2006) to indicate a family resemblance rather than a predetermined model. For example, we suggested that EBL would be characterised by a context in which the student frames the problem or subject of enquiry, compared with PBL, in which the teacher defines the task. Yet in an HE setting there is always, we would argue, a level at which enquiry is teacher-led, however tacitly.

One view might be that the *L2L* project watered down the CASS conception of enquiry and potentially lost its radical edge. Alternatively, one could say that *L2L* sought to make the emphasis on enquiry more widely accessible, recognising that it was unrealistic to transfer the notion wholesale from a specialist postgraduate source into mainstream undergraduate education.

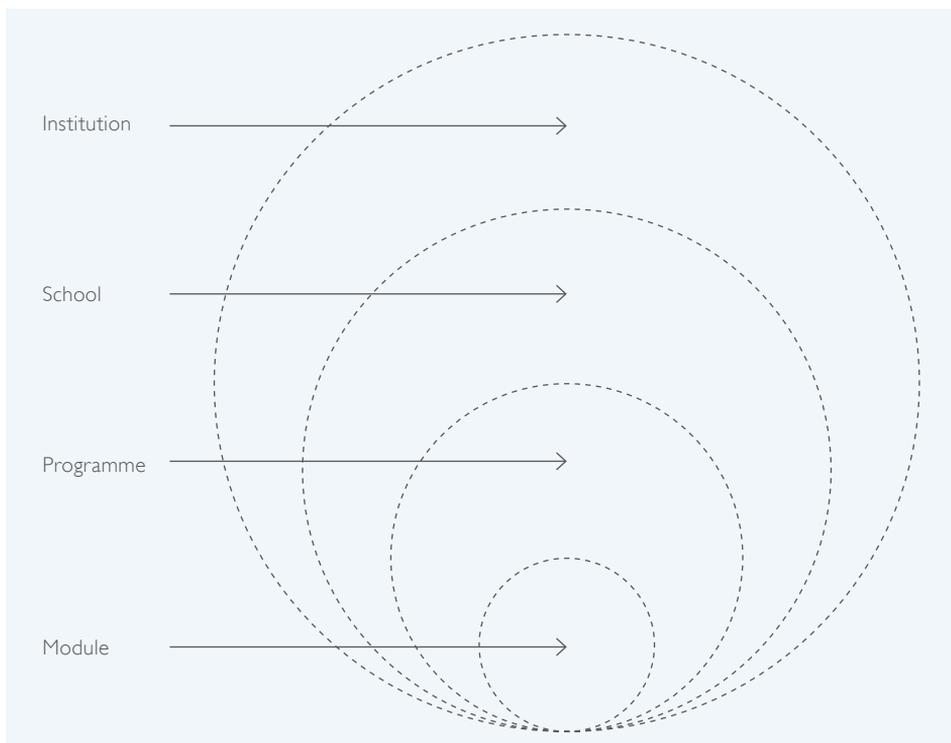
In fact there was some evidence among students of increased awareness of emotional competence:

I gradually started to come out of my shell and contribute more to discussions and made sure my ideas were being considered. This was not easy for me because I am not normally very forthcoming and I prefer to listen to others rather than to participate but in this particular project, I felt I had to step in before disaster materialised. It has done the world of good for my self confidence.

What L2L did retain was a commitment to the idea of learning to learn as a higher order capability. Thus the bid document referred to “the generic criterion of improving metacognitive skills in the curriculum”.

Next we explore the way the conception of EBL appears to have evolved at a number of levels.

Figure 2: Levels of system



MODULE LEVEL: THE CASE STUDIES

The five module co-ordinators began with a commitment to student learning and to the notion of enquiry. The following table summarises the emphasis of each development (as we perceive it in retrospect):

Table 2: The five L2L modules and their emphasis on EBL

<i>Module</i>	<i>Emphasis of EBL development through L2L</i>
Events management	Facilitation of reflective learning to elicit value from the experience of creating and managing a real event. Staff-intensive, focusing on individual reflective interviews with some 80 students.
Nursing 1	Developing practice-based mentors' capacity to support student learning from placement.
Nursing 2	Enhancing an existing problem-based learning module guided by a professional discourse of EBL.
Dietetics	Developing facilitation skills among associate tutors, especially to enhance their capacity to tutor groups and to discourage reliance on an information-giving style of tutoring.
Organisational change	Encourage student enquiry into real, complex situations involving organisational change, and engaging students in a creative process.

For staff, facilitation became a leading theme. We organised a regional workshop on facilitation 12 months into the project, which highlighted two things. First, it appeared that facilitation was a relatively unfamiliar notion and practice to many HE teachers. Second, facilitation is diverse and complex. We attempted to provide input on the day for staff who, with regard to experience with facilitation, were at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. This proved to be quite a stretch, and illustrated that different conceptions of facilitation existed¹⁸.

There were tensions too, such as recognising how EBL can conflict with curriculum, structures, systems and resources. Three of the five modules involved intensive face-to-face tutoring of students. In one case this was provided by existing associate tutors who were trained in facilitation by L2L, and in two cases L2L project staff acted as tutors to add to the teaching resource.

18 Materials from the event are available at: www.surrey.ac.uk/sceptre/enquirylearning.htm

There was also some evidence of changes in the conception of teaching and learning held by students.

The thing that sticks in my head about this module is the [Module Tutor saying] ... that we should question how we approach knowledge. For the last three years we were being told that this is black and this is white and this is what you're going to learn. Who's to say that is right? Because that is one person's interpretation ... through that [enquiry] mode of learning you question what you perceive knowledge to be. Appreciating that it's not black and white, you can question it ...

Students appreciated a module design that allowed for creativity and choice, and were able to consolidate learning from and for practice placements.

I prefer the practical side of modules completely. If every module had that interactive element of doing something creative not necessarily for assessment but something where you got together and talk, whereas in lectures you sit there in silence and you get told something and you go away.

Other comments expressed reservations about EBL. For example:

I just like straight lectures, because then you feel you are learning stuff.

I do not rate EBLs very highly. I feel the time spent on EBLs could be more usefully spent on learning about diseases and acquiring practical skills. We receive very little feedback about either the content or our presentations or our presentation skills. The EBLs to date have not been marked so students who have contributed minimally to presentations have not been penalised for their limited input. I feel I have gained very little from EBLs which will assist in my day to day practice as a nurse.

In the latter case the language used was especially interesting, since EBL had become concretised and nominalised as a thing (i.e. doing 'an EBL'), as distinct from being talked about as a process.

PROGRAMME

Something that seemed to us to be common across all five applications was the 'light' pedagogic philosophy at programme level, in stark contrast with the strong programme ethos of the MSc that was the basis for L2L. No doubt this was influenced at least in part by the modular design of the undergraduate programmes; the CASS programme, while formally comprising modules, was conceived of as a whole programme for single cohort led by an explicit educational philosophy.

SCHOOL

There were also interesting contrasts between Schools. One School had an explicit strategic commitment to EBL, linked to a clear disciplinary ‘language’ of EBL. The key champion for engagement with *L2L* operated in a strategic role within the School (although this role no longer exists). In this School the sense of engagement with the project was strong from a strategic level, and initially the major task of the project seemed to be one of how to create effective EBL in practice in modules. This changed over the course of the project. We facilitated two staff development seminars to explore notions of EBL, in which there was strong level of interest from participants and a lively discussion and engaged debate. Two module tutors gained significant professional development through their engagement in the project.

By contrast, a second School had what appeared to be strong examples of EBL practice, yet EBL appeared not to be significant at School level. There was no disciplinary discourse of EBL, and while EBL potentially met some current needs (e.g. improving student feedback), it was also perceived as a specialist and resource-intensive approach pursued by enthusiasts, not a universally applicable method. The School has very large student numbers, hence has a strong interest in innovations that are resource-efficient. Overall it appeared that EBL did not represent a solution to a problem that was on the School’s agenda.

INSTITUTION

The organisational arrangements for the project were designed to ensure that it linked with the key mechanisms for the support for learning developments in the university. Notably, the chair of the project steering group was the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for learning and teaching. Other members were the Head of the Centre for Learning Development (CLD), which provides support for academic staff, and the Head of SCEPTRe.

These arrangements provided fairly direct routes for the experiences from the project to inform practice and strategy in the university. For example:

1. The annual learning and teaching symposium organised by CLD and overseen by the university Learning and Teaching Strategy Group regularly included presentations relating to the project.
2. EBL, including outcomes from the project, is included in the programme taken by all newly appointed lecturers.
3. In addition to its focus on professional training, the other key strands of SCEPTRe’s work relate specifically to EBL. Many of the projects undertaken by academic staff with the support of SCEPTRe have related directly to EBL and a number of *L2L* module leaders were in the first cohort of SCEPTRe Fellows.

These and other activities took place in the context of the university's learning and teaching strategy. The overarching strategy developed in 2007 for the period 2007 to 2017 refers to students being given "opportunities for full engagement in the planning and development of their own learning" and students being "at the centre of its learning and teaching strategies". Within this a specific activity for 2007 was linked to the *L2L* project, expressed as "continue to develop an enquiry-rich curriculum and immersive learning experiences building on the strategic work of the *L2L* and *SCEPTrE* projects".

The review of actions against this item for 2007-08 included ten new enquiry-rich curriculum innovation projects, 20 staff from all four faculties being involved in a new enquiry-based learning initiative, a national conference and 60 immersive experience stories from staff and students. For 2008-09 the actions in support of the strategy continue to seek to ensure that "students are engaged as partners in the process of developing and enhancing their learning". This focus on the students as partners is noted in the 2009 academic audit conducted by the QAA, which commends as good practice the "institutional drive for cultural change towards an increased focus on the quality of student-centred learning".

During the period of the *L2L* project, the university was being restructured. The outcome was the creation of four faculties, with each having an associate dean responsible for learning and teaching and a separate learning and teaching committee. This had both positive and negative effects on developing the outcomes of the project. The university now has a much more transparent and obvious process for the development and implementation of strategy, with faculty learning and teaching strategies being developed in the context of the university strategy and with associate deans having broad oversight of the developments within their faculty and reporting to university committees. At the same time the faculty structure has permitted the appointment, from the academic staff, of four CLD faculty scholars supported by central funding for a part of their time, to encourage scholarly approaches to learning and teaching. In the medium term these sorts of changes will assist the development of strategies such as those related to enquiry-based learning. However, in the short term, while the faculty strategies have been under discussion and while the new organisational arrangements have been in the process of development, some of the initiatives have been held back, a point that is also acknowledged in the 2009 QAA audit report.

In summary, EBL has a continuing institutional presence and 'enquiry' has become part of the language of learning and teaching; for example through the CETL:

An important educational goal for SCEPTrE is to advance understanding and facilitate further development of collaborative, enquiry-rich processes for learning that will enable students to develop their capabilities as critical and creative enquirers¹⁹.

CONCLUSION

The conception of EBL appears to have evolved as follows:

Table 2: issues and outcomes at four levels of system

Level	Emergent EBL
Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — the project led to diverse local innovations and what 'EBL' meant to students varied – for some it was a process, for others a product; — EBL appeared to be highly dependent on the commitment of individual module tutors; — staff emphasised facilitation as a central skill involved in EBL; — some students thrived, and welcomed EBL as liberating, while others disliked it or were anxious about EBL.
Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — EBL may or may not link to a programme pedagogy.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — EBL may or may not link to a disciplinary discourse of EBL; — EBL can be taken up as a strategic/political development, or as local/tactical innovation; — EBL may or may not meet a perceived need.
Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — EBL has appeared in high profile texts such as institutional strategy and the remit of the institution's CETL, has received favourable comment in QAA reports, and has figured in recognition of the institution (NTF, CETL); — EBL has been highlighted through institutional recognition of individuals for learning and teaching; — At Surrey, EBL has become most identified with the notion of learning for complex professional worlds (linked to Surrey's professional training agenda), and less so with research-led teaching.

Impermanence is also a theme. Many members of the project team have left the institution, or have changed role. The MSc CASS programme had its final intake in 2006. Of the five modules in the project, one has been expanded to a 20-credit module to recognise the EBL, and one is being merged as part of a restructuring of the entire final year of its programme.

Finally, since a stated focus of L2L project was on conceptions of change, from the start we questioned the notion of 'transfer' as the guiding metaphor for change ('transfer' = to carry). Fullan (1999, p64) says: "There is really no such thing as easy product transfer in social reform. Innovation is not a pill, a widget or a silver bullet." In a similar vein, Elton (2002) has questioned the concept of dissemination in HE, arguing for an approach to change informed by Organisation Development (OD). Elton suggests: "It is argued that the major reason for the at least partial failure in the

dissemination of teaching innovations lies in the unidirectional approach used and the reliance on dissemination through education, both of which are in conflict with well established change theory...”

We therefore came to conceive of the key challenge not as one of transfer (of an entity) from one context to another, but instead of how the local emergence that already exists could be amplified. Emergence, a core concept from complexity theory (Goldstein 1999), has been defined as “the process by which patterns or global-level structures arise from interactive local-level processes. This ‘structure’ or ‘pattern’ cannot be understood or predicted from the behaviour or properties of the component units alone” (Mihata 1997, p31). It has been applied in education by Cooper *et al.* (2004), Davis and Sumara (2006), Fenwick (2003), and Haggis (2004), among others.

Hence we can conceive of the project as a catalyst for the emergent idea or ‘meme’ of EBL. This is not to suggest that *L2L* itself was a major factor in what emerged; as noted, EBL became prominent in national HE discourses especially through CETLs. The fact that EBL persists and continues to evolve in the institution probably provides the most significant evidence of impact.

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SECTION THREE

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

JULIE HUGHES

This section encouraged individuals and teams who had been involved in FDTL projects to reflect upon how their involvement had had an impact on their personal and professional development. Although originally not explicitly concerned with individual development *per se*, the FDTL initiative's aims were to stimulate and widely disseminate developments in learning and teaching with a focus upon tangible products for dissemination to wider subject and generic audiences. All three examples within this chapter successfully met the initiative's aims in terms of tangible evidence and dissemination. However, Judy McKimm and Helen Bulpitt's assertion that one of the greatest unanticipated impacts or effects of change of the FDTL initiative was upon individuals and staff development exemplifies an important conceptual shift to a consideration of the impact upon the development of people engaged in FDTL activities and communities. This also creates issues when attempting to evaluate retrospectively: as Judy and Helen identify, the very nature of funded project work often results in the dispersal of individuals and the lack of *visibility* of change as individuals move onto the next project.

The three narratives in this section offer a trajectory, or "chain of inter-connectedness" (McKimm and Bulpitt, Chapter Seven), that spans anticipated and unanticipated individual and community growth and the creation and exploitation of learning spaces (Savin-Baden 2007). Central to the development within all the narratives is the concept of the "project process as the learning environment" (Sambell and Gibson, Chapter Nine), which offers the opportunity for the individuals involved or, in Denise Robinson's case, the project itself, to potentially act as "boundary spanners" (McKimm and Bulpitt, Chapter Seven) working beyond the scope of the original FDTL project. In all of the examples there is evidence that individuals involved in FDTL experienced challenge around "learning edges" (McKimm and Bulpitt, Chapter Seven), which in the case of *ASSOCIate Online* (Huddersfield FDTL5) has gone on to become a national initiative with far-reaching staff

development implications within the teacher education community of the learning and skills sector (LSS).

The invitation for narrative accounts in this and the Conceptual change section reflects the desire to capture retrospective meaning making, which might offer new insights into conceptualising the impact of project involvement on an individual, group or ongoing project. The FDTL initiative can be historically positioned within “part of a general shift in the backdrop of priorities, emphases, seriousness and awareness within HE over the last 10 years or so associated with teaching and learning” (Saunders *et al.* 2007, p6). Kay Sambell and Mel Gibson articulate this backdrop (generic learning and teaching Higher Education Academy events) as serendipitously fuelling a number of chance encounters that facilitated the creation of a new pedagogic network and way of being, where “coming to know” (Sambell and Gibson, Chapter Nine) and the articulation of shared values in safe learning spaces emerged as a key driver in the *MEDAL (Making a difference: educational development to enhance academic literacy)* project (FDTL5). The opportunistic and symbolic nature of the ‘low-stakes space’ offered the opportunity for dialogue and personal and professional growth, which became the backbone of the project and its most important output. This development of staff confidence within a supportive community resulted in unanticipated professional development activities and outputs such as publications from emergent pedagogic writers, in some a reflexive shift in the sense of self as an academic leader and, interestingly, in the award of a National Teaching Fellowship to all core consortium members by the end of the project.

Although not explicit in Denise’s example, her work in learning and teaching has also been recognised on a national level with the award of a National Teaching Fellowship in 2009. Judy and Helen’s study across the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres for Health Sciences and Practice (HSaP) and Veterinary Medicine (MEDEV) with 17 FDTL4 initiatives identifies that “the projects were an excellent training ground for many individuals who were seen as effective change agents and thus sought after by other institutions”. All three pieces in this section offer examples of individual interconnectedness into other learning and teaching funded initiatives – NTFs, CETLs, CETT – however, as Judy and Helen conclude, projects, and by implication wider learning and teaching activity, cannot “rest on individual champions for success”. The sector must “invest in leadership development”. As we are nearing the end of a five-year period of HEFCE CETL (Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) funded investment (£351 million in 74 projects) in England from 2005 to 2010, it is fruitful to consider Judy and Helen’s comment about capturing just-in-time narrative accounts from individuals to ensure the visibility of their personal and professional learning gained through their engagement with funded projects and project communities.

JOINING THE DOTS

Judy and Helen's study articulates the clear view that projects benefited if individuals were part of an established internal or external culture/network led by individuals able to join the dots for the benefit of all. It was necessary for these horizon gazers to be risk takers who brokered, mediated and mentored others in boundary crossing. In the *ASSOCIate Online* project, development and evaluation is still ongoing and the boundary crossing is identifying sector, as well as individual development, needs around community and individual learning. The lessons learnt from the *MEDAL* project are that there is also a need for some communities to create their own "learning spaces" (Savin-Baden 2007) or networks that are mental and metaphorical, academic and social.

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Judy and Helen, as part of the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres for Health Sciences and Practice (HSaP) and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine (MEDEV), worked on the evaluation of 17 FDTL4 (2002 to 2006) health-related projects. The evaluation drew upon small-scale impact studies conducted in 2006 and Helen King's (2007) report on the FDTL4 projects. The report considers the leadership and management issues, successful leadership approaches, the impact upon professional development, and lessons learned.

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Kay and Mel worked on the FDTL5 *MEDAL: Making a difference: educational development to enhance academic literacy* project (2004 to 2008). The *MEDAL* project, led by staff at Northumbria University, brought together a consortium of lecturers who teach about childhood within universities across the UK, namely Durham University, the University of York, York St John University and Roehampton University. The project supported the development, evaluation and dissemination of learning resources, reports, guides and models, in conjunction with staff and educational developers, for use in assisting new and practising teachers of inter-disciplinary courses, within and beyond childhood studies, to support their students' academic literacy effectively. See <http://medal.unn.ac.uk>.

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Denise worked on the FDTL5 *ASSOCiate Online* project (2004 to 2007). The *ASSOCiate Online* project partnership was led by the University of Huddersfield and the Consortium for Post-Compulsory Education and Training in collaboration with Bath Spa University, the University of Greenwich and the University of Wolverhampton. The project was directed at the development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) targeted specifically at trainees in initial teacher education (ITE) in the learning and skills sector (LSS) to support their development in subject specialist networking. In 2007 the Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training led by the University of Huddersfield took over responsibility for the operation, extension and development of *ASSOCiate Online*, which anticipates a progressive move over three years towards a self-sustaining basis. See <http://associate.hud.ac.uk>.

7

FDTL PROJECTS AS A TESTING GROUND FOR
MODELS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

JUDY MCKIMM AND HELEN BULPITT

BACKGROUND

From 2002 to 2006, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres for Health Sciences and Practice (HSaP) and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine (MEDEV) provided support for 17 FDTL4 projects by assisting with development, networking, dissemination, advising or attending steering group meetings or other events.

Many of the projects faced similar issues related to working within complex networks crossing health, social care and education: engaging and liaising with multiple layers of relationships between stakeholders, including students, service users, institutions, funding, professional and regulatory bodies and NHS and other employers (including trusts, workforce deaneries and strategic health authorities). Developing and delivering learning across education, health and other public service organisations is challenging, particularly given the need for programmes to meet the requirements of professional and regulatory bodies around practice learning and fitness to practise. Management issues are further complicated by the diverse funding arrangements that support health professionals' education and training, involving funding through the HE funding councils as well as from the Department of Health through strategic health authorities and workforce deaneries.

It was agreed that the two subject centres should undertake small-scale impact studies in 2006 to identify some of the real and perceived impacts of these projects, drawing from data gathered from project documentation and interviews with each of the stakeholder groups. It is worth noting that policy, funding mechanisms and regulation related to the delivery of education programmes in this sector have subsequently changed.

This chapter draws from the findings of these impact studies and the findings of the report on FDTL4 projects by Helen King in 2007. We consider some of the leadership

and management issues faced by the FDTL4 health-related project leaders, explore leadership approaches that appear to be particularly successful, review the impact on the professional development of those involved, and identify some lessons learned.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

It is very clear that one of the greatest impacts of these projects was on individuals and staff development. The learning that individuals gained through participation in the projects is immense; however, the essence, or what the HSaP report (2006, p17) calls the “chain of inter-connectedness”, is hard to capture. In thinking about how FDTL projects impacted on individuals’ leadership and management development and approaches (and how those individuals impacted on the projects), we will therefore use a framework that enables us to consider professional and organisational perspectives within a structural view of change (Close 2009).

Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest that change can be understood from four perspectives or ‘organisational frames’, each of which represents key traditions in organisational thinking:

- human resource: involving people, enabling us to think about the psychological factors involved, including support, participation, transition and resistance;
- structural: working within formal organisational structures, processes and teams;
- symbolic: cultural aspects of work, the meaning and significance of activities, values, beliefs and models of practice;
- political: political understanding and skills, identifying arenas of competing interest, power relations, status, conflict and disagreements.

We will take each of these inter-related ‘frames’ in turn to consider how leaders (typically project managers and directors) from the FDTL4 health-related projects engaged with their projects, the organisations involved in the projects, the HE sector and the wider health community.

THE HUMAN RESOURCE FRAME

The overt focus and stated deliverables of the FDTL projects were to produce tangible products (including learning materials, resources, activities, staff development events and assessment tools). Evaluation reports identified a much wider impact, which centred predominantly on the development of people: students, HE staff, wide groups of national and international stakeholders, and

other users. To achieve impact, project leaders were therefore required to involve people at many levels and in many ways, ranging from the direct project team, steering groups, organisational stakeholders, subject discipline networks and wider HE and health communities.

The personal qualities of project leaders and teams were often instrumental in the success of the projects. Many projects changed significantly from inception to implementation as teams responded to change in the external environment and the input of a wide range of stakeholders. Leaders needed to “rely on their skills as interpreters of meaning articulated in different ways by multiple stakeholders. The hero visionary does not fit in the post-modern world, leaders need to listen to and focus on individuals with their own world views” (McKimm and Swanwick 2006, p15). This understanding is demonstrated by comments such as:

much of the project impact is dispersed through people, it is modified by their own situations, experiences and positions, and for health-related projects, the longer term impact is on improved patient care and service delivery (MEDEV report, p16).

Because these projects are being carried out across organisational and professional boundaries, relying on transactional leadership (which Kotter (1996) suggests is very similar to management, revolving around systems and resources) is not sufficient to overcome possible resistance and indeed may set up barriers. Effective project leadership requires good management (for example, skills in project management or financial management) as well as paying attention to strategy and people – a feature of transformational leadership (Kotter 1996). Comments made by many of the project leaders indicate that (while they may not use the actual concepts and rhetoric) they are displaying many of the characteristics of transformational leadership, which, perhaps unsurprisingly, also underpins the NHS Leadership Qualities Framework (Department of Health 2006).

Project leaders also displayed understanding of the fluidity of decision-making within highly autonomous organisations and teams. This highlights the need for situational or contingency leadership which Gilbert defines as “an approach based on the commonsensical idea that there will be interactions in most situations between the leader’s attitude and attitudes, the tasks to be undertaken, the strengths and weaknesses of the team and the environment in which the leader and team have to operate” (2005, p53). Loss of team members, variable (sometimes absent) institutional and national support, changing steering group representatives, and a rapidly changing external environment required leaders to display resilience, good self-insight and emotional maturity:

... the way the project was designed it was very inclusive rather than exclusive in that it was designed to have participants working in to help for the project from the word go ... so they all got to hear about it from an early stage (HSaP report, p14).

THE STRUCTURAL FRAME

UK higher education often provides targeted funding for specific initiatives, which has huge impact across the sector, within organisations and subject communities and for individuals. The most successful projects are led by individuals who, through virtue of organisational position and support, locate the project within formal organisational structures and processes. “Situations must be understood at local level with particular attention to diversity” (Keogh and Tobin 2001, p11). Successful project leaders therefore require a good understanding of formal mechanisms and roles of senior management within the institution:

... if you are embedded in the culture of an organisation, you have got a much better opportunity to make the most of it (HSaP report, p14).

Project managers need to engage in different leadership activities and adopt different leadership styles dependant on the situation. Goleman (2000) suggests that effective leaders need to adopt a range of styles – coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pace-setting, and coaching – in order to achieve project aims. The importance of communicating a clear vision and mobilising a “guiding coalition” (Kotter 1996) to help the project in the early stages and when things got tough, was seen as very important:

It has proved vital to engage with senior academics and curriculum officers at an early stage. This was a key contributing factor to the success of this project ... the Sub Dean for Teaching, Learning and Assessment has played an important role in the project. Without his support it would have been harder to get approval from the Board of Studies (MEDEV report, p5).

Project champions were identified by many project leaders as being vital to the success of the project. The majority of project leaders were (almost by definition) project champions themselves, but it was acknowledged that in itself this was insufficient to ensure long-term success, particularly as people moved on to other roles and organisations. There is a paradox for HEIs with an active culture of development and change (which often engage in projects and other externally funded initiatives) in that people learn and then move on. Active strategic management and succession planning is required to ensure the organisation retains staff to support such initiatives rather than allowing projects to drift.

Numerous strategies were employed to engage people from a range of organisations in management processes, including participation in steering groups, developing shared resources and engaging in training and development opportunities. Projects that worked across clinical, national or international boundaries involved making decisions as to how ownership of project activities, outputs and resources

would be agreed. Here leaders often employ situational or contingency leadership where “leaders adapt their stance and style to the particular situation, rather than seeing one leadership approach as being the ‘right one’” (McKimm and Swanwick 2006, p15). Bolden’s (2007) concept of distributed leadership also helps illuminate how leaders worked across boundaries, managing meaning and devolving power.

However, there were times when formal structures, particularly relating to bureaucracy or funding arrangements, impeded the projects. Projects that had effective internal (e.g. through PVCs or other senior champions) or external support achieved more and had greater impact. This would appear obvious, but some projects were impeded by their relative inexperience and inability to ‘join the dots’ and make connections at national level and specifically across subject discipline or institutional boundaries. Some of the issues encountered in the early stages may have been avoided by some focused training for project teams around project and risk management. Projects whose focus did not neatly align with national or institutional policy agendas; where the projects didn’t ‘fit’; or where the policy agenda they had been working towards had ‘slipped off the radar’ sometimes struggled to carry out their projects and keep a focus. The external evaluators were seen as providing good support, as were the subject centres. Support of the National Co-ordination Team was identified as not always consistent. To enable projects to have high policy impact, as opposed to raising awareness or effecting specific curriculum changes, it is essential to provide consistent support and advice at national level.

THE SYMBOLIC FRAME

Understanding the nature of different work and professional cultures is essential for all projects, but is particularly important for projects that operate across organisational, sectoral and professional boundaries. Here the concept of leaders as “boundary spanners” (Bradshaw 1999) who work across spaces helps to explain the effectiveness of some project teams that successfully worked with HE and health organisations to effect change. The roles of FDTL project leaders have much in common with the co-ordination roles required in integrated public services. Hartle *et al.* (referring to the Integrated Children’s Service Agenda) suggest that these new leaders have roles that “fit between the operational and policy ones. They are about working with others, collaborating, networking, gaining trust and respect, and building effective relationships. Clearly these characteristics underpin effective integrated working” (Hartle *et al.* 2008, p40).

In health and social care, being able to engage with core values and beliefs around the purpose of educational projects within healthcare settings is central. Public service leadership is often seen as being based around “servant leadership” (Greenleaf 1977) or ‘moral leadership’, which is underpinned by integrity, emphasises values and vision, and where “professional will is seen alongside personal self-

effacement” (Collins 2001). Often, project leaders worked to ensure the success of the project, sometimes to their own detriment. Although many project leaders achieved personal career improvement, awards and promotions as a result of their involvement in the FDTL projects, for others the decision to manage a project involved stepping out of a conventional academic career, which led to difficulties once the project funding has finished. Some projects included research components in their activities, which helped individuals and teams maintain a publication output.

Projects being carried out across HE and health sectors face additional challenges. Not only is it a complex, rapidly changing field with multiple stakeholders, but the range of professionals involved also highlights potential issues for project leaders. Fassauer and Schirmer suggest that “professionals ... identify with the professional community and its values and norms, rather than with the managerial-led organisation ... the attractiveness of joining a coalition depends on its values, norms, goals and vision ... change agents and recipients have to identify with the goals and visions of the change coalition in order to become coalition members” (2009, p19).

Project leaders need to be able to articulate the vision of their projects within complex, multi-stakeholder settings and exemplify value-led or moral leadership. Busy stakeholders in health service and education need to be able to see the meaning, significance and benefit of the project to their day-to-day work. Management of meaning in accordance with values, beliefs and work practices is vital, not only at project inception, but throughout the life of the project in order to keep people engaged and on board. For some projects, the project itself became a symbol or artefact that could be used to challenge and co-create meaning, effect change and provide a focus for discussions around values, beliefs and cultural models of practices.

Having obtained funding for a nationally recognised project gives credibility to the project team, legitimacy to the issue or topic that perhaps has not been there previously and allows debate and engagement with the subject (MEDEV report, p10).

Project teams noticed that, through involvement in the project, their own ‘learning edges’ were challenged, awareness was raised and many became experts in a particular area of learning. The development and legitimising of expertise has implications for organisations, many of which were able to capitalise on successful FDTL projects through obtaining further funding, including CETLs. A core quality of individual leadership is being seen as an expert in your field; some projects and project teams became the national experts in some areas with wide-ranging impact on educational practice. For example, “I honestly think that the project is a landmark point in the history of disabled people working in the healthcare professions” (MEDEV report, p12).

The close links between many of the projects and the project leaders (who were often seen as the ‘name’ of the project or as ‘being’ the project), while ensuring success and driving forward the project at one level, poses risk when people move

on. The FDTL projects proved an excellent training ground for many individuals who were seen as effective change agents and thus sought after by other organisations. As we have seen, a key issue identified across all FDTL4 projects is that of maintaining sustainability once external funding has finished and of retaining organisational memory and expertise. It is vital to embed learning within not only organisational memory but also sector memory so that higher level, long-term impact can be achieved. This involves a combination of identifying champions as well as locking the learning into policies, strategies, formal structures and funding streams.

THE POLITICAL FRAME

Health professionals' education is a highly politicised arena with multiple stakeholders working within a crowded stage. Buchanan and Badham (2008) suggest that skilled positive political behaviour is essential and ethical effectively to implement change. The idea of health leaders requiring political 'savvy' is echoed by nursing writers (Antrobus 2003), policy makers in health, frameworks such as the Medical Leadership Competencies Framework (Department of Health 2008), and in higher education by management and leadership development programmes offered by HEIs as well as the Leadership Foundation for HE. However, these are relatively recent developments and in 2001–02 when the FDTL4 projects were conceptualised and initiated, the need for individuals working at the level of project managers and directors to learn leadership and engage with politics was less well recognised. This led to situations such as:

... we ended up in a strangely political situation ... this was difficult ... we wanted to be part of the debate but couldn't really involve the project in political comments (MEDEV report, p3).

However, it is vital that project leaders (particularly in fast-changing environments such as health, social care and public services) take account of the external environment, use horizon-scanning skills and maintain a good network of contacts to remain vigilant as to the possible risks and impact (as well as opportunities) of external change. Good examples of where FDTL project teams responded creatively to the challenge of external change are where they used collaborative leadership skills to develop links with external organisations to develop collaborative activities. Being aware of policy agendas also helped some projects lock into and influence policy debate at national and organisational levels.

Another feature of many project leaders that links to servant leadership is their awareness of the long term:

If you are wanting to gain any meaningful change at national level you are travelling in parallel with development work and cultures and you can only make progress a

step at a time ... you are throwing out concepts, challenging people's assumptions and sending out ripples in a pond. You are probably looking at five years and probably longer, even three years is too short a time (MEDEV report, p12).

Leadership skills that are important here include the ability to negotiate and influence at an appropriate level, taking a flexible approach to achieving project aims, being able to adapt to changing circumstances and being a 'leader as connector' – knowing who to engage with and having a wide network of colleagues and contacts. For example, some projects spent a year to eighteen months in developing networks so as to be inclusive of stakeholders across disciplines, professions and organisations, which was seen as fundamental to the success and impact of the projects. The concept of sharing power through formal and informal collaborations, “the more power we share, the more power we have” (Turning Point Program 2003), underpins how many projects achieved their aims. This aspiration was tempered by constraints imposed by funding, bureaucracy and a “culture of unwillingness and secrecy to share information” (HSaP report, p14). Other projects encountered real difficulty in engaging stakeholders through time constraints, or through engagement of NHS colleagues, resentment over the project, unwillingness of other organisations to engage with the project and the inability to offer free resources or development events once the project funding has ceased.

CONCLUSIONS

Although measuring long-term impact is problematic, the FDTL4 projects were evaluated as having a positive impact on the sector: on individuals, on departments and institutions, on subject disciplines, and on students. For some of the health projects there was also an identified impact, although much less direct, on professional bodies, healthcare and patients. Projects also achieved their aims and in many cases provided additional deliverables or outputs. We can take from this that the projects were, on the whole, well led and well managed by project teams who were appointed on the basis of their expertise around the project topic, their knowledge and position in the sector and their enthusiasm for achieving the project aims and 'making it happen'.

However, many of the FDTL4 project directors and managers did not have any formal leadership development or generic or project management training, either prior to or subsequent to their appointment. King notes that some of the challenges encountered by projects “included project management; personnel; time and resources issues; discipline-based or institutional resistance; and changes in the external environment” (2007, p32). Lack of project management skills was highlighted by a number of cross-discipline projects. For example, one project was “overambitious in both the scale of the project's ambitions and the project plan”

(King 2007, p32), which led to non-achievement of planned deliverables. Some of the lessons learned from the FDTL4 evaluations led directly to additional support provided by the Higher Education Academy when the CETLs were established in the form of professional development for new CETL directors and managers in leadership development, project management and financial management.

We have seen that the leadership styles of project teams needs to be consistent with the expectations of the internal and external stakeholders involved in the project so as to maximise the impact of the project and take advantage of opportunities for development. Co-ordinators or boundary spanners who work across a range of sectors need to believe in collaboration; demonstrate an ability to obtain and distribute information strategically; see problems in new ways; craft solutions and develop and support the skills of others (Bradshaw 1999, pp42–5). Meyerson (2004) suggests that “tempered radicals” are required, who are willing to act on different external agendas and take risks, yet work successfully within organisations. This type of individual often acts as a broker, mediator and negotiator and is increasingly being recognised, recruited and trained for these specific cross-boundary roles (Hartle *et al.* 2008, Tennyson and Wilde 2000). Effective project leaders of multi-partner projects appear to combine a collaborative, value-led and situational leadership approach and an understanding of what is required to effect the desired change with sound management principles, particularly in project management, people management and knowledge of organisational structures and systems. The most effective project leaders also demonstrate understanding of the wider policy agenda and keep their eyes firmly on the horizon. It is clear that one of the greatest impacts of the projects was on the professional development of a wide range of individuals, directly and indirectly associated with projects.

It is vital, however, to ensure that projects do not rest on individual champions for success. If the impact of funding streams such as FDTL is to be optimised, the sector must support individual leaders through what Day (2001) calls leader development: investment in human capital to enhance intrapersonal competence for selected individuals (Bolden 2007, p6). The sector must also invest in leadership development, which Bolden terms as investment in social capital to develop interpersonal networks and co-operation within organisations and other social systems (2007, p6). If attention is paid to both these interlocking aspects, then the chain of inter-connectedness established through FDTL project champions as learning leaders will be embedded firmly within the sector itself and not lost as people move on to other initiatives and organisations.

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8

THE EXPERIENCE OF ASSOCIATE ONLINE: A VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR PGCE/ DTLLS STUDENTS

DENISE ROBINSON

When compared to the National Curriculum in schools, the range of specialisms that are taught in the learning and skills sector (LSS) is wide, and this means that there are few chances for trainee teachers to engage with others who share their specialism. Often, such trainees are the only teacher of their specialism on their PGCE/DTLLS (Postgraduate Certificate in Education/Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector) course and/or in the place where they work – whether that specialism is plumbing, philosophy, photography, pottery, politics, or whatever. They are geographically dispersed and professionally isolated – although new technologies now offer the prospect for them to join communities of practice that will effectively support their professional development.

The FDTL5 *ASSOCIate Online* project, led by the University of Huddersfield and the Consortium for Post-Compulsory Education and Training in collaboration with Bath Spa University, the University of Greenwich and the University of Wolverhampton, engaged in a project to develop an online means of supporting trainees in the acquisition of subject specialist pedagogic skills. Developing trainees' expertise in teaching their specialism is one of the priorities of the DfES in their Agenda for Reform of Initial Teacher Training (Learning and Skills) (ITT (LS)), and web-based provision has great potential for addressing this concern.

Where trainee teachers are dispersed, and their teaching specialisms are very diverse, they often have few opportunities to engage with others who teach the same specific content. Finding a suitable mentor, for example, is often a problem. Through the project, though, there is now a practicable way of providing such professional development.

WHAT DID WE EXPERIENCE?

The Funding for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) allocation received for the Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) Consortium of the University of Huddersfield from 2004 to 2007 was directed at the development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) targeted specifically at trainees in initial teacher education (ITE) in the learning and skills sector (LSS) to support their development in subject specialist networking.

Policy initiatives had moved an 'Agenda for Reform' in ITE (Ofsted 2003, DfES 2003, DfES 2004) that included the requirement to demonstrate subject specialist pedagogy, supposedly in line with their counterparts in the schools sector. Ofsted, in its report on the initial period of inspections (Ofsted 2009a, p4), stated that in 2003: "Inspectors were also critical of the limited opportunities for trainees to learn how to teach their specialist subjects." However, the LSS differs fundamentally from the schools sector in many respects. It is very diverse and it has been suggested by Crawley (2005) that there are some 200 subjects (as opposed to the 11 in the National Curriculum for the schools sector). Thus what might have been regarded as a solution to improving standards in subject teaching by policy developers was transformed into a problem rather than a solution (Thompson and Robinson 2008).

For a certain group of trainees there are issues surrounding geographical and discipline isolation. Looking to new technologies offered a solution to these seemingly insurmountable problems; thus, the proposal to develop an electronic version of subject communities by attaching trainees to a VLE was submitted and approved. A partnership was formed, led by the University of Huddersfield in collaboration with Bath Spa University, the University of Greenwich and the University of Wolverhampton. Known as the 'big four', these institutions are the major HE providers of initial teacher training (ITT) for post-compulsory education and training in the learning and skills sector.

The project adapted the Moodle VLE for the purpose of developing trainees' expertise in teaching their specialism; this is one of the priorities of the DIUS (DfES as was) in their Agenda for Reform of ITT, and web-based provision has great potential for addressing this concern. The VLE provided a cross-institutional facility that is the basis for communities of practice that initially provided a structure that could sustain subject specialist communities in each of the 50 sectors and sub-specialisms identified by the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA). Hopes ran high that the development of the VLE, referred to as 'ASSOCIATE Online', would serve to address the challenges presented by the Agenda for Reform and the requirement for subject specialist pedagogy. Furthermore, the network that had become established with three other universities and their partner colleges would provide "a speedy, innovative, effective and national solution to a long-standing problem in delivering subject-specific pedagogy in IT[E] for the LSS" (Fisher and Webb 2006, p344).

The initiative required a large scale (the HEIs have 5,000 in-service teachers as students between them) for viability and impact, and 2007–08 saw the widespread introduction of the facility. It has been incorporated in contrasting ways into the new ITT curriculum of each partner (and three other HEIs). In addition, the incorporation of a VLE as a tool to facilitate the networking of such a large group of trainees would not only provide an ideal opportunity to connect disparate subject specialists, but it would also provide a context in which the trainees could develop the skills, knowledge and application of e-learning (JISC 2007). This was, however, to prove a greater hurdle than had been anticipated.

The four HEIs identified how the VLE could be incorporated into their particular curriculum, thus embedding both subject specialism and IT. Sustainability was a necessary outcome, and this was to be a challenge as the VLE required central technical as well as local support; ‘e-moderators’ were introduced to ensure that there was subject specialist support for trainees. The e-moderators were employed by the University of Huddersfield on the basis of their subject expertise rather than any presumed experience in the use of VLEs. The Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) led by the University of Huddersfield was to take over responsibility for the operation, extension and development of the *Associate Online* after 2007. The HUDCETT business plan anticipated a progressive move over three years towards a self-sustaining basis.

ROLE OF E-TEACHING IN SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A major element of the development of the VLE has been the training and development aspects for teacher educators. Various training packages have been developed and made available electronically, as well as the provision of ‘hands-on’ training sessions. Perhaps the real challenge to teacher educators as teachers undergoing continuing professional development is the question of the role of e-learning development and its contribution to the understanding and knowledge of teaching and learning. The VLE we have developed is based on a social constructivist approach (Lave and Wenger 1993, Vygotsky 1978) and acknowledges the role of collaboration and conversation (Benson and Brack 2009).

The impact of the creation of knowledge through blogs and wikis and virtual worlds has yet to be fully explored (*ibid.*). However, is this easily accessed ‘new world’ perceived to be a fundamental threat to teacher control and teacher as gatekeeper? The problem may be not so much the skill development and how to teach and support online (Salmon 2003, p77) that is patently obvious in many cases, but much more about learner control and authority of knowledge. Yet these are the very objectives that most teacher educators would profess to realise in their learners. Are we actually offering instrumental and communicative knowledge, but holding back the possibilities of emancipatory knowledge?

One of the participants in a recent JISC (2008, p5) project stated “we have been allowed to destabilise knowledge construction in this project” and “we have moved on from a focus on e-content to one which focuses on learning itself” (JISC 2008, p13). The question for us at these still early stages of the roll-out of the VLE is: can we claim the same?

FEAR OF IT AND ITS APPLICATION TO EDUCATION

The application of e-learning solutions may easily become focused on technical and application strategies, whereas a deeper and thornier obstacle to successful implementation may be the user’s lack of confidence. According to JISC a common error is to assume that resistance to change is only the lack of motivation, whereas it is more likely to reflect:

... the defensive avoidance that results in the inability to face one’s own presumed inadequacies if one does not feel psychologically safe ... role models not only provide behavioural clues on what to do, but, more importantly, permit the target to psychologically identify with the model and, thereby, absorb some of the new cognitive point of view (JISC 2008, p29).

The position of the teacher educator and their IT confidence in front of a class of trainees is therefore crucial. Their trainees range from some who may never have even touched a computer alongside those using IT on a daily basis and as an integral part of their teaching. Simultaneously, Crawley suggests that there has been an improvement in IT skills over the last five years in the FE sector (Crawley 2009, p4).

Thus, a combination of a lack of confidence and fear of revealing that lack of confidence before other teacher educators and trainees, plus issues of teacher control and the destabilisation of knowledge, combine to create barriers to the professional development for this group of teachers. The Ofsted report (2009b) identified similar problems across the schools and colleges they surveyed in 2008. VLEs are not being exploited to their full extent and tend to be used as a simple repository. However, where a teacher endorses and commits to the integration of the VLE facility in class, the learner engagement in the VLE is markedly improved.

IDENTIFICATION OF TEACHER EDUCATOR NEEDS – A RESOLUTION

Thus there was a realisation that initial training had not been followed through by the teacher educators and that, furthermore, this was not simply a question of additional training being needed, but reflected deeper issues to do with both their

perceived status as teacher educators and that of the threat to knowledge formation and control. This led to a complete rethink of the role of the VLE and its position as a tool in the armoury of teacher educators and their incorporation of e-learning into their teaching and learning strategies. This phenomenon has been identified across virtually all the partners of ASSOCiate; the only exception being where partners identified that they had a teacher educator who was an enthusiast for e-learning. Again, this was also reflected in the Ofsted survey (Ofsted 2009b).

The membership of the VLE expanded to some 7,000 members by 2009 (including trainees, their teacher educators and, as an addition for continuing professional development (CPD) purposes, teachers), but the interactivity was not as great as had been expected. As a result of a number of evaluation surveys of the VLE and the introduction of a Chief E-Moderator pilot, with direct support being given to the e-moderators in the development of their e-moderation skills, a number of recommendations were made and are being introduced.

Identification of the need to give more support to both teacher educators and trainees was pivotal to ensure improved take-up of the site. The actions include:

- a restructuring of the site to facilitate access and interactivity by reducing the number of activities and designing the site on a 'big button' basis;
- developing additional support strategies for teacher educators including a greater focus on the issues of e-learning and their incorporation into the curriculum as a supplement and tool as opposed to a replacement of what we know we do well in the classroom;
- reducing the number of subjects from the 50 qualifications to 20; this will facilitate interactivity and has the added benefit of supporting sustainability;
- consider further embedding of e-learning into the curriculum at a strategic level;
- ensure the continuing support and engagement with IT support managers who are proving crucial to, for example, the release and access for users within colleges to university email addresses that are the basis for usernames in the ASSOCiate Online system;
- research on the impact of e-learning on trainees.

As part of the redesign fewer facilities are included and a live chat is now available on a synchronous basis. It will be interesting to see how the use of this facility compares to that of the asynchronous forums.

The offer of the use of the VLE as a CPD vehicle is proving of interest to a number of organisations who are looking for a reasonably-priced service that offers subject specialist membership and, at the same time, incorporates the use of a VLE as a tool for e-learning that can be transferred to use in a learning context. This also fulfils the Institute for Learning (IfL) requirement for 30 hours of annual CPD.

Work undertaken by JISC (2008) has identified the benefits of e-learning – as

perceived by the learners – as a range that surprised the participants themselves when asked to define the tangible benefits; for example, that e-learning acted as a stimulus to creative approaches as well as quantifiable aspects such as an effect on exam results or student retention (p7). The expansion of the acceptance of e-learning continues; Becta (2008), in its latest survey of ‘e-enablement’, found 25 per cent of responding providers in the learning and skills sector to be e-enabled, 48 per cent enthusiastic, seven per cent ambivalent and 19 per cent late adopters. This indicates a considerable increase in confidence on the part of FE staff over the last five years, although impact has proved more difficult to identify (Crawley 2009). However, one aspect that continues to constrain the professional development in e-learning for all teachers is the lack of institutional support (JISC 2008, p13), and this must be borne in mind when considering CPD strategies for such teachers.

Ofsted, in its latest report on ITE in the LSS, is still calling for teacher educators to “ensure that trainees’ practical teaching experience, in particular the development of their expertise in teaching their specialist subject, is central to their training and the assessment of their progress” (Ofsted 2009a, p7). The use of *ASSOCiate Online* as a tool to develop subject specialist pedagogy is a support system that can be incorporated to the benefit of all its members, be they trainees, experienced teachers or the teacher educators themselves.

The final word here goes to JISC on the role of this aspect of professional development for teachers trained on university ITE courses: “all academics need exposure to current technologies and some ideas about how they can be applied to learning and teaching. This should be an essential part of all PGCE courses” (JISC 2008, p30).

The website of the *ASSOCiate* project with the latest updates on the VLE can be found at: <http://associate.hud.ac.uk>.

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THE MEDIUM BECAME THE MESSAGE: THE MEDAL PROJECT AS LEARNING SPACE

KAY SAMBELL AND MEL GIBSON

OVERVIEW

Our contribution offers a retrospective glimpse into some perspectives on the *MEDAL* (*Making a difference: educational development to enhance academic literacy*) project, a three-year initiative that created a pedagogic network for childhood studies (CS), a new, complex and rapidly evolving area of research and undergraduate study. It aims to capture the sense of community that evolved throughout the project, because this underpinned our sense of the conceptual change and professional development that *MEDAL* brought about for the individuals working within it.

Our narrative incorporates the core team's perspectives and explores the ways that this group worked with others in a community that came to encompass members with a range of experiences, disciplines and backgrounds. In particular we will focus on the ways that *MEDAL* co-collaborators included students and emerging pedagogic writers, and highlight some of the common issues and ideas that emerged across the various electronic, physical and metaphorical spaces that the project developed. We draw on our own reflections and on data gathered by an independent researcher in interviews with staff and students, illuminating the ways in which *MEDAL* offered us what Savin-Baden (2007) calls "learning space".

BACKGROUND

The original idea for the *MEDAL* project stemmed from a number of chance encounters at a range of generic teaching and learning events, such as National Teaching Fellowship meetings and Higher Education Academy conferences. Here

the project director met six individuals who eventually combined to lead the project consortium. While seemingly having little in common, other than an enthusiasm for and commitment to improving student learning, by happy coincidence we all taught courses on the theme of childhood. For some this had recently become a primary focus, through leading childhood or early childhood studies degrees (CS/ECS), which were, by then, beginning to burgeon. Most, however, taught childhood-related themes as individual modules, such as children's literature in English, others on history of childhood in education studies, others on childhood media in media and cultural studies.

We concluded that we had not met previously because CS/ECS had no 'natural' subject centre home and agreed that this could leave one feeling a little rootless, with few opportunities to discuss the plethora of pedagogic issues and challenges that emerge from teaching CS/ECS at university. Consequently, when the opportunity arose, we decided to bid to FDTL to enable us to create a network for people interested in pedagogic issues associated with the area, which could be hosted by ESCalate and linked to other relevant subject centres.

At the core of the bid were staff from Northumbria University, Durham University, the University of York, York St John University and Roehampton University. Local contexts were extremely diverse, as were courses and students. As individuals the core group had a range of roles, responsibilities, research and disciplinary backgrounds, and experience in their institutions. Three of us had met as 2002 National Teaching Fellows, but most did not know each other well.

A key agreement in the very early stages of the project after funding was granted was that, despite massive pressures on time, face-to-face core team meetings were important, both to get to know each other and to share ideas about project development. Regular symposia, residentials and seminars involving the core team, rather than only appearing in the start-up phase of the project, became an important and highly prized aspect of *MEDAL*. In fact, these meetings became a vital component of the project's success, because of the nature of the conversations we had during the time we spent working together.

THE CHALLENGE: CREATING A PROJECT IN THE 'SPIRIT' NOT THE 'LETTER' OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At our first meeting it soon became clear that we felt the team's main challenge was to create a project in the 'spirit' rather than the 'letter' of educational development. We did not want to produce a bank of 'stuff', of materials or guidelines that might prove difficult to transfer, nor to suggest a 'fixed' or 'correct' way of doing things in this complex area of work. What we aimed to do, if possible, was maintain the underlying spirit and ethos (Davies and Ecclestone 2008) of discussing, sharing and further improving the principles and approaches our own CS/ECS teaching sought

to embody, not work to the letter of educational improvement by simply publishing and transmitting knowledge and information about 'good practice.' We wanted to emphasise *MEDAL* as a vehicle for conceptual change and professional development. The challenge was to find ways of doing this in harmony with the principles we shared for developing the types of learning experiences we hoped to bring about for students.

THE PROJECT PROCESS AS A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Research interest in improving student learning in higher education has focused on the notion of trying to improve the quality of students' learning environments. Most interest has, predictably, focused on the development of student learning/formative assessment environments that value learner activity and collaboration (Gibbs and Simpson 2004, Hounsell 2003, Nicol and MacFarlane Dick 2004, McDowell *et al.* 2005). From this perspective, approaches to improving student learning typically promote dialogic, interactive methods (Bloxham 2007, p68) that aim to stimulate conversations, social learning, questioning, self-evaluation and group discussion about learning and assessment (Black 2003). Dialogue as a means of contextualised 'coming to know' is a key theme and students are believed to benefit from collaborative inquiry and from seeing others' approaches (Hounsell 2003). These key principles were shared by the team, underpinning our espoused approaches to fostering student learning. In our first meetings we discussed how, through our pedagogic practices, we wished to create for our students communities of practice where participation, as a way of learning, enables the course participant to understand and contribute to the culture of practice (Lave and Wenger 1996).

With hindsight, similar principles applied to our own involvement in the *MEDAL* project, to the extent that the project medium, rather than the more tangible published outputs, gradually emerged as the main message of the *MEDAL* project. Given that we were working in such a diverse and emergent subject area meant that we needed to spend time coming to know each others' preoccupations, challenges and concerns, as we gradually sought common ground in order to make collective decisions about the project's direction. The sense of community that evolved throughout the project became crucial to the sense of conceptual change and professional development that *MEDAL* brought about for the individuals working within it, so that in an important sense, for us as much as for our students, *MEDAL* itself became a learning space.

LEARNING SPACES AND LEARNING CULTURES

While a recent review of the built environment of the university emphasised physical space (Temple *et al.* 2007), the notion of learning space can also refer to mental and metaphorical environments in higher education. The concept of learning space

expresses the idea that there are diverse forms of space in an individual's life where opportunities to reflect and analyse one's own learning position occur. Savin-Baden (2007) argues that ideas about learning spaces are rapidly emerging as a means of changing pedagogical practice. She suggests there are different types of spaces, which include ones that are:

- physically or psychologically removed from 'normal' learning environments, involving the creation of special time for writing and reflection;
- social spaces for dialogue and debate, discussion and shared reflection.

Notions of learning space underpinned individuals' sense of the value of the core team meetings, which became places in which we collaboratively worked on *MEDAL*; important sites of reflection and learning bringing about our own professional development and conceptual change.

At the project's outset, for instance, we decided that it was important to gain an in-depth, systematic overview of the key issues and challenges of learning and teaching practice in the area of CS/ECS. The Northumbria team leading *MEDAL* visited every partner site, interviewing the lead members of staff, relevant teaching teams and selected students in order to gather a range of perspectives on learning and teaching in CS/ECS. The data, suitably anonymised, became the focus of a two-day core team symposium, in which we discussed our views of the issues and teased out their possible implications for practice development and project planning. Although there is no clearly agreed nor 'boundaried' body of knowledge in the area of CS/ECS, as definitions and views of what is important to study are locally negotiated, the team debated whether there are fairly universal "ways of thinking and practising" (Hounsell and McCune 2002) that "constitute a threshold function in leading to a transformed understanding" (Meyer and Land 2003) of childhood.

We consequently drew up a working paper that sought to establish threshold concepts, collectively identifying some features of ways of thinking and practicing in CS/ECS that could act as a starting point for the project and its subsequent development. The declared focus of the working paper was on the creation of effective learning and teaching environments for our students, following the *Enhancing teaching and learning environments in undergraduate courses* (ETL) project's model (www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk). The original aim was to draw together some agreed commonalities in what was a hugely diverse, amorphous and eclectic subject area. However, collaboratively producing the paper helped us recognise the value of forging our own new learning space to discuss the very heart of our philosophies, rather than just scratching the surface. Team meetings, then, were not routine points during which to touch base and update each other on progress, but the backbone of the project.

The idea of learning space stretches beyond the simple idea of having time to think and write: for Savin-Baden (2007) it is defined by a different way of thinking. It encompasses the possibility of locating oneself in spaces where creativity and ideas

can flourish and the “values of being are more central than the values of doing”. These spaces are often places of transition and sometimes transformation, involving some sort of a shift or reorientation, perhaps a shift in role perception, so that issues and concerns can be seen in new and different ways. *MEDAL*’s learning space became a type of situated social practice: what Davies and Ecclestone (2008) call a “learning culture”. Learning cultures stand for the social practices through which learning takes place, and are characterised by the stances, dispositions and actions of participants. Questions of values, attitudes and assumptions are raised and the focus goes well beyond the instrumental.

The interviews we report below suggested how far and in what ways every member of the core group valued this sense of community and felt that, as one member said, “*MEDAL* has facilitated reflective thought”.

VIEWS FROM THE *MEDAL* COMMUNITY: CORE TEAM MEMBERS’ VIEWS

Despite the group being made up of some highly experienced and senior staff, including three National Teaching Fellows, a key feature to emerge, perhaps surprisingly, was the development of staff confidence. “It has been very effective in building staff confidence, because there’s a community of people who are interested in what you are doing. Somebody else thinks it is worth reading about your ideas and practices.” Such was the impact on confidence that core consortium members had all been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship by the end of the project.

This issue of confidence closely mirrors research into student learning, and underlines the need for experienced staff, as well as students, to have access to ‘low-stakes’ environments (Knight and Yorke 2003) in which they can rehearse ideas, learn from others’ approaches and form a sense of belonging to a community. “The great thing about *MEDAL* is its openness ... we can all have a go and share.”

Interviews revealed that issues of validation and status were significant. These sometimes related to an individual’s sense of belonging: “I now feel part of a wider academic community.” In addition, these issues were sometimes related to the ways in which the subject itself, rather than the individual, was located and valued: “*MEDAL* has been about giving the subject of childhood a presence and importance it hasn’t been allowed.”

Creating a community offering space to think about one’s location and stance in relation to the project and pedagogic issues was central. This dialogic space, an arena concerned with different ways of thinking or shifts in perception, allowed issues to be seen in new ways. “*MEDAL* has been characterised by opening things up and sharing and allowing free exchange”. Such dialogic spaces, according to Savin-Baden (2008), are sometimes confused with ‘idle chat’ (p54), but are typically challenging and

thought-provoking: “Being exposed to other people’s ways of thinking has challenged a lot of boundaries.”

Creating non-judgmental, non-threatening, collaborative spaces empowered the core team. As *MEDAL* was in uncharted territory there could, it was agreed, be no single ‘right’ way of doing things and it needed to be genuinely divergent, not convergent. Given that the focus, CS/ECS, is fluid, open, flexible and contested, it was felt that *MEDAL* should also be fluid, embodying diverse possibilities and so allowing intellectual debate.

Involvement in *MEDAL*’s learning space sometimes prompted a reconsideration of one’s own position in relation to the academy. For some it offered, for example, a space to think about locating the subject: “Being involved in the project has given me a lot in terms of understanding the nature of children’s studies and its place in the academy.” For others, the space was most important because it opened up discussions regarding staff development and encouraging take-up, which opened up new approaches to leadership: “My involvement in *MEDAL* has taught me something about academic leadership.”

CREATING SPACES FOR ‘EMERGENT PEDAGOGIC WRITERS’

Dissemination came to be seen as a means of encouraging others to join the network and contribute to case studies and resources. Among the contributors were a number of ‘emergent pedagogic writers’: staff new to publishing and disseminating their ideas in relation to pedagogy. This aspect of the project was largely unanticipated.

While electronic resources are very useful, the experience of *MEDAL* suggests that it is community and personal contact that encourages real change and embedding to take place. For many the first step was a face-to-face discussion with core team members, not a more traditional call for papers. The low stakes environment this offered allowed contributors to rehearse ideas and learn from others’ approaches. This validation of personal classroom practice could be empowering and confidence-building.

Moving from initial conversation to published case study often took a considerable period and contributors needed much encouragement and support. The project process was the learning environment, and face-to-face encounters in hands-on workshop sessions allowed resources to be developed according to specific need. As the body of material grew on the website, each element reflecting the voice, style and ideas of an individual, it also became a resource in supporting new writers in finding a pedagogic voice. This process of moving from practice to case study, as well as enriching the *MEDAL* community, allowed the contributor to benefit through developing their understanding of teaching and learning and through increased self-reflection generated by writing about an aspect of practice.

STUDENTS AS CO-COLLABORATORS

Like students, issues of confidence, identity, discipline and practice were flagged up in interviews with staff, irrespective of levels of experience. The recognition of these shared issues in CS/ECS meant *MEDAL* could be a vehicle for conceptual change and professional development for both.

This took place in a number of different ways, ranging from transparency around practice when teaching by some lecturers, through to active student participation. The former was characterised by using the *MEDAL* website in lecturing and flagging it up as a resource for students as well as staff. This opportunity to look 'backstage', to see lecturers as part of a community of learners, and to get a sense of what lecturers might do when not working directly with students did have an impact upon student perceptions of the role of lecturers. Interviews suggested that students, like case study writers, were also drawn to increased reflection on the nature of teaching and learning: "It helps students to know that they are involved in a teaching and learning project; their stuff is up there on the site. It makes them more self aware."

However, this was not the only response, in that some students began to move into active participation. The desire to create a community characterised by openness, in effect, created a potential space for students to become active members. Students, for instance, attended conferences and became involved in data collection as co-collaborators. This engagement was extended by students becoming speakers at conferences, as well as attendees and organisers.

Lecturers involved in *MEDAL* became more confident in initiating staff-student partnership working and in engaging with students as change agents. The relationships built through this conceptual shift, combined with the case studies, meant that *MEDAL* participants were well-placed to bid for research-informed teaching initiatives with students as researchers; in particular, via adaptations of Pam Knights' Signs of Childhood approach (for details, please see the *MEDAL* website). Spin-off projects based on collaboration have also been successful in bidding for further funding.

Finally, student engagement also linked back to subject centres, with, for instance, staff and students co-presenting at the ESCalate 'Students as Researchers: From Novice to Expert' conference. There were also further links to, for example, an NTFS project promoting undergraduate research. Thus student and staff perceptions of teaching and learning beyond the classroom and even the overall structure of the sector became subjects for shared endeavours and understandings. Here's where the medium really became the message – students as part of *MEDAL*'s community of practice.

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SECTION FOUR

PARTNERSHIP AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

CHRIS TURNOCK

While there exists literature on concepts to do with projects themselves that is highly relevant to any teaching and learning project, not least FDTL, such as change management, research, or sustainability, there is a paucity of information on several other aspects of learning and teaching projects beyond that. These aspects can often be glimpsed only by delving deep into a project report about how these concepts were addressed by project teams.

For example, projects often go through a process of change and evolution within their lifetime, but what is the nature of this change? Projects may often experience unexpected ‘side effects’ or accidentally discover an unanticipated way of addressing the project aims. How do project teams capitalise on these events? What happens when things don’t work out as expected, how do project teams deal with ‘failure’ if and when it occurs? Many projects involve a consortium of partners, who having collaborated in producing a successful application for FDTL funding then have to start to work together in a much closer way than during the bid-writing phase. What methods are used to build a team into one with a shared project culture so the project team can work effectively, while accommodating individuals who may have differing perspectives on the project and also have roles and responsibilities within their home institution? Most FDTL projects range from two to four years in duration and so inevitably experience changes in personnel during the lifetime of a project. How do projects deal with such situations?

While FDTL projects aim to undertake development of learning and teaching, research may often also be a feature of project activity. However, the use of research in FDTL projects has in the past been considered inappropriate by the funding body as the focus was on developing learning and teaching. Recent policy changes have made it possible for projects to be more explicit in describing research-based activity. How did FDTL manage research activity when it was

discouraged, and how has the recent change in policy affected the nature of research-based project activity?

Funding for FDTL projects is time limited, yet project teams usually want to produce outputs that have a legacy beyond the project's endpoint; for example, a tool or materials that can be used by others working in the sector. Do project teams build in a strategy for sustaining the project when funding ceased? If yes, how did they approach planning for an effective project legacy? Was it in the initial stages of the project or did planning begin later in the project's life?

These questions can be categorised into three particularly important aspects of FDTL projects, namely: managing the project effectively; undertaking research as part of a project; and identifying how to sustain a project when external funding has ended. This section will explore each of these aspects in turn within individual chapters drawing upon the authors' experiences of participating in FDTL projects to provide real, lived experiences of a learning and teaching project.

THE PROJECT STORY

Chapter Ten considers what is meant by project management before exploring whether or not projects adopt a specific theoretical approach to project management and what happens as a project progresses. The contributors then share their experiences of a number of scenarios that projects may encounter; for example, effective team building, learning from failure, managing change in project team membership, capitalising on the unexpected, and managing changes in the project trajectory. The chapter is structured by addressing the following questions:

1. How can project culture be developed?
2. How do projects behave?
3. How do projects manage change?
4. What determines the success or failure of a project?

The answers provided draw upon the contributors' experiences to illuminate responses given to each question. The chapter concludes that effective projects are less a consequence of a particular approach to management of the project and more due to the commitment of project team members, which in turn results in these individuals impacting upon pedagogical practice well beyond the life of a project.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN FDTL PROJECTS

The nature of research within FDTL has undergone significant, though often implicit, change. This chapter considers the impact that policy statements about

learning and teaching developments' relationship with research have had upon the approach of FDTL projects, both in their project-related activity and in project dissemination. The chapter explores a number of key questions concerning the role of research in FDTL projects:

1. Have the language and politics of research in learning and teaching projects changed?
2. What is the purpose and meaning of research in learning and teaching projects?
3. What research methods have been used in learning and teaching projects?
4. How can projects use their outputs to promote research engagement?

These questions will be answered by examining policy changes concerning the use of research in learning and teaching projects before looking at theoretical approaches to research, which are then applied by providing examples of how FDTL projects have undertaken research, either explicitly or by using 'alternative' terminology to describe research-related activity.

SUSTAINABILITY

The final chapter addresses the key issue of sustainability of project outputs and outcomes within the context of FDTL projects. It provides a working definition, identifies four key questions to frame the discussion and identifies lessons learnt in relation to these questions with reference to examples from three FDTL projects. The chapter asks:

1. What makes a project sustainable? Lessons learnt here cover the influence on sustainability of: pre-project proposal preparation; planning for sustainability; output design and technology choices; dissemination approaches; and identifying new opportunities.
2. How do we know a project has had an impact? The projects found that they could provide evidence of output use, evidence through interest from across the sector and evidence of use/reuse beyond the intended context.
3. What evidence do we have for sustainability? The projects provide evidence of sustaining the team to develop project outputs and continue to collaborate on new projects and sustaining outputs through strategic planning for future projects.
4. How can policy changes affect sustainability? The final section considers how CETL funding has impacted upon FDTL projects.

The chapter concludes that sustainability is not an isolated construct but part of wider academic and social contexts.

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10

THE PROJECT STORY

CHRIS TURNOCK, CORDELIA BRYAN,

STEPHEN GOMEZ AND JOAN MULHOLLAND

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explore the realities of a number of FDTL projects, with chapter contributors covering various aspects of a project's life. It starts by considering whether or not projects adopt a specific theoretical approach to project management and what happened as the project was undertaken. The contributors then share their experiences from participation in various projects, including *Assessing group practice*, *Making practice-based learning work* and *Profile*, writing about a number of scenarios that projects can encounter; for example, effective team building, learning from failure, managing change in project team membership, capitalising on the unexpected, and managing changes in the project trajectory.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Shenhar (2001) argues that seeking to identify a single theoretical perspective on project management would be inappropriate because of the range of contingencies that project teams encounter. Furthermore, the diverse nature of project team membership makes the use of a single particular approach to managing projects questionable. Söderlund (2004) believes the literature contains a number of mid-range theories on project management. These include Theory-W (Boehm and Ross 1989) in which project management involves identifying goals and subsequent strategies to meet these goals, with negotiation of project members' input a key role of the project manager to facilitate successful project outcomes. In contrast, contingency theory (Fiedler 1976) insists that there is no single leadership or management style suitable for all situations.

Each situation is unique and, therefore, requires unique solutions and differing styles of leadership. The skill is for the manager to identify the elements of the situation and provide a range of solutions or actions.

While the chapter could continue to explore theoretical perspectives on project management, exploring the realities of project management provides an opportunity to illustrate the complex and dynamic nature of projects. As the JISC infoNet (2009) documentation on project management points out, many aspects of project management are common sense, in which a structured approach is used to achieve what many would do instinctively.

However, the reality is that project management often involves new and unexpected experiences, which may feel they are unique to a particular project. The questions that are addressed here provide some insights that the chapter contributors acquired during their involvement with their FDTL projects. Readers should be aware that extrapolating from one project to another should be done with caution and instead use the following writers' experiences to inform their actions.

The questions explored are:

- How can project culture be developed?
- How do projects behave?
- How do projects manage change?
- What determines the success or failure of a project?

HOW CAN PROJECT CULTURE BE DEVELOPED?

The initial excitement of being informed that a bid has been successful is often followed by an all too brief period of innocence when a project team believes it can start the work. Reality kicks in with bureaucracy taking a grip. No matter how much theoretical preparation, project teams will rarely be quite prepared for the reality of the project.

Delays occur due to a need to set up cost codes, followed by an often lengthy process of agreeing and advertising project team posts. Negotiating for teaching relief to manage the project is a fundamental aspect of starting a project and key to a project's successful start, yet this also takes time. A useful approach to helping projects to get started was the ongoing support workshops for project teams, especially when teams met to share experiences, particularly tales of university bureaucracy. This helped project teams realise that their experiences were not unique. Furthermore, delays at the start of a project may not necessarily be all bad. They can give a project team more time to reflect on and refine the implementation plan.

One important aspect of project culture concerns respect for individual opinion, ideas and valuing the people involved in the project. This leads to feelings of ownership towards the project and its products by all involved. Another key aspect of project culture is to foster motivation. Members of the project team have

busy jobs outside the project, though fostering commitment to the project normally resulted in members giving the time and work freely and with enthusiasm. This can be exemplified by a 'can do' attitude, in which project team members responded well when asked to do things outside their job description and comfort zones. It appears these challenges are more likely to motivate the project team than the financial rewards of participating in an FDTL project, which are normally small and not a major motivating factor. The recognition of individuals' work, being part of a forward-looking team, supporting risk taking and thinking innovatively, can lead to a happy, cohesive and highly motivated project group.

One interesting approach drew upon Fielder's contingency theory so that the project team, as a group of disparate individuals located in six higher education institutions, *modelled* as far as possible the processes required for successful collaborations among the project team to develop. To achieve this, the manager persuaded the project team that their endeavours would benefit if team members placed themselves in a situation similar to students to ascertain, as far as possible, how it felt to be engaged in the project aim – creative collaborative activity within the performing arts – and how it felt to be assessed on their performance of the collaborative activities.

Project team members readily agreed to become involved actively in this research process and to try out all pedagogic methods (and subsequently produced learning materials) on each other before releasing them into the wider HE community for further trialling. Our approach adopted principles of action research in which the teacher-researcher utilises feedback from the intervention to inform practice and the next stage of research. However, the project went well beyond the principles of action research by trying to experience being students as well as teachers.

The project team decided to draw on its collective experience and knowledge of group performance and assessment to create a positive nexus between assessing group practice and the developing project management. The project team members believed they had become reflective practitioners engaged in collaborative problem solving, focusing on the problems associated with assessing group practice and the group dynamics. Within a complex consortium project involving 15 academics and practitioners from old and new universities across the UK, the management may legitimately be problematised both with regard to logistics and people management.

The project team addressed this situation by agreeing to both self- and peer-assessment of their experiences of participating in collaborative work, both in terms of the quality of their performance in meeting project outcomes and in conjunction with external evaluation processes. In effect, project team members acted as guinea pigs in their work and as the quality controllers of project management, i.e. group processes.

As a model that others might wish to emulate, the benefits of the aforementioned approach include:

- getting the most from the project team;
- sharing the facilitation of personal and professional development for all participants;
- achieving optimum project outcomes.

However, while project teams are normally self-directive, one of the author's experiences as a project director was an occasional need to focus the project team on what was to be done and how it must be done. Projects are time-limited and outcome-focused, so clearly defining conditions and required outputs is important. To assist, several projects required project contributors to sign a Memorandum of Agreement, stating not only what was required of the individual, but also the responsibilities of the project to support individuals' contributions.

There is a whole literature on effective team building. What is described here is how projects can achieve early team cohesion among a disparate group of individuals, who in the case of many FDTL projects have not chosen to be involved at all, but may actually have been coerced to participate and then expected to 'give their all'!

Concern and support for all involved in a project should be central to any management style adopted. Respect for individual opinion, ideas, and valuing the people involved results in a feeling of ownership towards the project and its products. This can be achieved by adopting a participative style (Champoux 1986) of leadership and team building. The importance of consultation, serious consideration of new ideas before making decisions, and the publicising of all materials and outcomes to team members assist in group cohesion and motivation. Vroom (1964) emphasises the importance of setting high performance goals and having the confidence in the ability of others to meet those goals. Where such an approach was adopted, outcomes were met to a high standard. Expectancy theory suggests that when people perceive a connection between effort and desired outcomes they are more motivated to achieve a collective goal.

The geographical dispersion of partner institutions means that email and telephone communication are the norm for many FDTL projects. However, contemporary technology means other methods can be considered, e.g. instant messaging, Voice over Internet Protocols such as Skype, and document sharing software such as Google Docs or Live Office Workspace. Consequently, face-to-face meetings have to be perceived as valuable and well organised given the time and effort expended travelling considerable distances to meetings. One project organised an awayday in its first weeks and it was made clear to all why attendance was essential. The event was to determine:

- a shared understanding of the project;
- how the project might achieve its aims (how we might most appropriately evaluate progress, quality etc.);
- the extent (or existence?) of shared pedagogic values;

- the individual strengths, expertise and interests of team members in relation to the project aims;
- the inherent opportunities for personal and professional development;
- a creative strategy for achieving commitment to the project and dealing with competing priorities (for all, other than the manager, the project accounted for only a proportion of their work time);
- an agreed *modus operandi* (when, where and how frequently to hold awaydays, how best to communicate and share findings etc.).

The awayday was designed like a conference with a series of workshop activities including ice breakers, all of which were intended to determine the above and to create team cohesion and a positive culture. A different team member made notes and action points each session and agreed to circulate these to the team by an agreed date. Just like students in any collaborative venture, necessary tasks and themes were allocated according to individual strengths and interests as well as individual consciences for a sense of fair play in sharing the less popular tasks. By the end of the awayday each member was clear as to his/her responsibilities and necessary preparation to lead his/her session for the whole group at the next awayday. All concerned also signed up to provide critical feedback on (assess) each other's individual and collaborative work in the same way academics frequently expect students to do so in group activities.

As a result of this first 24-hour event, a powerful team spirit was created and a quite distinctive project culture in which peer pressure was already playing a positive part – no one wanted to be seen to be the weak link or to let the side down. Each member willingly took responsibility for his/her specific tasks with the full knowledge that late or non-delivery would negatively impact upon the project. The team culture developed into a micro community of practice (Wenger 1998) imbued with genuine respect and friendship developed through our own collaborative learning journey afforded by the project. The strong group identity that had been fostered would sustain the project team through the ups and downs commonly experienced by project personnel.

HOW DO PROJECTS BEHAVE?

It is important to engage team members in the project right from the start. This engenders a sense of ownership in that each person has a stake in shaping the project's methodology by contributing to discussions as to how the project might be conducted. If managed creatively it also demonstrates that the whole has the potential to be greater than the sum of its individual parts. The challenge lies in creating an environment in which participants really take ownership of this process and gradually know and feel that their full participation is valued and is necessary

to achieve the best outcomes within the project consortium. Achieving a sense of ownership is fundamental to project success.

The authors' experiences of adopting a participative leadership style throughout a project meant decisions taken maintained the autonomy of the project team. Project teams also have to take into account what may be achievable and most likely to have impact within the project time frame. Furthermore, projects need to be flexible in their activity, often having to adapt to changes in the sector that form the context for project outputs. For example, one project team became aware of the growing importance of inter-professional learning within the working and learning agenda of healthcare in the United Kingdom, and realised that a proposal to develop an inter-professional staff development programme for practice educators should be amended to provide arguably more flexible educational materials and resources provided on the project website. This resulted in it being made an originally unanticipated theme in the structure of the resources produced by the project team.

HOW DO PROJECTS MANAGE CHANGE?

Changes in project staff often bring threats to the continuity within the team, but may also provide an opportunity to bring in new people with different skills and ideas. Interestingly, while changes often occur at key times in the project life, new team members can revitalise the project and add a new flavour to the group dynamic rather than contribute to any negative effect. This requires sensitive management to ensure that any new members are welcomed and brought up to speed as fast as possible. The maintenance of a core team (including new members) throughout the project life is fundamental to basic project functionality. Preventing change occurring is usually beyond the control of those involved in the project. Directors and teams must therefore be flexible and assess each situation to identify appropriate actions.

One example of managing change occurred within a project originally intending to produce paper-based resources as a project outcome. The team realised that NHS staff, who would be the main users of project resources, had greater access to the Internet, either in their places of work, study or at home, than originally assumed. The project team believed these healthcare practitioners were not only becoming more willing to utilise materials delivered in an electronic format, but that this was how they expected the materials to be presented to them.

It is important to note that the most common project challenges (managing change in personnel, the course or nature of the project, accidents or unexpected failure) all pale into relative insignificance if one can establish an authentic and sustainable team or community of practice.

WHAT DETERMINES THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF A PROJECT?

Many factors can influence the success of a project. A major feature of success in FDTL projects has been support from key senior managers. Sometimes this support helps overcome initial resistance to the changes in teaching practice arising from project activity, which some staff may consider to be a threat.

A people-centred management style appears to be a major success factor. Concern for and support of all involved in the project is central to this: a warm, friendly and approachable style provides an atmosphere of openness and collegiality. However, it is important to remember that during the life of a project individuals may not always agree, especially when dealing with complex situations. This is healthy and should not be seen as a problem, but as an opportunity for the project team to critically examine an issue. Creative management of these conflicts should acknowledge that, while tensions may exist, they can help strengthen the quality of project output through open discussion of the key issue(s). The discourse, and subsequent resolution, will enhance the academic rigour of project team activity as a consequence of an issue being subjected to critical analysis as part of the problem-solving process.

Achievement-orientation is an important aspect of motivation. The setting of high performance goals and having confidence in the abilities of others to meet those goals is likely to result in all outcomes being met to a high standard. As noted above, expectancy theory suggests that when people perceive a connection between effort and desired outcome they are more motivated.

A key aspect of FDTL projects has been an expectation that project teams engage with colleagues through dissemination across the higher education sector. Meeting and sharing with colleagues gives project teams insight of processes elsewhere, which can be used to inform project activity. To meet with colleagues who deal with similar challenges to you gives a sense that your project is worth something to the higher education community and not something that will just be used as a local solution.

Publicising the contribution of all actively involved in producing or co-ordinating project outcomes on the project website helps demonstrate commitment of all concerned to the project.

CONCLUSION

Effective FDTL projects create a mini community of practice, which has potential for wider dissemination and embedding of project outcomes after the project has officially ended. Personnel from many projects continue to disseminate and embed good practice and even effect strategic level change in their respective professional positions. It is, and probably always will be, impossible to quantify just how much impact such pedagogic interventions make as the ripple effects continue and collide

with other pedagogic innovations, thereby contributing to a critical mass of gradual course-level, departmental, institutional and even national higher educational shifts of culture.

A commonly ignored yet powerful tool for sustainable embedding of project outcomes resides in its personnel. Each individual's personal and professional development gained from within a project's learning community of practice continues to influence his or her practice well beyond the life of the project. This will be looked at in detail in the chapter on sustainability.

One feature of project participation that has not been explored in this chapter concerns the impact of participation in project-based research activity upon individual project team members. The next chapter will explore the nature of research in FDTL projects, how and why it has changed in recent times, and the impact of these changes impacts upon individuals participating in FDTL projects.

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II

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN FDTL PROJECTS

SHEENA BANKS, CHRIS TURNOCK

AND GORDON JOYES

National policy changes over the last five years have given greater strategic significance to linking research to learning and teaching innovation of the kind undertaken by FDTL projects. This is a significant change of emphasis for the HE sector, which has now filtered down to practitioner level and is making an impact on what is expected of projects undertaking learning and teaching innovation. The drivers for these policy changes come from issues related to increased student expectations of HE, research-led teaching, the increasing professionalism of teaching in HE, the development of flexible curricula, diversity and internationalisation, use of enquiry-based learning approaches and knowledge transfer. This policy context has meant that funding bodies such as HEFCE now have expectations that learning and teaching projects will build in research as part of their project plan and use research techniques to disseminate evidence that can impact on stakeholders. These expectations reflect academic practice movements within HE related to pedagogic research, scholarship of teaching and learning and students as enquiry-based learners. Developing pedagogic research in learning and teaching innovation that engages with theory-based knowledge and uses robust research approaches that go beyond the development of reflective practice is an opportunity to build capacity in linking research to teaching. There is also the potential of teaching-enhanced research (Brew 2003) as a process to stimulate the learning of academics.

These new policy approaches meant that FDTL5 projects, in contrast to previous funding phases, were encouraged to share and disseminate research outputs from their projects. As this emphasis on project research is a recent phenomenon, this chapter examines how FDTL projects have developed research as part of their projects. The chapter reflects on the significance of this policy approach, giving examples from FDTL projects, particularly the *Making practice-based learning work* and *V-ResORT* projects, of how to embed research within learning and teaching innovation

projects and highlighting some of the tensions and challenges faced by project teams in trying to achieve this.

The questions to be explored here are:

- Has the language/politics of research in learning and teaching projects changed?
- What is the purpose and meaning of research in learning and teaching projects?
- What research methods have been used in learning and teaching projects?
- How can projects use their outputs to promote research engagement?

THE CHANGING LANGUAGE/POLITICS OF RESEARCH IN LEARNING AND TEACHING PROJECTS

FDTL projects focus on linking policy to practice, importantly providing a policy framework in which the project is implemented. The impact of policy in developing drivers for the role of research within FDTL projects needs to be considered in several ways. Firstly, there is an impact on the way projects are managed, which is reflected in the expectations and project output criteria set by Higher Education Academy programme teams supporting FDTL projects.

What is now clear is that national policy on research-led teaching and learning is attempting to be much more holistic in making links between the quality of research and the quality of student learning. This was a key principle for FDTL projects to consider. An important publication highlighting the role of research in learning and teaching was the Higher Education Academy report on institutional strategies to link teaching and research (Jenkins and Healey 2005). This report provided an introductory evidence base of the ways in which HEIs can embed strategies to integrate staff research and scholarship within student learning which has relevance for FDTL projects. The report highlighted strategies to address what Ramsden (2001) called the re-engineering of the teaching-research nexus. One of the important recommendations of the report was that re-engineering does not occur automatically and has to be facilitated. We believe this is also true for FDTL projects and reflects the need to develop academic practice within projects that Kreber (2006) summarised as scholarship associated with notions of reflective practice and critical reflectivity. However, it is also very challenging because, as acknowledged by Brew (2003), the relationship of research to teaching is based on practitioners' existing conceptions of research and teaching, and there is wide variation in these understandings.

Secondly, the expectation that research will be part of FDTL projects has impacted on project design. Undertaking research within FDTL projects needs careful preparation and facilitation in a strategic way, so that it can link to the new policy and be disseminated in ways that have impact. It requires consideration of research methods, ethical issues, research design and knowledge transfer. It also requires consideration of theoretical frameworks, an important debate at FDTL meetings. We believe that the use of

theoretical frameworks considerably enhances the impact of FDTL projects and the scope for sustainability as they make project ideas more transferable.

Thirdly, the expectation that research is part of the learning and teaching innovation in FDTL5 projects is relatively new, and project teams have had to adjust to this. Previous FDTL projects often carried out research, though usually disguised as evaluation or dissemination. The need for disguise reflects the fact that previously research was separated from learning and teaching, but project teams nevertheless had to meet institutional requirements for research engagement. In effect projects operated in two different ways simultaneously to service the different requirements of their institutions and the funding body. This led to further tensions and conflicts with traditional research cultures; for example, the acceptability of sole-authored research papers in comparison to multiple-authored research-informed papers/ chapters that are the typical outputs of research and development type projects. It is therefore something of a relief that we can now publicly discuss how project research was designed and developed. There are also opportunities to connect the research emerging from these projects with the previously mentioned national agendas.

Ideally, projects should frame their objectives in the light of policy issues that exist at the time of writing the project proposal and be prepared to adapt to new policy issues. For example, the aim of the FDTL5 *V-ResORT* project was to develop online resources for research training. Its objectives were influenced by the contemporary emphasis both in the field of education in particular and the social sciences in general to 'build capacity' in UK research and for the development of training materials (JISC 2003).

THE PURPOSE AND MEANING OF RESEARCH IN LEARNING AND TEACHING PROJECTS

Project research has the potential to improve practice considerably and have a greater impact through publication and dissemination that goes beyond disseminating guidelines or case studies of good practice. Pedagogic research has a role in learning and teaching projects as a form of critical inquiry that generates and contributes to enhanced forms of educational theory and practice, which in turn can impact positively on the student experience.

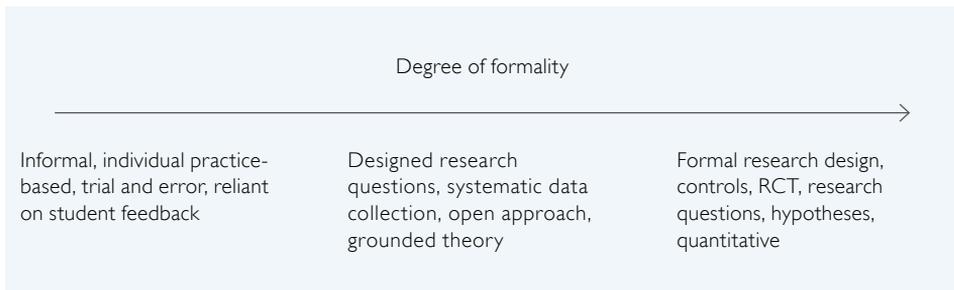
The use and dissemination of research data about the way in which FDTL projects contribute positively to the student experience, in ways which are sometimes experimental, can only enhance their impact. However, there is a need to be realistic about how much research FDTL projects could achieve, given the level of funding. Also, project research is usually very context specific and often not generalisable. This has been highlighted as an issue by Saunders *et al.* (2008) in their CETL evaluation report. Project teams need to engage with others undertaking learning and teaching research.

There is emerging evidence about the role of research in learning and teaching projects from 81 CETLs, particularly ideas about teaching excellence. The scale

of funding given to the CETLs had the effect of undermining the impact of FDTL5 projects, but those institutions that had both CETLs and FDTL projects have been able to build synergies, particularly in drawing on research and evaluation data produced by CETLs. Levy (2007) wrote about teaching excellence from her position as Academic Director of the CILASS CETL at the University of Sheffield. One of the requirements for teaching excellence was that critical practitioner inquiry into learning and teaching should be fundamental to its development. She examined teaching excellence through the lens of the Aristotelian concept of praxis, which is informed by practitioners’ critical engagement with the questions and problems that arise in the lived context of their practice (Levy 2007). Using the concept of praxis, she states that teaching excellence emerges both as a quality or disposition of professional engagement (enquiring) and also a fundamentally situated and ongoing developmental process. These processes contribute to pedagogic research, but will not occur unless specifically facilitated.

Pedagogic research has many variants of practice, but tends towards individual investigations that are not necessarily generalisable (Saunders *et al.* 2008). Saunders *et al.* (2008) also highlight difficulties of status that pedagogic research has compared to discipline-based research, presenting a continuum model of pedagogic research ranging from informal to formal (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Types of pedagogic research in practice (Saunders *et al.* 2008)



Analysis of how phase four and five projects have undertaken and publicised research activity in their projects has revealed that a higher proportion of phase five projects have undertaken research activity. This interpretation of project activity is based on analysis of project websites and responses from the named project contact and therefore must be treated with caution.

The findings of this ‘survey’, using the model in Figure 3, are that research activity fitted into the category of designed research questions, involving systematic data collection. A total of nine of the 38 phase four projects appear to have undertaken

research, while 18 of the 32 phase five projects undertook research. There was also a difference in the proportion of projects explicitly stating they were undertaking research activity, with five phase four projects explicitly stating they used research rather than evaluation or scoping, whereas only one phase five project did not declare to have undertaken research. The chapter will now present different approaches to research based on the experiences of two FDTL projects.

RESEARCH METHODS USED IN LEARNING AND TEACHING PROJECTS

Both Kreber (2006) and D'Andrea (2006) stress the importance of pedagogic research that links theory-based knowledge to practice in order that the research can impact on learning and teaching. D'Andrea (2006) sets out the challenges of this, calling for a rigorous approach that links conceptual knowledge to research questions to sound methodologies as a basis for developing high quality evidence. We have already highlighted how the processes of evaluation and dissemination are often used as a means of collecting empirical data in FDTL projects. However, there are other research approaches that are widely used, such as action research, which can be used to inform project development.

The *V-ResORT* project explicitly used action research to inform project development, although the rhetoric in the bid was 'project management speak' that referred to user needs, stakeholder engagement, iterative development, evaluation and dissemination. The project timescale of four years, including the transferability year, meant that this approach was ideal. The four-year timescale allowed a thoughtful action research approach to be adopted, ideally suited to engaging mainstream lecturers in all phases of the development. The action research spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, action and the evaluation of the result of action (Kemmis and McTaggart 1990), is ideally suited to developments that need to engage practitioners in reflecting on their practice.

The need to engage mainstream practitioners in the *V-ResORT* project was informed by the literature that suggested that new technologies were not being readily adopted by lecturers in higher education (Coopers and Lybrand 1996, HEFCE 1999). It was suggested that this was in part due to the need to engage mainstream lecturers, not 'missionaries', directly in the development (Watson 1993) to champion the materials in their institutions and beyond, and to ensure the materials were able to be used within their curriculum and not just innovative contexts (Reigeluth 1993).

The action research in the project was developed as an iterative six-stage cycle that extended into the transferability phase of the project. The first plan-act-review action research cycle started at the project planning stage. Before the project proposal was put together, a one-day conference was held to discuss the use of new learning technologies in education studies (Joyes 2002). Feedback from this

event plus evaluation data collected from learners' use of an e-research CD-ROM at the University of Sheffield was used to conceptualise a more advanced concept. This process also identified key partners and an inner circle of collaborators for the subsequent FDTL project.

The second action research cycle occurred once the project successfully gained funding and focused on work by the four project partners. The key task was creation and evaluation of an appropriate conceptual, pedagogic and technical design that would encourage reuse and meet user needs. Importantly, the design was influenced by the approach to dissemination used within the project.

The third action research cycle involved two key elements:

- creation of a functioning prototype resource on the project website incorporating key pedagogic design features that acted as a testbed for the technologies and approach for reuse. This was key in sharing the 'vision' within the project and more widely;
- identifying and working with local mentors within partner schools who were to use the materials. These were key academics with high status, who acted as mentors not only within their institutions, but also with the project team to support understanding of the ways to engage with the local culture. This led to the development of further online content and identification of additional resources that were then incorporated into the website.

The fourth and fifth cycles involved engaging the inner circle (a wider group of universities) and then the wider educational research community in similar ways. The sixth cycle, building on the success of the earlier cycles, involved transferability across the social sciences, within health studies and within a graduate school cross-university programme. This action research approach allowed each new dissemination engagement with the community of users to be problematised so that the local context was accommodated. As a result not only did the community of users grow, but so did the resource.

An implicit approach used questionnaires within the *Making practice-based learning work* project, which as a phase four project was less explicit in the use of research methods as the funding preceded aforementioned policy statements on the use of research in learning and teaching projects. The project presented an initial piece of research as a scoping exercise, which involved the project team designing and piloting a questionnaire to ascertain the methods used by universities to prepare and support work-based learning within selected health disciplines. This questionnaire was then distributed to a purposive sample, i.e. academic staff responsible for preparing healthcare staff for supervising health students undertaking a clinical placement.

The findings from a descriptive statistical analysis of the questionnaires were presented at a number of regional workshops. The project team used these

workshops to undertake further research activity, namely focus groups. The agenda for the focus groups was to consider the implications of the questionnaire findings for the development of resources to support health students' work-based supervisors. The project team collected pertinent dialogue from the focus groups and collated the written recommendations from the groups. Analysis of the dialogue and recommendations informed the next stage of the project, an approach often found in action research but which was not made explicit in the project's publications.

The distinction between 'scholarly evaluation' and 'research' became blurred when a project wanted to obtain user feedback on the usefulness of online resources intended for the preparation and support of healthcare staff supervising university students on clinical placement. An online questionnaire was employed to obtain feedback by asking a series of closed and open questions that were then systematically analysed for use by the project team to enhance the nature of the materials being reviewed. While this activity was undertaken by the project team as part of a strategy to ensure peer review of published materials, user feedback was presented in a systematic way to indicate the project team had used a systematic, research-based approach to assessing user satisfaction.

PROJECT OUTPUTS TO PROMOTE RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT

The *V-ResORT* project used its developing website as a core piece of research evidence that could be disseminated. This provided the outcome of the initial action research phase; the narrative around its rationale and the ways it was constructed were of interest to all its audiences. This visualisation of the key pedagogic concepts was essential as a demonstrator for each of the audiences with which the project engaged. However, other audiences had specific interests and this meant the project director and manager needed to consider how the project fitted with their particular interests.

One way was to respond to conference calls as these reflected the current interests of the particular communities. The development of papers to meet the calls resulted in an engagement with new literature, the need to collect different data or reanalyse the data collected within the project and an engagement with wider theory appertaining to the project. Acceptance of a paper would lead to engagement with a particular community and immersion in new and rich areas of influence.

The outcome has been journal articles and book chapters that focus on the interests of each of the communities. For example, Joyes and Banks (2008) presented the paper 'Postgraduate Research Training and Online Pedagogy' at 'The Teaching – Research Interface: Implications for Practice in HE and FE' conference held at the University of Stirling by the Education Subject Centre (ESCalate). This proved a useful engagement with this area of the literature and led to the book chapter 'Integrating eLearning and eResearch' (Joyes and Banks 2008). There are other similar examples of the project engaging in issues related to learner identity, communities of practice, personalisation, participative learning design and research-led and informed teaching (see Table 3).

Table 3: Examples of project research presented through dissemination

Audience/community	Examples of events at which V-ResORT contributed papers and presentations
Our own teaching colleagues	Course review meetings/workshops (local), CETL events
The teaching and learning in HE community	Project workshops/conferences (UK) CETL conferences (UK) Higher Education Academy conference (UK) Education Subject Centre (ESCalate) conference Universitas 21 conference (Mexico)
The technology development/e-learning communities	ALT conferences (UK) Ascilite conferences (Australia) Keynote at the International Malaysian Educational Technology Convention conference (Malaysia)
The research in HE community	BERA conference (UK) Networked Learning conference (Greece)
HEFCE – the funders	FDTL project conferences (UK)
Professional bodies	UKCGE, VITAE

However, to achieve these wider gains the design of the project website needs to be carefully considered. At the beginning of a project there is a need to publicise the project, its events, activities etc., but there is a case for the website to be quite different by the end of the project. This move from project overview to teaching and learning website happened within the V-ResORT project in essentially three phases of website redesign. The action research approach provided the necessary feedback to ensure a smooth progression from project publicity to teaching and learning website as proposed changes could be checked out with the user community.

The location of project research outputs needed to be rethought as publications would now appear on individual project members' websites as well as ESCalate's. Some of the research findings had application for learner support; for example, findings about scenarios of use around the materials became part of the online help as suggested learning pathways on the final website.

CONCLUSIONS

The policy landscape for HE has changed considerably over the last five years in relation to the status and meaning of pedagogic research as part of learning and teaching projects. The FDTL5 programme changed its approach and focus to respond to this, creating new opportunities for research engagement with those projects able to adapt

to the changing culture. The benefits of project research are many: impact on practice, marketing, networking to obtain the views of others, raising of personal profile, and development of research identity leading to professional and academic enhancement.

It is possible to look back and see a 'before and after' effect of this within the FDTL programme that underlines the fact that pedagogic research undertaken by projects creates added impact on learning and teaching, and also rewards project teams by opening up opportunities to engage in research. However, there is a need for greater understanding and some further evidence about how this can be achieved.

In addition, there is a close relationship between research and sustainability; in particular how evidence of project impact can influence the nature of project sustainability after the funding period is complete. Publication of project research in peer-reviewed journals may influence the opinion of senior staff, whether institutionally or nationally, about the value of a project and outputs from the project. The next chapter will explore this and other aspects of sustainability.

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12

SUSTAINABILITY

GORDON JOYES, CHRIS TURNOCK, SIMON COTTERILL
AND SHEENA BANKS

OVERVIEW

This chapter will address the key issue of sustainability of project outputs and outcomes within the context of FDTL projects. It will provide a working definition, identify four key questions to frame the discussion, and identify lessons learnt in relation to these with reference to examples from three FDTL projects in which the authors had a major involvement: *Making practice-based learning work*, *Managed environments for portfolio-based reflective learning* and *V-ResORT* projects. It is hoped that providing the context for the lessons learnt will enable the reader to judge their value in new contexts. It is worth noting that it is also legitimate for projects to end without attempting to be sustained. There may also be projects whose outputs become redundant due to other developments reducing the usefulness of an output.

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is the continuation of benefits after project funding has ceased. Successful FDTL projects – those that had delivered what their plans specified – could bid for continuation funding up to a maximum of 10% of the original project funding. Projects needed to demonstrate a continued demand for their benefits, and the funding was to support this and not new development work. The literature on sustainability, for example NCT (2002) and JISC (2008), makes a distinction between outputs and outcomes as benefits. Outputs include:

- technical sustainability (the software and where it resides);
- use/reuse/further development (continued use in the sector including beyond the intended partners).

Outcomes include:

- pedagogic and/or technology impact (influence on practice);
- human capital (the capabilities of the project team and other participants that provide potential for further impact in the same or in new areas).

One of the key strategies for achieving wide impact is the dissemination of lessons learnt. These can inform practice, future projects and strategy and policy. FDTL used cross-phase conferences to share lessons learnt and projects were encouraged to take part in these as well as wider dissemination activities such as conferences and publications. The following will provide some of the lessons learnt from the three projects in relation to the sustainability of outputs and outcomes and will address four key questions:

- What makes a project sustainable?
- How do we know a project has had an impact?
- What evidence do we have for sustainability?
- How can policy changes affect sustainability?

This chapter uses the term ‘partners’ to refer to the project team, which might reside in one or more universities and comprise members of the steering or advisory group and others who might be contributing to the project or using the output; for example, the subject centre or the Higher Education Academy adviser. A well-designed project will involve an increasing number of partners as it develops, consciously target these and look for opportunities to engage with new partners to support sustainability.

WHAT MAKES A PROJECT SUSTAINABLE?

Lessons learnt here cover the influence on sustainability of:

- pre-project proposal preparation (choosing the outcome and partners);
- planning for sustainability (having an early demonstrable output);
- output design and technology choices (ensuring accessibility, flexibility and adaptability);
- dissemination approaches (targeted ensuring take-up of outputs and outcomes);
- identifying new opportunities (actively disseminating to create opportunities).

PRE-PROJECT PROPOSAL PREPARATION

There is more to sustainability of projects than meeting the FDTL requirement to make the outputs freely available at the end through developing and maintaining websites or placing their resources within the JISC-maintained JORUM repository as recommended. This in itself can be problematic if extensive links to external resources are used, because these need some mechanism for regular checking that they are live. The FDTL NCT handbook states “the most successful exit and continuation strategies have been worked on from the outset as a central component of the project. Thus, when funding finishes, there is a smooth transition to a form of continuation that is organised in a different way or the project has achieved all of its aims and exits neatly.”

The consultation process before the project begins can have a major impact on sustainability as it raises issues with stakeholders in advance of the project. Thus, if project outputs do prove beneficial, stakeholders are aware that there may be ongoing costs and requirements to plan for. However, a far more important factor for sustainability at the bid writing and consultation stage (and during the course of the project) is ensuring that the project addresses real needs that are perceived as important by stakeholders, which increase the likelihood of embedding and sustainability after the project. This process also facilitates identification of key partners and core team for a project.

The *V-ResORT* project provides an insight into how this can be achieved. As described in the previous chapter, the project adopted an action research approach and the first plan-act-review action research cycle started at the project planning stage some two years before the FDTL5 project began. The fact that the FDTL programme had a rolling timetable for applications tied to the subject review process for HEIs meant that staff within education studies knew that the FDTL5 application would need to be developed during 2003. The *V-ResORT* project director, who was developing the use of online video to support research students, contacted other colleagues in the sector with similar interests and applied for funding under the thematic initiative framework of ESCalate, the Education Subject Centre, to explore and share effective pedagogic approaches to research training that utilised elements of online support and teaching and learning methodology. The funding enabled the group to run a workshop at the ESCalate ‘Research Methods for Research Students’ conference held at the Institute of Education, London in June 2002 (Joyes 2002a) as well as at the ESCalate ‘Research methods teaching and learning: Effective online support conference’ held at Birkbeck College, University of London in September 2002 (Joyes 2002b). This attracted representatives from 22 higher education institutions and identified the need for internet-based materials to support research students in training; online video narratives were identified as something that would add value to existing pedagogies used in teacher-led as well as student-centred settings. This pre-FDTL5 project activity also identified key partners, creating an inner circle of collaborators for the project who were ready to respond to the FDTL5 call and an outer circle with whom to engage if the bid were successful.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Having chosen the area for development that shows potential for sustainability and identified key partners to support the development, the project plan needs to begin with conceptualising and developing something demonstrable that visualises the intended output. This serves to support all the partners in ‘owning’ the output and the approach to developing this. It also means that key sustainability issues such as technology and output design choice begin to be addressed, as well as providing something that can be demonstrated in order to engage potential users at an early stage – within partner universities and wider. This ensures that early feedback from potential users can inform developments to improve sustainability. The *V-ResORT* project used the demonstrator to encourage new partners throughout the project to add their own researcher narratives to the online resource creating a sense of the resource being ‘invented everywhere’.

OUTPUT DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY CHOICES

If the project outputs are designed to be flexible and adaptable then the project may impact at discipline level, across an institution and at the HE/FE sector level – sustainability will be enhanced. Even a single subject context is likely to have changing requirements over time, so static outputs will be time limited. In the case of the *FDTL4 ePortfolio* project, the ‘product’ was designed to be customised on a programme and year-group basis (Cotterill *et al.* 2006), which facilitated its adoption into other contexts (Cotterill *et al.* 2005). The *Making practice-based learning work (MPBLW)* project illustrated how its outputs could be adapted for contexts outside of the original subject areas. This flexibility makes project outputs more applicable and adoptable for new policy agendas and therefore more open to new funding opportunities. In the *ePortfolio* project, the product was initially developed to help develop reflective learners; additional project funding was obtained to further develop the portfolio for other policy agendas such as personal development planning, employability, lifelong learning, work-based learning and personalised learning.

Technology choices can critically affect sustainability as accessibility and reusability of online materials need to be addressed. Three-year projects need to be future-proofed to ensure outputs can be supported and used beyond a project’s life. This is a difficult process and often compromises have to be made. The *V-ResORT* project chose to utilise a flash interface, a searchable database to provide powerful navigation around the online video resources and high quality video streaming. These decisions assumed increasing bandwidth and that flash players would become a standard feature of web browsers. Both proved to be correct; however, the decision to use Microsoft Producer to create and stream the videos

meant that the project output would be dependent on Microsoft continuing to develop this and support its use on different platforms and in different browsers. This proved problematic throughout the project with upgrades to the software causing difficulties with publishing videos as well as being able to play them in anything other than Internet Explorer. A platform independent solution would have been better, but the alternatives available in 2004 did not look as if they would be around at end of the project.

DISSEMINATION APPROACHES

There is a strong link between dissemination and sustainability (NCT 2002). Outram (2006) points out dissemination for implementation or embedding has become recognised as central to project activities. All the projects considered in this chapter have been involved in dissemination for implementation and for sustainability activity by engaging with the community such as giving demonstrations, presentations, networking, and publishing articles and book chapters, though the impact of these activities is not always easily measured. Many of these activities may well not sustain the product, but the lessons learnt and key ideas developed may lead to changes in thinking and practice.

The *MPBLW* project recognised that a range of stakeholders/partners would not only be key contributors to project outputs, but would also be influential in sustaining use of the outputs through activity to both raise awareness and encourage adoption of materials designed to enhance the preparation and support of healthcare practitioners supervising university students on clinical placements. The project team identified key stakeholders, which included healthcare education professionals (although increasingly there was interest from other fields such as social work), statutory bodies, higher education institutions and professional organisations. A key aspect of the project team's activity was to ensure stakeholders were informed about the project to promote take-up of outputs during and after project completion. The methods used to promote take-up and use are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Methods used to promote take-up and use – Making practice-based learning work project

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Extent of engagement with the project</i>
Healthcare education professionals	Regional workshops Practice educator email network Members of development group Expert panel members Online evaluation Open access to all learning materials and resources via the project website
Professional and statutory bodies	Meetings with project team members Provide copies of all project outputs Representation on project steering group Mapping of professional standards against project themes and learning resources
HEIs and Higher Education Academy (including subject networks)	Copies of all outputs HEI survey Presentations and workshops Consortium partners 'learning and teaching committee' involvement
Wider community	Academic publications Education and healthcare discipline conferences

IDENTIFYING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Monitoring funding bodies (HEFCE, JISC etc.) for funding calls is a well-recognised way of identifying new opportunities. However, engaging with 'the community' may lead to other opportunities and interest in the project team's work. The *ePortfolio* project participated in 14 conferences within the subject community and also in 20 conferences in the wider HE community, which led to an unanticipated level of interest, including 45 requests for consultation meetings over a three-year period.

Having considered what makes a project sustainable, the next question concerns whether or not one can ascertain the impact of a project.

HOW DO WE KNOW A PROJECT HAS HAD AN IMPACT?

Understanding project impact is a complex task, especially as other extraneous factors will also influence change within the area of project activity. However, the projects found that they could provide:

- evidence of output use;
- evidence through interest from across the sector;
- evidence of use/reuse beyond the intended context.

The lessons learnt here not only relate to how to evidence this impact and how this evidence might be used, but importantly how these represent the outcomes of conscious strategies for sustainability. The focus in the three projects was on how participative and engaging forms of impact evaluation can lead to a “more holistic understanding of the relationship between outcomes and the activities and contextual factors which may influence outcomes” (CILASS 2006).

EVIDENCE OF OUTPUT USE

Project evaluation activities can tend to focus on whether the project objectives were achieved rather than capture any impact on practice. Baseline data of practice ideally need to be captured as part of the development of the proposal, leaving the project to measure any changes or added value to learning that results. User uptake of project resources and/or participation in project-related activity can be used to provide evidence of impact that can stimulate project sustainability. In the case of the *V-ResORT* project, registered users were contacted to explore the value of the resource and the scenarios of use. This feedback was incorporated as suggested learning pathways as part of the online help on the video narratives website.

EVIDENCE THROUGH INTEREST FROM ACROSS THE SECTOR

Engagement at conferences, requests and expressions of interest from across the sector are also indicators of impact. The *V-ResORT* project would commonly come across users of the resource in the conference audience who would provide unsolicited active endorsement of its use during the presentation. At some stage, usually in the second year of a project, projects having an impact develop a ‘life of their own’ when developments seem to happen without being facilitated by the project team. Examples from within the three projects include being invited by various stakeholder groups, e.g. university departments, subject centres or CETLs, to run workshops and be involved in consultation meetings. The background to invitations often involved key members of a particular group becoming aware of a project’s outputs and believing sharing project findings or outputs with colleagues can help enhance learning and teaching activity.

EVIDENCE OF USE/REUSE BEYOND THE INTENDED CONTEXT

In all three projects the outputs were designed for reuse and as a result there was evidence of them being adopted for use outside of the intended context. For example, the *MPBLW* project had an intended context for use that involved healthcare practitioners supervising students undertaking clinical placement, but the project

outputs were adopted for use by a wider range of users, including other disciplines, for example sports sciences and business studies, and other groups, including university staff and students. This was supported by engaging with professional and crucially statutory bodies, i.e. Health Professions Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council. The nature of engagement varied, but the project team used these discussions to inform the nature of project outputs. The project team also cross-referenced project outputs against relevant standards for placement learning, making them suitable for reuse outside of healthcare. Furthermore, these discussions also helped publicise project outputs through implicit endorsement of the project arising from statutory body websites including a link to the project website.

The evidence from the selected projects indicates their impact upon the HE sector. However, what evidence exists to suggest projects can be sustained beyond the life of the project?

WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

The projects provide evidence of:

- sustaining the team to develop project outputs and continue to collaborate on new projects;
- sustaining outputs through strategic planning for future projects.

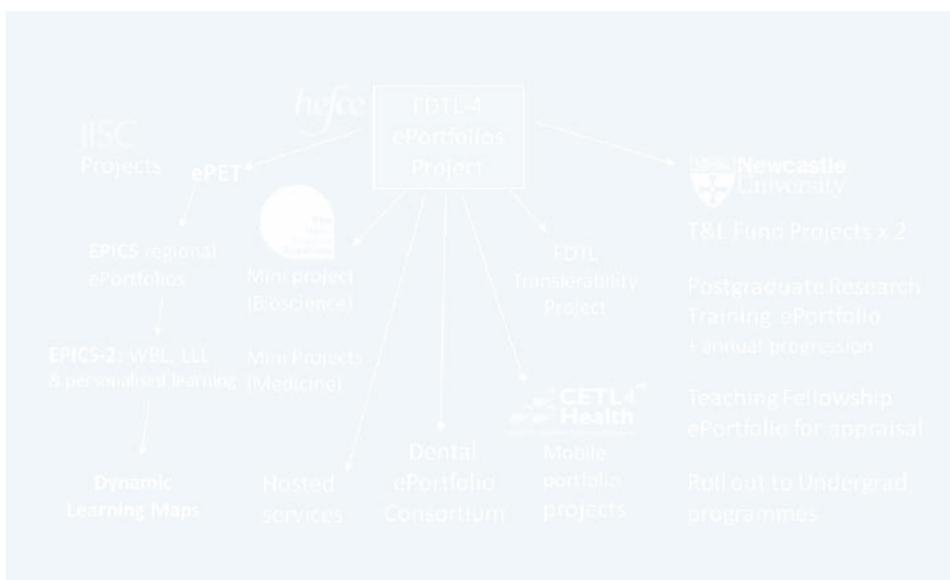
Their experience provides additional lessons learnt in relation to ensuring sustainability. These include the importance of team selection and development, and of being flexible in considering strategies for sustaining outputs beyond the life of the project.

SUSTAINING THE TEAM TO DEVELOP PROJECT OUTPUTS AND CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE ON NEW PROJECTS

The *ePortfolio* project has resulted in over 20 ‘spin-off’ projects for the lead site (see Figure 4) as well as continuation activities at the other partner institutions. The project team has been sustained and grew to three developers within this area, working within a broader team at the University of Newcastle. Initially focusing on medicine, the project outputs have been adapted and applied in many other contexts; for example, a postgraduate research training portfolio used university-wide at Newcastle. This growth has been achieved with a mixture of strategic planning for future projects and opportunistic growth, with both processes beginning early on in the project, which itself built on reputation and expertise developed in two earlier projects funded by DfES. Strategic planning included monitoring JISC and other organisations for calls for funding opportunities that reasonably aligned with stakeholder requirements,

alongside targeting internal funding for strategic developments. There were a number of opportunistic approaches from those in other subject areas and other institutions that had requirements for *ePortfolios*, these approaches resulting from a strategy of early project dissemination and flexible design that enabled adaption in other contexts. Following dissemination at a conference on medical education the medical programme at the University of St Andrews joined the FDTL4 project as a 'self-funded' partner, and has continued to adapt and use the project outputs (Aiton *et al.* 2008).

Figure 4: Overview of continuation projects following the FDTL4 *ePortfolio* project



Sustaining the team to develop project outputs and continue to collaborate on new initiatives can be challenging. Often knowledge and expertise vested with key personnel may be lost at the end of the funded project, or worse still staff on fixed-term contracts may need to leave the project before completion in order to ensure their continuing employment. In the case of the *ePortfolios* project at the University of Newcastle, sustainability of the team has benefited from being part of a broader development team (currently 13 people within a Learning Technologies for Medical Sciences unit) alongside support from senior managers in the school, faculty and university. Being part of a broader development team with multiple funding streams may reduce vulnerabilities to short-term gaps between project funding and can provide some opportunities for personal development and career advancement that help retain key staff. Also, having

a broader team makes it more feasible to take on additional ‘spin-off’ projects without detracting from the delivery of the ‘parent’ project.

The model here (Figure 4) has seen project-based growth alongside embedding and adaptation to other contexts; however, this does bring some challenges. For example, sometimes there may be tensions between seeking funding to maintain a ‘soft-funded’ team and meeting core organisational requirements. Also, supporting a growing base of users at the same time as embarking on new projects may result in challenging workload issues. There may be other approaches to sustainability; for example, in the *ePortfolio* arena there are good examples of how early commercialisation following an initial project can be very successful, though this may be problematic for public-funded projects. For sustaining software outputs from projects ‘Open-Source’ models may be an alternative, but need some income to grow and commitment from a broader community in order to become self-sustaining. In either approach, developing a ‘brand’ or identity for the output/team is important.

SUSTAINING OUTPUTS THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Sustaining outputs through strategic planning is more easily demonstrated by the two FDTL4 projects as they finished in 2005. However, the FDTL5 project, *V-ResORT*, which only finished a few months before the writing of this chapter, has strategically aligned itself with Open Educational Resources initiatives to work with others in the sector to create a repository of resources for use in research methods training at postgraduate level. There is an increasing awareness in the sector of the need for high quality digital resources in this area and the project team will continue to be involved in these developments. Unlike the *ePortfolio* project, the *V-ResORT* project did not set out to sustain a team beyond the life of the project. The team included members seconded part-time from different partner institutions together with other staff on short-term contracts. In this case the seconded staff ensured the outcomes were embedded in their institutions and they have continued to engage in sustainability activities at the end of the project.

While the evidence presented indicates that projects can have a life beyond the cessation of funding, how has policy change influenced the nature of post-project activity?

HOW CAN POLICY CHANGES AFFECT SUSTAINABILITY?

During the timescale of the three projects, there have been several events that have changed the landscape for sustainability. The first has been the emergence of the 74 CETLs, funded by HEFCE for five years from 2005. They were funded to a level that eclipsed the financial impact of FDTL funding, and possibly its strategic impact. In those institutions that had both CETL and FDTL funding, the FDTL project became less

important. This was both a drawback and a blessing: a drawback because it made the possibility of institutional embedding less likely; a blessing because it meant the institution paid less attention to the FDTL project, there was light-touch management from the Higher Education Academy, and there was therefore greater potential to innovate, which if successful might lead to institutional buy-in at a late stage in the project's life.

The second major change has been the strategic focus on research-led teaching and the research-teaching nexus as a consequence of the Jenkins and Healey (2005) report for the Higher Education Academy. This has had an impact on policy in that research was no longer separated from teaching and learning, an impact that was felt directly by FDTL projects²⁰. During 2003, when project proposals were being submitted, project teams were advised that research should not be included. By the end of the FDTL projects, we were being encouraged not only to carry out pedagogic research within the project, but to incorporate ideas of research into sustainability, particularly through the idea of knowledge transfer. The *V-ResORT* project focused on knowledge transfer during the transferability phase of the project. This had more impact and is longer lasting than direct use project products, because it offers the prospect of conceptual ideas being used in other contexts and the project is therefore sustained in other forms. Furthermore, this is an example of 'deepening a project impact', discussed in the CETL evaluation report (Saunders *et al.* 2007). FDTL does not have the level of funding available to take up all the ideas of 'deepening impact' described by the report. However, it is possible to use the CETL evaluation model of change strategy in relation to sustainability through the process of Awareness — Exploring Wider Effects — Adaptation and Extension as a framework for FDTL sustainability.

The third major change has been how the technology has moved on since 2003, particularly how e-learning has become mainstreamed in the HE sector. It is no longer enough to be using technology in a project, or to be seen as being 'innovative' merely by using technology. The technology and how it is used must be distinctive with the potential to become easily embedded for use in learning and teaching. However, one of the surprises of the *V-ResORT* project has been how much direct student use of the online resources there has been – much more than teacher use.

CONCLUSION

FDTL projects do not achieve sustainability on their own. They have to interact with strategic priorities at an institutional and national level, so that their impact becomes embedded in the wider policy context. Planning for sustainability requires a combination

20 See Chapter 11 for a detailed discussion of how policy changes have influenced changes in the way research has been approached in FDTL projects.

of foresight, vision, commitment, scholarship, flexibility and pragmatism. The impact of the project experience upon project members will, if it has been a positive one, mean they have a key role in disseminating, and hence sustaining interest in, project outputs.

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APPENDIX:

BULLET SUMMARIES FROM CHAPTERS IN SECTORAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

CHAPTER 1: EFFECTING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATION

- Measuring impact takes time; ‘what’ to measure may not always be known until towards the end of the project when insufficient time remains to do so. This was particularly true for unanticipated impacts.
- It is extremely difficult to establish a cause and effect relationship between a project and a perceived impact.
- Champions were seen as integral to the sustainability of the outcomes of the project: this could potentially cause a problem when a champion moves on, unless new champions have been recruited to replace them.
- The external environment is constantly changing – an especially important factor in the case of longer term projects. The timescale between putting the original project proposal forward and achieving realistic outputs can be years, and the external world can have moved on a lot in that time. Project teams need therefore to be vigilant as to the possible risk and impact of external change, which may be external to the institution (if a project is locally focused) or external to higher education.
- Obtaining funding for a nationally recognised project can give credibility to the project team, legitimacy to issues or topics that perhaps were not there previously and can encourage debate and engagement with the subject.
- Changes are much more likely to be sustainable where they are embedded, either within an institution’s policies and practices or at national level.

- One of the key ways in which change was effected through the health-related FDTL4 projects was through collaboration and partnership working across HE and NHS boundaries.
- The projects will have greater, long-term impact if the knowledge transfer and products from projects across subject disciplines and institutions is actively managed on a national basis. Project teams do not always have the power, skills, knowledge, networks and time to do this for themselves.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN FDTL

- As CoPs are not formal entities within an organisation, it is possible that the FDTL funding initiated a process of supporting and growing of these networks, and then gave them support and credibility.
- Developing and maintaining a wiki can certainly prove valuable in enabling the non-specialist to potentially embrace the subject material when preparing, and enable more social interactivity, supporting and scaffolding their learning.
- If using a wiki to support a community of practice, there is a need to let the community drive a wiki rather than impose a set of topics or areas of discussion from a central control.

CHAPTER 3: LONG-TERM IMPACT: LEARNING FROM THE LEGACY OF FDTL

- A project web presence is useful for maintaining interests and access to any outcomes of the project. Many FDTL projects maintain websites and provide a useful starting point for research. The ease of finding the projects during the initial searches did vary, with projects later in the FDTL phases typically being more aware of offering an acronym or identifying phrase that would make the project easier to find. Earlier projects, and those using generic language, are very difficult to find.
- Project outcomes that have resulted in published books or appeared in peer-reviewed literature remain visible among the many resources available on the web. This outcome must be balanced between delivering project outcomes during the project such as workshops and newsletters, as the formal publication process can be too long for it to be of use in disseminating a new project.

- Consideration of the audience, and knowing who the audience is, can mean some resources or initiatives may become longer-lasting. Projects are still receiving requests for materials long after conclusion of the project as the outcomes have been sufficiently generic and timeless. This success has been achieved by careful consideration of the needs of the stakeholders, but also by accident, and successful projects have been quick to capitalise on these successes.
- It is clear the structure of FDTL, providing as it did a testbed away from the pressures of research activity where experimental teaching and learning could be developed, has led to much innovation and enthusiasm.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

APPLET	<i>Advancing the provision of pharmacy law and ethics teaching project</i>
ALT	Association of Learning Technology
Ascilite	Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education
BERA	British Educational Research Association
<i>BioLab</i>	<i>Biomechanics teaching and learning toolbox project</i>
CETL	Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
CETT	Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training
<i>CoBaLT</i>	<i>Community-based learning teamwork project</i>
CoP	Community of practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CS	Childhood Studies
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland (now DELNI)
DELNI	Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DIUS	Department for Industry, Universities and Skills
<i>DOPLA</i>	<i>Development of postgraduate and language assistants project</i>
DTLLS	Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector
EBL	Enquiry-based learning
ECS	Early Childhood Studies
<i>EQUIPE</i>	<i>Educational quality in placements in engineering project</i>
<i>ERA</i>	<i>Experience-rich anthropology project</i>
ESCalate	Education Subject Centre
<i>FAST</i>	<i>Formative assessment in science teaching project</i>
FDTL	Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
FDTL NCT	FDTL National Co-ordination Committee
FE	further education
GNU	<i>Geography for the new undergraduate project</i>
HE	higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
<i>HELM</i>	<i>Helping engineers learn mathematics project</i>
HELP	Higher Education Learning Partnerships CETL
<i>HILP</i>	<i>Hertfordshire integrated learning project</i>
HND	Higher National Diploma
HSaP	Health Sciences and Practice Subject Centre
<i>ICP</i>	<i>The interculture project</i>
IFL	Institute for Learning
<i>IMAGE</i>	<i>Interactive mathematics and geosciences education project</i>
ITE	Initial Teacher Education

ITT	Initial Teacher Training
ITT (LS)	Initial Teacher Training (Learning and Skills)
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
JORUM	A free online repository service for teaching and support staff in UK further and higher education institutions. Jorum encourages sharing, reuse and repurposing of learning and teaching materials created by the community for the community. Jorum is a service in development, run jointly by EDINA ⁷ and Mimas ⁸ National Data Centres and funded by JISC.
L2L	<i>Learning to learn through supported enquiry</i> project
LeAP	<i>Problem-based learning in Astronomy and Physics</i> project
LSS	Learning and Skills Sector
LTSN	Learning and Teaching Support Network
LUMEN	<i>Leeds University music in education initiative</i>
MaPPiT	<i>Mapping the placement process with information technology</i> project
MEDAL	<i>Making a difference: educational development to enhance academic literacy</i> project
MEDEV	Subject Centre for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine
METAL	<i>Mathematics for economics: enhancing teaching and learning</i> project
MPBLW	<i>Making practice-based learning work</i> project
NCIHE	National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education
NCT	National Co-ordination Team
NHS	National Health Service
NTFS	National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OLAAF	<i>Online assessment and feedback</i> project
PADSHÉ	<i>Personal and academic development for students in higher education</i> project
PCET	Post-Compulsory Education and Training
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QCA	Quality and Curriculum Authority
RAPPORT	<i>Residence abroad project at Portsmouth</i>
Saphe	<i>Self-assessment in professional and higher education</i> project
SCEPTRE	Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (CETL)
SEED	<i>Science education enhancement and development</i> project
SIP	<i>Sociologists in placement</i> project
SLICE	<i>Student-centred learning in construction education</i> project
SMILE	<i>Strategies for managing an independent learning environment</i> project
STAR	<i>Student transition and retention</i> project
SPAT	<i>Student progression and transfer</i> project
SWAP	Social Policy and Social Work Subject Centre
TALESSI	<i>Teaching and learning at the environment, science, society interface</i> project
TQEF	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund
TRANSEND	<i>Transferable skills in engineering and their dissemination</i> project
TransLang	<i>Transferable skills development for non-specialist students of modern languages</i> project
UKCGE	UK Council for Graduate Education
UMAP	<i>the Universities medical assessment partnership</i> project
ViperLib	<i>Visual perception library</i> project
VITAE	a UK organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes.
VLE	Virtual learning environment
V-ResORT	<i>virtual resources for online research training</i> project
WILeN	<i>Web-based inter-professional learning network</i> project

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Between 1995 and 2009 the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) funded 164 projects across a wide range of subjects. The FDTL was initiated with the aims of 'stimulating developments in teaching and learning' and to 'encourage the further dissemination of good teaching and learning practice across the higher education sector'.

The projects, and the initiative as a whole, have impacted on a number of levels – personal, institutional, practice and policy.

This collaborative publication shares insights from and about FDTL in order to further the sustained legacy of the initiative. It is organised around four key themes: Sectoral and organisational change; Conceptual change; Professional and personal development and Partnership and project management and draws on a variety of practice-based evidence arising from FDTL.

The book is of relevance to all higher education practitioners and particularly those interested in, undertaking, or responsible for the development of learning and teaching in higher education.

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