

Welcome to the launch of PRAXIS!

An unusual name you may think, but I feel its meaning fits nicely with what we are trying to achieve. Of Greek derivation, it is used to describe skilled activity borne out of, or as a result of, knowledge.

This first issue coincides with both the College's recent policy initiatives regarding the promotion and development of staff scholarly activity, and the opening of the Knowledge Transfer and Research Centre on the ninth floor at Summer Row. Moreover, it has particular salience in view of the growing need to publicise, both internally, and externally, what we are doing in terms of scholarly activity and knowledge exchange; imperatives brought sharply into focus by our recent, and ongoing, application for taught degree-awarding powers (tDAP).

As a dual-sector institution offering all levels of higher and further education, and operating across a multitude of disciplines and sub-disciplines, we occupy a very specific, some would say unusual, position within the post-16 education sector. A consequence of this, of course, is a very heavy emphasis on teaching and learning, together with associated levels of administrative and ancillary support. However, and perhaps paradoxically, it is this very focus on teaching and learning that creates its own commensurate, and continuing, demand for research into new knowledge, application of existing theories and practices, dissemination of current thinking and ideas, and the need to share knowledge. Indeed, you could argue that teaching institutions such as ours have a greater requirement for such activities than some of the higher education establishments that

concentrate resources towards research for its own sake. After all, should we not research primarily to inform our teaching?

This then is our problem; how can we develop our scholarly activity and knowledge exchange profiles within the constraints of our teaching and administrative responsibilities? Although this is a major consideration, and one to which there is no single answer, one of the ways we can seek to approach the challenge is by pooling and sharing what we have, and what we are doing. However, it is very difficult to achieve such synergistic gains without first knowing what we have and what we are doing. In short, we need to internally publicise.

There is a considerable wealth of vocational and academic potential within the College.

In order to outline how this publication may help us achieve this, I would like to set out the proposed scope and structure of the publication, both as an introduction to its purpose and style, and as a departure point from which you are encouraged to freely contribute ideas and suggestions for its continuous

development and effectiveness.

The overall aim of Praxis is to provide a forum for the internal publication of a broad range of scholarly activity and knowledge exchange for all College staff. It is envisaged that this may be achieved by encouraging staff to contribute articles relating to proposed research, and ongoing projects relating to scholarly activity; to disseminate existing knowledge and current practices; to offer descriptions as to contemporary applications of skills and methods; to offer suggestions regarding future potential research projects; and to share with colleagues practical, academic, and intellectual ideas. Set within a three-part structure of regular, school-department-denominated pages; a section for staff contributions of short articles, scholarly activity outlines and project summaries; and a space for communications and information, it is planned to have two semester-related issues in March and October, together with a special issue in July covering the College Conference papers and contributions.

As last year's College Conference demonstrated, the enthusiasm and commitment shown towards scholarly activity, and the high quality of the material presented, there is a considerable wealth of vocational and academic potential within the College, and I encourage you to take full advantage of this forum in order to develop and take these capabilities forward. In doing so, I hope you will all feel that this is your journal, and an important vehicle for your individual development, but also urge you to consider it as an opportunity to fully share your skills and knowledge with us all.

David Jenkins

If you would like to contribute an article, comment on any of the issues raised, or join the debates published here, please e mail us at researchandkt@bcfctcs.ac.uk

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Research and Knowledge Transfer: an external view

The opening of the new Knowledge Transfer and Research Centre represents not only the establishment of a purpose-built, and much needed, multi-functional facility for students and staff; but also signals the increasing scale, and developing scope, of the activities of our department. With this in mind, I would like to outline the structure and function of our operations, and to share with you our plans for the short, and medium-term, future.

Most of you will be familiar with the names of the department staff, but the roles and responsibilities we share may not be so obvious. Please see below a schematic which illustrates how we are organised, together with a brief overview of how the department operates.

The first thing to note is the notional nature of internal and external research co-ordination. Although we jointly share the overall responsibility for the running of the department, with Andy managing the undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations processes, while I look after external research affairs; there is considerable overlap both within, and between our roles. For example, Andy is involved with me on a day-to-day basis with the development and planning of staff scholarly activity, and I am involved in the new postgraduate dissertation module as module leader, and as a team co-ordinator for undergraduate dissertation assessment. The extent of the overlap is such that effectively our roles and responsibilities can be considered interchangeable.

We like to think this works, both for students' ongoing research support, and from a staff access perspective, where we now have 16 members of staff studying at doctoral level, and a significant number of colleagues on various other postgraduate programmes; a level of involvement we are continuously seeking to develop.

In terms of our colleagues' roles in the department, we can view the above schematic from left to right.

Jackie Westwood is responsible for all the administration of both undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations. Throughout the year Jackie liaises on a regular basis with dissertation supervisors and assessors, ensuring they have access to the appropriate support, materials, and paperwork to make sure the dissertation mechanism runs smoothly. She also follows up students and ensures there is effective communication between everybody involved in the process. In addition, Jackie also maintains a dissertation records database, which offers an overview of the current position of all students involved at the dissertation stage of their degree course. The scale of this operation is worthy of note. Last spring and early summer, nearly 500 undergraduate dissertation projects were processed, with all of these being double marked, and some going forward for third marking, this represents well over 1000 separate transactions!

The postgraduate dissertations, while not yet on the same numerical scale, but growing rapidly – in January 2008, we expect around 200 submissions from our current postgraduate cohorts – have additional complexities, far too numerous to describe here, but which in order to address we have imported Roland Hegarty to work with Jackie in order to oversee the tracking and management of submission timeframes and associated issues. Roland also continues with his various other teaching responsibilities.

In January 2008, we expect around 200 submissions from our current postgraduate cohorts.

Nichola Lavin manages the public side of our operation, acting as the first point of contact for students and staff entering the department. Her role involves offering information and advice to students (and signposting where relevant), maintaining and developing the resources we offer, overseeing the Research Methods workshops, supporting

staff research, and ensuring that the centre offers a positive working environment for staff and students alike. Juliet Burnham teaches Managing Research and Information (MRI) at level two, and is also actively involved in our day-to-day operations. In addition, Juliet is pursuing a number of research topics of her own that will both inform curricula and develop the College's scholarly activity profile.

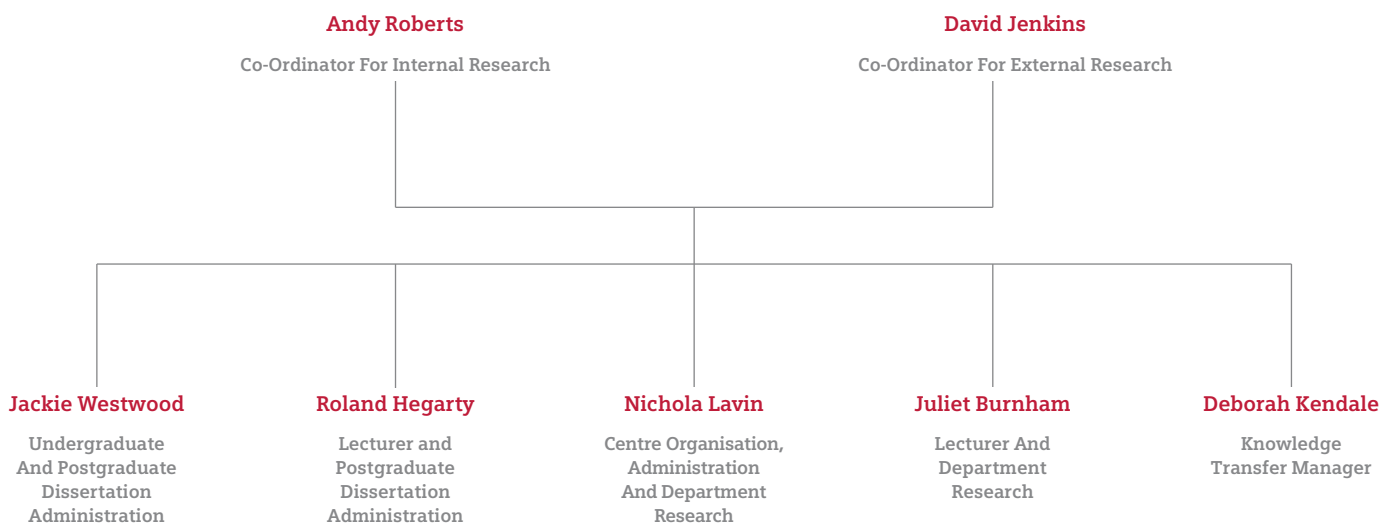
Deborah Kendale is the Knowledge Transfer manager, whose primary role is to develop relationships to external contacts in higher education, business and public sector bodies that have relevance to the subject disciplines that the college has expertise and knowledge in. Through these contacts and relationships, Deborah hopes to gain opportunities for college staff to undertake projects, participate in events and develop consultancy type work that relates to their area of expertise.

The development of knowledge transfer (or exchange) in the college is encouraged at all levels. Deborah would be delighted to hear of project ideas from members of staff who have their own contacts or ideas and wish to develop them as part of their scholarly activity.

Amongst other things, Deborah is currently working on an application to the regional development agency for a product development kitchen and with Melvyn Pryer is working with a local community project to develop a short course in faith-based guiding.

David Jenkins

Knowledge Transfer and Research Department



David Jenkins



Avoiding the 'Jade Goody' approach to fostering harmonious Group Work

When developed as a means of purely reducing the perceived burden of marking work load or simply as a means for students to tackle projects which are too large for any one student to complete on their own, student group work should carry a health warning. The final learning outcome could be perceived to be tedium, lack of practical purpose, lack of constructive development and sour personal relationships. Indeed, under such circumstances student group work activities can result in an assessment experience for both assessor and the assessed akin to being strapped in front of a television and being made to watch the antics of a bunch of 'C' list celebrities attempting to rejuvenate their public profile confined to a room or jungle patch!

In November 2006, an Academic Management Team cross-school sub group symposium was held to critically review current group working practices, and to develop a cross school framework to clarify expectations of group work at different levels of HE. Supplementing such developments was the recognition of the need to develop practical guidance tools, such as a handbook so as to avoid an assessment experience that Jade in her eloquent Essex dialect might describe as 'Pony and trap...'

The perceived need to develop a strategy, towards developing group work as an effective learning experience, has been prompted by concerns voiced by both students and lecturing staff. Typical comments received have included:

- The perceived fairness of group work
- Recognition of individual team player contributions
- Preparation of students to undertake group work
- The amount of group work assessment on HE programmes

- The use of group work to reduce workload
- Grading of group work and the consequential impact on classification profile
- The need to clarify expectations

Discussion in the symposium was sub-divided into various themes, with each theme facilitated by a senior member of the academic staff. The debate was thought-provoking and stimulated interactive discussion involving all attendees.

The symposium debate revealed that there appears to be clear cross-school common ground on the following key points:

- The need to clarify expectations of group work at the various levels of HE
- To effectively communicate expectations of group work amongst both students and lecturing staff perhaps through the development of support material.

- The rationale for using group work should extend beyond the perceived logistical convenience of this form of assessment to manage large groups and therefore was thought to be best suited for projects that are too large for any one student to complete alone or where imaginative problem solving solutions were required.
- Group work when managed effectively, assesses a range of practical and intellectual competencies exposing students to working in a team environment
- When managed effectively, group work develops employability competencies considered desirable by the industry and vocational environments served by the College's portfolio of HE programmes.

However, the symposium debate revealed a number of challenges in arriving at a set of definitive strategies:

- A cross College prescriptive format covering every level does not appear to be viable. Alternatively, emphasis might be best placed on developing social, product, process and academic competencies and skills. At the initial stages of an HE programme these may attempt to develop student self efficacy and basic 'how to' skills in managing the group social dynamics; where at the final year Honours or Masters level students might be expected to deal with more complex problems demanding high level interactive debate and a decision based outcome based on substantiated/supported debate.
- Is the derived mark awarded for group work for the end 'product', the 'process' or both? This complex dilemma has clear implications in terms of deciding the philosophical rationale of group work at different levels of HE.

For example say a Level 3 (honours) candidate is presenting a sales 'pitch' for an innovative service concept. It may be legitimate to judge the group in a similar way as to how a prospective employer may view the outcome i.e. a product outcome led with less emphasis placed on how you arrived at the solution.

Such an approach, whilst attempting to create a realistic scenario environment, may omit consideration of the social process dynamics of the group and the research methodology

- The whole nature of group work assessment presents a myriad of complex interconnected issues, which have added complex dimensions when applied to different forms of group work activity. Therefore advisory guidance may be the most appropriate format. This raises the issue as to whether the format should act as a self-reflective guide providing exemplar templates to promote a successful assessment outcome.
- The organisation of group work. Should groups self select? Should they be random? Or directed by the tutor? Self-selection offers certain advantages in allowing students to work with colleagues they know. However, friendships can become strained and objective input and analysis can become the victim of groupthink. In addition, group activities may not simulate a future working environment, which may draw together individuals to tackle a specific task.

In contrast pre-selected groups do present the tutor with organisational and cross-cultural integration advantages. However, tactics to engineer groups to enhance a group's grading profile by mixing the abilities can cause frustration if there is disparity of contribution especially where a detrimental grading outcome could potentially damage a students' award classification.

Is the alternative random selection? Does this approach adopt a neutral position of chance? The drawback here being for example, the potential impact on mature or part time candidates.

Suggested Cross School Framework

In order to arrive at some form of fruitful outcome, a foundation basis needs be established to clarify expectations. The group debated Moon's J (2006) model, which attempts to establish generic skills for students within groups across levels. This model provides a useful basis of group work orientation and would appear to be consistent with the College's approach towards developing employability skills. To summarise Moon suggests:

Level 1 student works effectively with others as members of a group and meets obligations of others. This would suggest development of skills of social interaction, teamwork and 'how to tackle group work' guidance.

Level 2 as above plus giving and receiving information/ideas and modifying responses where appropriate.

Level 3 as above plus recognise and support or be proactive in leadership, negotiate in a professional context and manage conflict.

Level M as above plus clarify and make appropriate use of capacities of group members; is able to negotiate and handle conflict with confidence.

To conclude, group work is essential in terms of developing students to work effectively in teams and who are therefore better placed to work effectively in a future work environment demanding creative and innovative products and services. In addition, effective group work promotes social and cross-cultural understanding, an issue which is vital in an emerging era of global commercial activity. Group work can help move assessor and assessed out of the comfort zone, so enabling individuals to discover unrealised talent and to self reflect on those attributes requiring development. Yet sorting out a cohesive approach is not easy and the experimentation to get it right may cause upset and self-doubt. Nevertheless, the consequences of not experimenting and not developing a coherent approach, could further student resistance to learning techniques designed to developing team skills and would be what Jade Goody is to harmony, teamwork and celebrity E list promotion.

Robert Swinnock

Effective group work promotes social and cross-cultural understanding, an issue which is vital in an emerging era of global commercial activity.



Robert Swinnock

Does my hairdresser need a degree?

I visit the hairdresser's once every six weeks or so. I go to my hairdresser because she was recommended to me, and I am confident that she does a good job, but I confess I have no idea what qualifications she has.

Her skills are wide ranging. She not only cuts, colours, perms, and styles hair; she is also good at communication. I know this, because she manages to translate the vague and wishful descriptions, sometimes accompanied by impossible-to-reproduce celebrity photographs presented to her by clients, into something we are pleased with, all the while chatting about anything from weather, to holidays, to politics. Like a good number of hairdressers, she runs her own business, and she supervises trainees, sent to the salon from a local college and training provider.

There is no doubt that the job has changed, she says. The weekly shampoo and set that was the bread and butter of the trade when she started is a thing of the past. Nowadays, the average client visits every six weeks. And with the media pressure on all of us to look eternally youthful, I imagine she now needs advanced skills in raising self-esteem and self-confidence amongst a clientele which is seeking if not an eternally youthful look, at least a not-yet-old look. Moreover, the talk is not just of Hello magazine and holidays, but of 'product'. You must need to do lifelong homework to keep up with what's new, what's in and what's out in the 'chemicals R us' world of 21st century hair care.

So does my hairdresser need a degree? There seems to be enough here to fill a Foundation Degree programme, if not an Honours top up. And indeed, there are currently ten higher level qualifications on offer in hairdressing. Two are HNDs, four are Foundation Degrees and four are BA Honours degrees. They range from 'Hair Design' to 'Make-Up and Hair Styling for Theatre Film & TV' to 'Salon Management'.¹ But the fact that there is a degree, does not answer the question: Does my hairdresser need a degree?

What does getting a 'degree' mean in the expanding world of higher education? In a 'dual sector' institution, this is a serious question. Here students are studying and training on courses which could lead on to higher, degree level study. And they see degree courses, possibly in their subject, being offered by their own institution.

Are we sure that the jobs actually exist for our students to enter on graduation?

The Foundation Degrees website² tells prospective students: 'you'll be developing understanding, skill and knowledge that's highly valued in business.' In fact, wherever you look, there appears to be a strong emphasis on employment skills. This applies to both FE and HE. The government says FE is a specialized system focused on employability³, while HE 'equips people with higher level skills relevant to their working lives.'⁴

But HE has traditionally aspired to be more than this. A 2003 DfES report described higher education as follows:

"Its research pushes back the frontiers of human knowledge and is the foundation of human progress. Its teaching educates and skills the nation for a knowledge-dominated age. It gives graduates both personal and intellectual fulfilment. Working with business, it powers the economy, and its graduates are crucial to the public services. And wide access to higher education makes for a more enlightened and socially just society."⁵

How, I wonder, does this sit with a Foundation Degree, which is sold to prospective students with the question: Would you like to work with media people in fashion, TV, film or video companies?⁶ And equally importantly, what happens to those students who complete their degree and find that the media industry is not beating a path to their door, desperate to employ them to style celebrity heads.

It is perhaps easy to raise these questions in the context of hairdressing. But the same underlying questions apply to higher education more widely. If we are promoting degrees as a route to employment, and to better paid and more fulfilling employment, are we sure that the jobs actually exist for our students to enter on graduation? And if higher education in its expanded form is about more than skills for jobs, how are we going about developing 'personal and intellectual fulfilment' in the work that we do? In our haste to expand and take advantage of the government's widening participation targets, I wonder if we might need to step back a moment and consider what we are doing, and who it is for.

For the hairdresser of the future may well need a degree, but I would like to think it will prepare her (or him) to do more than dream of styling the heads of a new generation of Victoria and David Beckhams.

Ann-Marie Bathmaker is Professor of Further Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

1 You can find the full list on the UCAS Foundation Degrees Gateway WebPages at <http://develop.ucas.com/FDCourseSearch/Gateway.html>

2 <http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/index.shtml>

3 White Paper Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances (DfES, 2006)

4 White Paper Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work (DfES, DTI, HM Treasury, DWP, 2006) Part 1, p.27

5 White Paper The Future of Higher Education (DfES, 2003) p.10

6 City College Manchester on the UCAS Foundation Degrees website

Research and Knowledge Transfer: an internal view

Back in the summer of 2006, the College was invited to assist in the writing of a research proposal to seek funding for an extensive research project (some £250,000) designed to examine the issue of student access to undergraduate education. The final research aim agreed was: 'to examine the impact of the division of further and higher education on strategies to widen participation in undergraduate education'. There are relatively few Dual Sector institutions – those offering both FE and HE provision – and the College was soon identified as being a key player in such an area. ESRC funding is very competitive and the subsequent approval of the project underlined, we felt, the importance and timeliness of the project.

Here at the College, we may take for granted all the efforts we make to ensure a smooth transition for those students transferring from FE to HE. We may further take for granted the collective knowledge we have of how FE and HE operate and how the two 'sectors' relate to each other. This is by no means the case in single sector institutions, and thus, what students transferring from FE to HE experience and the impact of these experiences on their HE study, is not as common knowledge as many may think. In essence, we as a dual sector institution are in a much stronger position than, say a 'traditional' university, to appreciate how the process of FE-HE transfer impacts on student success or failure at HE level. This is why the College was sought out and invited to be part of the team investigating the above aim.

At present, the research is undertaking a series of interviews with students to explore their experiences of making a 'significant transfer' in their learning – whether this may be progression from FE and HE or from foundation degree to Hons level; concepts such as 'space and place' and 'imagined futures' are just some of the areas proving most interesting. Pleasingly, we are finding students have put far more thought and effort into their study and career plans than we often give them credit for. Whilst the research has complex theoretical underpinnings and a well-reasoned research design, our fieldwork is reminding us that complex research should always seek to uncover in the simplest terms how the real world actually is. Hearing students articulate their hopes and fears, imagining their futures and sharing their perceptions

and needs, reminds us that being young and trying to plan for your future in a less than certain job market is a complex and often demanding time. For me, spending time planning research with respected professionals and then hearing how students themselves experience their world of learning has been an excellent reminder of the importance of ensuring even the most high profile research must always keep sight of the 'everyday' real world of others.

The ESRC insist that each research project demonstrates 'capacity building'. That is, it demonstrates how the project leaders will seek to encourage and promote the research expertise and profile of others; the College has already gained very useful working relationships with our research partners – especially Professor Ann-Marie Bathmaker who has already presented a very well received introduction to the project at the College conference. Further, the doctoral work of Andrew Morrison, who examined the role of 'institutional habitus' and the doctoral literature review on foundation degrees completed by Theresa Morris, have already attracted interest from the project leaders.

We thank all those staff who have already helped contribute to the project through the early focus groups, and we will obviously welcome anyone wanting further information, on both the project design and execution or on the actual findings to date, to contact us. The website for the project can be found at: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/furtherhigher>.

Andy Roberts

What students transferring from FE to HE experience and the impact of these experiences on their HE study, is not as common knowledge as many may think.



Andy Roberts

Knowledge Transfer at BCFTCS: Current activities and future opportunities

Since my appointment in March 2006 as Knowledge Transfer Manager, to support business development and with the opening of the new dedicated Knowledge Transfer and Research Centre, resources and contacts are in place to enable and assist staff in both HE and FE departments in the college to undertake scholarly activity and knowledge transfer.

Below are brief summaries of some of the activities the College is currently involved with in the areas of knowledge transfer. New ideas and project proposals are always welcome.

New Product Development Kitchen

An application for funding for an upgraded recipe development kitchen on the second floor is in development. The kitchen will be available for use by small and medium sized businesses for product and recipe development. The kitchen facility will allow businesses to experiment in a managed environment and have the facility to innovate on a test market scale with little risk involved. This will provide a work environment where staff and possibly students will have the opportunity to network with and assist regional food and drink businesses.

Faith Based guiding Project

Progress is underway with a local faith based community project on a short course in faith based guiding. The course will hopefully be accredited by the Institute of Tourist Guiding, with the assistance of Pam Powis, who is the chair of the accreditation committee and a part time lecturer at the college. The aim of the course is to provide faith based guides based in places of worship in Birmingham with a structured basis from which to conduct tours, including the production of publicity materials and the ability to monitor and assess customer satisfaction.

Science City

The college is a member of the development committee of "Science City" a treasury sponsored initiative that aims to recognise the achievements and raise the profile of only six cities in the country (Nottingham, York, Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol and Birmingham) using the broadest definition of science. Birmingham Science City has five major themes. These are low carbon, innovative healthcare, understanding of science, digital Birmingham and communications. Key audiences for the initiative are schoolchildren, the general public, business and the government.

Whilst the College is not active in research and teaching of traditional science, it has a useful part to play in the healthy eating debate and the drive to make food choices healthier, mainly in institutional settings to enable people to "live better for longer".

Other Regional Developments

The College is one of the university and college sponsors of CONTACT, which acts as the regional knowledge exchange. CONTACT acts as a broker between universities and colleges and industry based companies who are looking to get help with business based problems from the HE sector. CONTACT has recently restructured itself into nine theme areas that reflect areas of expertise that the universities and colleges have and that business and industry is looking for help with. These areas include food and drink and sports technology. Deborah Kendale represents the College on the food and

drink theme group as the chair and another member of staff will represent the sports therapy and sports management groups within the College.

Further opportunities are sought this year that may lead to projects, events and courses where the college can showcase its capabilities and strengths.

The aim of these groups is to act as a regional point of contact for businesses that want to work with Universities and Colleges and to develop and be innovative.

The examples above show where the College is working with business and other universities and colleges across the region. Further opportunities are sought this year that may lead to projects, events and courses where the College can showcase its capabilities and strengths.

Deborah Kendale



Deborah Kendale

Taught Degree Awarding Power: What difference will it make?

The College is currently undergoing a Quality Assurance Agency assessment of our capability to manage taught Degree Awarding Powers (tDAP). What difference will this make?

It is only since 2004 that the College has been eligible for tDAP, following a DfES revision of the eligibility criteria¹, and these powers will confer on us the right to award foundation, bachelors and taught masters degrees in our own name. Our very successful relationship with the University of Birmingham will continue with no change; however tDAP will offer more opportunity to devise a wider range of awards, possibly delivered in novel ways, for some specialist subject areas in which the University does not always have curriculum expertise. In this way, tDAP will assist in at least maintaining our student numbers.

The recent Leitch² report reinforces encouragement for more vocational relevance to teaching and learning in HE and FE. We have a long track record of staff scholarship being linked to industry practice, resulting in innovation in teaching programmes, their content and delivery; tDAP will give us even more opportunities to use this scholarship to respond rapidly to ever-changing industry needs and to continue the strong elements of employability found

in our curricula. (Tether, Mina, Consoli and Gagliardi (2005)³ have an excellent literature review of relevance here, and see also Yorke (2005, 2006), Knight (2006), Robinson (2005))⁴

tDAP will also make us eligible for University College status, placing the College firmly within the HE sector as a high quality institution. This would be public acknowledgement that the College has matured into a confident HEI with a national and international reputation for its vocational curriculum. However, the College Corporation has made it clear that it is keen to preserve the College's specialist teaching and learning mission, including the combination of HE and FE provision that has proved so successful in the past.

Staff – and particularly those who teach and engage in research – will benefit from this further confirmation of the excellent practices already acknowledged by the QAA Institutional Audit and other external groups, and tDAP is also likely help in attracting well qualified and experienced candidates for vacant academic posts as they arise.

The additional peer confirmation of the College's high standing that will be brought by tDAP may also help to stimulate more opportunities for collaborative research and scholarly activities with other HEIs- such as the major ESRC funded project of which we are already a part.

Students will also benefit, as tDAP will be further confirmation that they have studied in an institution which is judged by its peers to be every bit as credible as any other HEI.

In short, benefits all round. Only another 45 meetings with tDAP assessors to go...

1 <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/dap/briefGuideDAP.asp>

2 <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch>

3 'A literature review on skills and innovation – How does successful innovation impact on the demand for skills and how do skills drive innovation?' DTI

4 All published by the HE Academy: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>

Paul Simpson

We have a long track record of staff scholarship being linked to industry practice, resulting in innovation in teaching programmes.

Plagiarism: less Hobbes, more Kant, or has more radical assessment reform now become an imperative?

Writing in the Political Studies Association News in March 2004, Ben Rosamond of Warwick University argued for a plausible Kantian alternative approach to the then perceived increasing problem of plagiarism.

Earlier in the article, Rosamond had described the mainstream solutions to plagiarism, which include the following.

- The need for clear, watertight, and consistent definitions of the crime, together with the construction of discernible boundaries between categories such as 'plagiarism' and 'poor scholarship'.
- The format and structure of penalties for transgression of plagiarism codes and the insurance of consistency between university and departmental norms for processing, prosecuting, and (possibly) punishing offenders.
- The capacity of university regulations on cheating to stand up to litigation in open court.
- The effective advertising of internal penalties to the student body.
- The development of tools, such as anti-plagiarism software, that assist assessors in the detection of plagiarism.
- The appropriateness of existing assessment regimes in the light of the rising incidence of plagiarism (such as the view that a reversion to the closed book examination format may be one way to defeat the plagiarism menace).

While considering these as very important, Rosamond describes the overall Hobbesian climate of resigned pessimism, and suggests our efforts are either overwhelmingly concentrated on the 'output' end of the plagiarism problem – what to do with proven offenders and how to shut off escape routes for obviously guilty offenders;

or focused on the 'input' side, where the emphasis tends to be on methodologies of deterrence, such as clear announcements of what plagiarism entails in student handbooks and in induction sessions. This climate of pessimism also reveals a 'them and us' situation, where the academic staff find themselves almost in direct opposition to a 'significant proportion of our students'. Unless we police the problem – in a 'Hobbesian' way perhaps – then plagiarism will occur and the cheats will inevitably prosper.

An alternative 'Kantian' approach might be considered, where we consider the possibilities of becoming persuasive advocates of the norms of academic integrity. Can we convince them that studying in our departments represents admission to an academic community, rather than simply joining a degree-making process akin to a 'sausage-factory'? Here, the work of educationalist Benson R Snyder, who in the 1970s developed an analysis of what he called the 'hidden curriculum', offers some clues. In this, he describes a consistent discrepancy between 'our' academic aims

and learning objectives, and 'their' instrumental rationality (Snyder, 1971). Students (increasingly) seek to navigate a path of least resistance through their degree programme, and its component units. However, 'we' ask 'them' not only to absorb and practice 'our' academic norms, but perhaps do not realise that from 'their' perspective, 'we' are deliberately erecting an additional set of troublesome barriers. Moreover, at one extreme, this view of the relationship between teachers and students paints an even gloomier picture, and raises three questions. First, does this mean students cannot really be moulded? Second, does it make it rational to cheat? And third, that the only solution is to build a regime of punishment that is effectively a series of disincentives to cheat: that is, it is to make it irrational to cheat?

Pessimistic indeed, but the first two of these questions can only be answered if we can genuinely understand our students and their motivations. If we assume that we do, and that plagiarising students are really just, in economic theory terms, simple utility maximisers, then the answer to the third question is,

Can we convince them that studying in our departments represents admission to an academic community, rather than simply joining a 'sausage-factory'?

Figure 1. The nature and characteristics of College plagiarism

Preventable ← → Less Preventable				
Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5
Incorrect referencing 1	Incorrect referencing 2	Inconsistent referencing 1	Cheating 1	Cheating 2
The student appears not to understand the need for, or the importance of, a recognised referencing system.	The student demonstrates poor scholarly activity and practice, by not fully adhering to the College guidelines on referencing.	The student appears to reference correctly only in certain passages of their writing, whilst in others references are either omitted completely, or included in the references list without being cited in the main body of the work.	The student has deliberately plagiarised from someone else's work, either by 'borrowing internally' from a College friend or colleague, or purchasing/ copying 'externally' from a non-College source such as the internet.	The student has purloined the work from another person without their knowledge or permission. Tamount to stealing.

Source: primary

unfortunately, yes. By extension then, this logic suggests that the majority of students should be, as Rosamond puts it 'at it', and the only reason the majority are not, is that they are deterred.

However, it is probably fair to say that the majority of students are not deliberately plagiarising, and that following the 'Hobbesian' solutions outlined above will only help us with a troublesome, albeit growing, minority. This perhaps interrupts the logic so far described, in that we are left with a majority that may contain only some 'functional instrumentalists' who view us as merely the suppliers of degree certificates which are the culmination of a process; but also includes a mix of others, some of whom may be students who wish to take the academic journey with us. And it is for these students that a 'Kantian' approach may be adopted. Rosamond goes on to suggest examples of how we might encourage the majority of students to buy into the deeper academic process. These include research-led teaching via small research projects to develop scholarly skills; focusing assessment not only upon outcomes (such as essays), but competences displayed in putting the assignment together, for example information gathering skills and the ongoing precision of citation and

referencing skills; and integrate discussions on intellectual property and moral/ethical issues into core research methods curricula.

There is much to commend in all this, but the above arguments highlight two major concerns. The first is that plagiarism is undoubtedly on the increase, a point which Rosamond skirts around, but which also suggests that the Hobbesian policing methodology may not be working, and in the light of this increase that we should perhaps consider some of the Kantian alternatives, on which I believe Rosamond is right. The second concern is that we are not only seeing a rise in the levels of plagiarism, but also witnessing the introduction of a new type of plagiarist.

It is fair to say that the nature and characteristics of plagiarism are more complex than simple definitions such as '... the taking and using as one's own of the thoughts, writings, or inventions of another' or 'a purloined idea, design, passage, or work...' (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (SOED), 1988:1596) may suggest, but this definitional departure point does assist in attempting to identify generic types of plagiarism, a version of which is shown in figure 1 above.

Here, I use a simple barometer diagram where, on the left, we can identify generic types and characteristics of plagiarism that are preventable. Moving towards the right, are types of plagiarism which exhibit features that are seemingly increasingly difficult to prevent, until we reach the blatant purloining position at the extreme right-hand. To purloin, as referred to in the SOED definition of plagiarism above, means '...to steal, especially under circumstances which involve a breach of trust...' (p.1712).

Whilst the management of the first two 'preventable' categories will (hopefully) be the subject of continuing debate and development in the face of the suggested increasing levels of these forms of plagiarism, it is to the remaining three that I wish to point as the spheres from within which I argue, a new type of plagiarist has spawned. To further consider this, each of these categories warrants a brief discussion.

The type-three plagiarism, 'inconsistent referencing', is arguably both the most arduous to detect, in that you have to check all the references cited against all the references listed – a mechanism I know some, but not all, assessors already adopt – but also one in which there is probably the largest 'grey area' of doubt,



David Jenkins



We have to design a more consistent, and universally subscribed-to, assessment mechanism in order to catch the majority of the plagiarists.

and within which most of us would like to offer the student the benefit of doubt. However this is also, I fear, an area in which the new plagiarists feel the balance of probability of escaping detection is on their side: trepidation, I suspect, which would be supported by appropriate statistical enquiry. Moreover, if this argument holds, it would support the academically pessimistic view suggested by Snyder that it could be rational to plagiarise in this way, given the probabilistic perspectives of both assessor and student alike, and that the new plagiarist would obviously then only be just a utility maximiser, taking his or her chances within the system; pretty much as most of us have been when 'risking' taking an amber light when driving. Type-four, cheating-1, is perhaps more straightforward, but unfortunately, only when detected, does it become so – an outcome usually relative to the individual assessor's determination to identify such behaviour, or unless an offended, previously passive co-operative raises the issue and reports a 'friend'. Again, probability is perhaps on the side of the new plagiarist: how many assessors have the time or inclination to be so empirically inquisitive? How many students want to be seen to be informing on their 'friends'? Finally, the fifth type, cheating-2, is similar to the previous four in that it is one that most of us have all had first-hand experience of, but is also perhaps the most disappointing of all because the perpetrator has signalled an even clearer intention, for the particular subject at least, not only not to join us in the above-described deeper academic process, but has preferred seeking a technically illegal solution.

Why do I use the term 'new type' of plagiarist when all of the above forms of plagiarism are already well known to us? The answer to this question has two sources: the apparent increase in repeat plagiarism as part of the overall rise in

plagiarism in general; and the behaviour of plagiarists when confronted with our suspicions. How many times do we now say, for example, 'It's the nth time this student has been found to plagiarise...?' How many more 'Ps' are appearing in the spreadsheets against the same student at exam boards; and how regularly are grades not now reported at exam boards because of ongoing investigations, often, I suspect, into serial plagiarists. But regrettably, it is the second of these sources that suggests to me a different genre is now amidst us. The behaviour of the students when interviewed about suspected plagiarism is often now different. There is now almost a standard and immediate denial of any involvement with plagiarism, either when interviewing lone students, in pairs, or even groups, even when the evidence is overwhelming. Following further questions, this opening gambit is usually followed by some vague recognition that some exchange of ideas did take place, but the work is definitely independent – first interview over. There will be a second, more formal interview with a director of studies, and maybe a third with a vice-principal and so on. This is an appropriate and just system, in which the genuinely innocent students will be dealt with fairly. The point is that guilty students – often obviously so – are becoming more brazen and calculated about facing such interrogation, and will sometimes go all the way through the process in continuing denial. By adopting this behaviour, the guilty ones obviously believe there is a reasonable chance of either getting off scot-free, or escaping any real punitive measures, perhaps a resit assignment, or a 'pass only' grade, especially if as a previous offender they have escaped detection. Outcomes such as these would be well worth the effort for the new plagiarist: for one only really interested in joining the process for the

certificate, perhaps rational-choice behaviour indeed!

And this is the problem, if we make the assumption that a significant (and increasing) number of students enrol for other reasons than taking the academic journey with us, then it follows that an increasing proportion of them will become new plagiarists. If this argument holds, then we have even greater moral, ethical, intellectual, academic reasons to ensure that the rigour and integrity of our assessment methodology favours the (decreasing) proportion of our students who join us for the academic journey, and discourages the others from cheating.

Just as I have considered two sources of the development of the new type of plagiarist, I believe there are also two courses of action, which we must take. First, and in the short-term, we have to design a more consistent, and universally subscribed-to, assessment mechanism in order to catch the majority of the plagiarists, with the recognition that the new variant will be amongst them, and as a rational-choice, utility-maximiser he or she will be only be deterred as the probability of detection and severity of punishment increases. It is also important not only to punish them commensurately, but also to be overtly seen to punish them. The second, and more medium-term exercise, is to develop and introduce a research methodology which will inform the identification of the real reasons why our students enrol in the first place.

In short, certainly more Kant, but also, more Hobbes!

David Jenkins

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- Snyder, B.R. (1971) *The Hidden Curriculum*, New York: Knopf.

The School of Business & Marketing

The School's focus on scholarly activity to date has centred on the extensive range of live project work undertaken by second year marketing undergraduate students under the direction of Jeff Perry, along with individual staff research work, either towards higher degrees or as part of 'Knowledge Transfer'. The mechanism, implementation and control of such project work is now well developed and from a situation where the School was having to find suitable projects, clients are now starting to come to us.

Live project work has traditionally been undertaken with local and regional organisations, most notably Birmingham City Council, but with an increasing number of private sector companies seeking market surveys prior to product launches or to test products and services. New clients include the City's Irish Quarter, who have approached the College with a request for a host of projects to be undertaken, covering not just student survey work, but also, for example, operational research (into the Irish Centre) and research into city zoning strategies in developing an Irish quarter identity. Such projects clearly offer the possibility of working with other Schools in the College, as such themes relate to numerous aspects of the College's programme provision.

In 2006, the College was approached by The Limes, a small hotel in Earlswood to the south of the City, for assistance in developing promotional materials. Accordingly, the 'live project' concept will now be developed in the practical promotion work undertaken by marketing students in 2007.

Staff from the School have been working with Dr Richard Fallon (Out of Hours) and the City's Chamber of Commerce in devising a framework and support mechanisms for final year Business Enterprise students to develop their own

Such projects clearly offer the possibility of working with other Schools in the College, as such themes relate to numerous aspects of the College's programme provision.

business plans. With the acquisition of specialist software, our 'Enterprise Champion', Iqhlak Hussein, can start to plan for a final year, where students face the possibility of receiving financial assistance from Business Start-Up before they have completed their study programmes, with new businesses emerging before the summer recess!

In the academic research field, Zaida Perez, was funded by the EU to present a paper (and related exercises) on developing creative techniques for business at our partner the Copenhagen Business School in Denmark. Zaida prepared this paper drawing from her doctorate research and in consultation with Dr Richard Fallon (Out of Hours). Unfortunately, Zaida's health prevented her from giving the paper, but an offer was made to her to present the paper when she returns from her maternity leave. Furthermore, the focus on Zaida's paper was on the application of De Bono's (1980) six hats theory, some of the findings of which were highlighted in last year's College symposium on group work.

Closer to home, Barry Whitehouse conducted research into the needs and aspirations of College Alumni in respect of the Alumni journal 'First Class' produced by the College. His findings will greatly enhance the appeal of 'First Class' to our Alumni as both a networking tool and a useful communication forum.

Given that the business and marketing portfolio of programmes is not as well known outside of the College as other fields, it is likely that staff from the School will also engage in projects in conjunction with other Schools in the College, particularly those involving some degree of market assessment. Colleagues in other Schools will find our rates very competitive!

Melvyn Pryer



Melvyn Pryer

School of Childhood and Education

I was pleased to be asked by David Jenkins to write a brief overview of scholarly activity within the School of Childhood and Education. As most of you know our school spans both FE and HE programmes. I would argue this means that our students and staff get the best of both worlds. This is reflected by the abundant availability of resources for research due to our HEI status, together with the emphasis on working with the industry we serve and the experimentation with different methods of delivery, which tend to be more a focus with a traditional FE approach.

We have worked as a school very closely with our industry both nationally and locally in the past year. Marj Jeavons and I are members of the national early years degree network which leads developments for all the HEIs who offer degrees in this subject. We have worked with a subcommittee of this group to set up a new set of benchmarks for the area of Early Childhood Studies. This has just been passed to QAA. Pam Steer and I have served on a review of the children's workforce for Birmingham and Solihull. This group have now agreed a plan with employers and I am on a workforce strategy group to implement the plan. The information gleaned from this committee has helped us shape the content of the degrees we offer and has led to working with partners for new areas. (e.g. community and family support worker)

The kinds of scholarly activities we are involved in vary according to the interests of the individual staff. Most of the staff are involved in some type of research and or further study. Interestingly, although staff choose which areas to investigate they seem to choose themes which will enhance their teaching, although this may not be directly.

To give you a taste of the interests of our staff I am now going to summarise some of the research areas of the staff. You may find in future editions of Praxis individual staff will give you more details but I thought you may be interested in what some of them are doing.

Last year as part of the research rally Alaina Lally worked with a member of staff from another school to investigate the existence of valid and reliable

research into the CAM. (Complementary and Alternative Medicines.) She found an undeveloped research culture with much of current research methodology flawed and concluded new methodological approaches to CAMS research are needed. They concluded a more rigorous research was needed combining qualitative & quantitative methodologies. She also looked at psychological research into why some people respond well & not others – susceptibility theory. She is our named transition manager for the action research into the transition process for BA ECS full time students moving from FE to HE. She is working with Marj on the retention group.

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of the staff are
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further study.

The theme of retaining students was also a theme for Vicky Wynne who for her masters investigated the reasons why successful year 1 students fail to return in year 2. This was based on FE students. She states this was a non-empirical, retrospective, comparative study carried out to investigate which is the most appropriate way to retain trainee level three Early Years workers within the Birmingham and Solihull area.

Other research being carried out links more specifically to staff roles for example Carol Hill who worked as a counsellor before joining our team is looking at the impact of brief intervention theory. Lin Treadwell who looks after our mature foundation degree early years which is the largest programmed within the HE part of the school is reviewing FdAEY students perceptions of personal and professional development for her Masters study. As a result of her working on the learning mentor programmes and working as a tutor for our first year students Martine Bird chose to work for a MA in Mentoring and Coaching, Her research so far has centred on the development of trust relationships.

One of newest staff, Gill Curry, the programme manager of our PGCE Early Years, is studying for a modular EdD in Mathematics Education. She has looked at how low attainers in mathematics (from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2) are identified and supported. Additionally she conducted in-depth interviews with trainee teachers to explore their personal histories of learning mathematics. Currently she is reviewing how boys and girls, and adult learners, approach different learning situations, and also gender differences in learning styles, preferences and attribution. Our relatively new PGCE has led us to other research. Marj Jeavons is looking at two associated themes for our PGCE Early years, M level study and special needs within the programme. She has already spoken at national conference on one of these themes, and will be delivering at another in May with two of our partnership special schools.



Joan Hendy



Danielle Carey is working for her doctorate now but as a final MA she carried out an investigation into the strategies used in Birmingham to improve the recruitment of people from ethnic minority groups to the childcare workforce. She was able to present this at a national conference Research to Reality for those working in the Early Years last year.

Danielle is working with Andy Roberts and others within college on a long term research project "Further Higher" in conjunction with Sheffield University which aims to ascertain why students do or do not progress from FE to HE, focusing on the strategies used to improve progression rates whilst also investigating barriers to student progression. The research draws on data from four participating institutions. She reports that already an early finding indicates students prefer to continue their education at local community based settings; this has implications for HE institutions wishing to widen the participation of hard to reach groups. It is too early to draw conclusions but she is sure the outcomes will be extremely informative for all of us in BCFTCS.

I hope this gives you a taste of the type of activity as a school we have been involved in. We realise we still have a long way to go but many of the staff are very interested and their enthusiasm is infectious. On a final note just for fun this year we have started having BBB meetings on a Friday. This was the brain child of Marj Jeavons and stands for breakfast brown bag. You bring your breakfast in a brown bag and discuss a previously agreed topic for an hour. We held the first one last week with 12 willing participants where the topic was censorship. All enjoyed the experience and we hope to hold up to two meetings each semester. I will keep you updated in the next edition.

Joan Hendy

The School of Sports Therapy and Salon Management

The school has developed a portfolio of higher education programmes over the last few years, beginning in 1999 with an HND in Beauty Therapy. This was superseded in 2004 with the introduction of the HND Salon Management which incorporated three pathways: beauty therapy, complementary therapy and hairdressing. 2004 also saw the introduction of the BSc and FdSc Sports Therapy programme. The most recent addition to the portfolio has been the validation of the BA (Hons) and FdA Spa Management with Hospitality in January of this year. This will recruit its first cohort of students in October 2007.

The growth in the portfolio of programmes has led to an increase in staffing with seven new staff having been appointed, each bringing their own areas of expertise.

The development of the Sports Therapy programme has been in conjunction with the Society of Sports Therapists (SST) and has led to a collaborative agreement with the Society, which allows graduating students full membership of the Society and student membership during their studies. The Society has made an application to the Health Professions Council (HPC) recommending that sports therapists should become regulated. The School has supported the Society in its application.

The School is currently involved with the Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Industry Association (HABIA) consulting on the development of Specialised Diplomas. We have hosted consultation events with local employers and schools and staff have commented on the draft standards for the proposed qualifications. Other current activities include membership of the Vocational

Training Charitable Trusts education advisory group EVAC and a project with the LSC to improve attainment at FE level 2.

Areas of research interests within the School include exploring the role of complementary therapies in health care and the treatments of musculoskeletal injuries.

Gary Wood

The Society has made an application to the Health Professions Council (HPC) recommending that sports therapists should become regulated.



Gary Wood

School of Hospitality, Food and Retail Management

I am delighted to be asked to contribute to this first edition of Praxis and give an outline of current activity in the School of Hospitality, Food and Retail Management.

Hospitality, food and retail are dynamic industries with a constant need for change and development. The scope of staff activity across the School reflects the nature and diversity of these industries. Engagement with industry is the focus of much of the activity of the School. This embraces a range of activity including consultancy and research projects, 'live' projects undertaken by student groups and industry up-dating by staff. Examples of the work of the School are outlined below.

Consultancy and Research

This underpins developments in curricula and takes the School on a forward path. Current projects include the following:

- Dave Andrews and Simon Turner are working with Enterprise Inns on a project evaluating training provision for new lessees. Phase one of this project focuses on induction training. It is planned to expand this further as the project develops;
- Juliet Burnham and Ros McAteer are conducting an examination of the influencing factors and the power structure driving the development of school meals provision;
- Chris Watson is conducting an analysis of the changing perception of photography in the digital age;
- Nigel Davis is exploring student-centred and independent learning in the higher education food production curriculum.
- Debra Sullivan is working with Adrian Welch on a research project (funded by the Quality Improvement Agency) related to craft apprenticeship;

- Juliet Burnham is investigating the impact of increasing diversity within hospitality management education and the rise of the intercultural, individualised learner;
- Faiza Khan is exploring the issue of the international teacher's experience of teaching home students and has presented an initial paper to The University of Birmingham Annual Teaching and Learning Conference;
- Angela Quinn is working with Saima Akhtar to develop e-learning opportunities for block-mode delivery;
- Holly Bamunuge is researching the journey of students with vocational qualifications progressing through to undergraduate study;
- The application of principles of course design to the food studies arena is being examined by Mandy Lloyd.

The Council for Hospitality Management (CHME) May 2007 conference is a target for a number of the above for presentation of their work.

Engagement with the wider education community is also an important aspect of scholarly activity whether this be attendance at conferences and forums, external examining, external membership of validation panels or advising other institutions on programme development.

'Live' Project Work

This is a feature of School activity and provides tremendous opportunity for student and staff engagement with industry. Such work is also highly valued by our industry partners. Recent examples are given below.

- Final year hospitality and culinary arts management students worked on a consultancy project with Redcliffe Catering to examine options for the redevelopment of the catering facilities at the Cadbury World site (project leaders – Rob Swinnock and Ros McAteer). This followed an earlier project with Moor Hall Hotel.
- Food product and recipe development work has been undertaken by food and consumer management students with Whitwood Foods (project leader- Mandy Lloyd), Marlow Foods and Sandwell Health Authority (project leader – Adele Bright).
- Final year hospitality students staged an innovation exhibition to present new ideas and concepts to Compass Group and Jurys Doyle (project leaders – Jennie Howe and Jerry Hartley).
- Hospitality and food management groups completed food product and recipe development projects for Loxton Foods and Bakkavor (project leader – Shivaun Caffrey).

In the fast moving industries covered by the School, industry and subject up-dating is of paramount importance.



Jerry Hartley



■ Final year culinary arts management students staged an exhibition of new food product concepts working with RHM and third year groups linked with the Moat House Hotel in Acton Trussell on a menu research project (project leader – Nigel Davis).

Project activity is also run on a collaborative basis with other education providers as in the case of the Joint Food Photography Project completed by food and consumer management students in conjunction with Sandwell College (project leader – Mandy Lloyd).

Industry and Subject up-dating

In the fast moving industries covered by the School, industry and subject up-dating is of paramount importance. In September over 40 staff participated in a two day industry up-dating event centred on the regeneration of the Cardiff Bay area. The event provided a fascinating insight into both hospitality and tourism aspects of the regeneration project. The event also provided the opportunity of witnessing the Millennium Stadium operation and visiting Rocco Forte's St David's Hotel and Spa. An entrepreneurial aspect was also lent to the event by the owner of Llanerch vineyard who gave an interesting discourse on the development of his business model. Planning for the 2008 event will commence in the not too distant future, so ideas are welcome!

Industry up-dating continues as an on-going priority and the School is keen to encourage and to support individual activity in this respect, for example industry placements with organisations or one day visits to companies.

Jerry Hartley

A version on a theme

Hours and hours are spent in preparing research papers and articles. Work is drafted and redrafted until the final product is ready for the final viewing by a critical audience. But does this hard labour have to produce a product that has a single airing? I would argue not.

A conference paper can be delivered to a relatively small audience, yet the contents of the paper can be profound, so why not repackage the product and deliver it again elsewhere in a different format?

For example, in the School of Childhood and Education we have a relatively new PGCE Early Years course, validated by the University of Birmingham, which is taught at Masters level. (The questions around a postgraduate course not being taught at postgraduate level are numerous and interesting, but are unfortunately not relevant for this article.) Determining effective ways of supporting students, who are more than likely to have come straight from completing an undergraduate degree course in June, and then progressing to a Masters level course in September of the same year, is paramount at the very start of the course.

After attending a one-day course with other HE providers of teacher training courses about school teachers moving into teaching in higher education, and the support mechanisms around that, it became apparent that support mechanisms for trainee teachers on 'new' Masters level PGCE courses was of great interest on a national scale. I decided to analyse the different ways in which I and my PGCE team had provided academic support over the first two years of the course. I devised PowerPoint© slides around the analysis and presented it at the College Conference in July 2006. For me this was a 'practice run' as I'd already agreed to provide a seminar for ESCalate (The Higher Education Academy, Education Subject Centre, www.escalate.ac.uk) in January 2007 at the University of Gloucestershire. At that seminar I was allowed just one PowerPoint© slide for a 10-minute talk

This will mean disseminating the information through numerous channels to a wider audience.

with 10 minutes of questions around the subject matter. I've now been invited by ESCalate to write a paper on the same subject material, which will then be placed on their website. I'm also looking to provide the same material, though adding additional up-to-date details, as the support has developed and evolved, at further conferences in the near future. This will mean disseminating the information through numerous channels to a wider audience and I will continue to do so until the subject matter becomes outdated, or I've reached saturation point.

In this way the initial hard work of seemingly endless drafts will have reached fruition several times. The theme of 'M' level support will have been disseminated in a variety of ways to reach as full and as wide an audience as possible. If I can do it, so can you!

Marj Jeavons



Marj Jeavons

The School of Recreation, Sport and Tourism

The diversity of programmes offered within the School of Recreation, Sport and Tourism is reflected in the portfolio of wide ranging scholarly activities which have been undertaken in the past, from major in-depth market surveys (such as the Seligo e-travel projects) through to the quirky 'coffin tourism' proposals at the Newman Brothers coffin works building on Fleet Street in the city centre. This diversity is matched in the research interests of those colleagues undertaking higher degree research.

In respect of scholarly activity, opportunism has traditionally been the approach adopted, as the scope of the curriculum is such that virtually any tourism or recreation related work could have application. However, with the drive towards 'knowledge transfer' now taking hold, a new era promises the opportunity of targeting more specific research activities directly aligned to curriculum needs of the School.

Nevertheless, the opportunism strategy has resulted in the School being asked to develop what will be a very high profile faith guides training course, the first of its kind in the UK. This work will be conducted in association with various religious groups in the city and with the regional Institute of Tour Guides (led by our own Pam Powis). Similarly, a proposal by former student Zillafer Muwafer, to assist in the design of a new travel website (www.travel.adviser.com) will yield both knowledge transfer activity as well as offering the possibility for those studying travel geography to contribute directly to the site. In the field of sport, the College has received an approach from Oxford Rowing Club for a user survey, which could make for a useful student live project.

A great deal of the scholarly activity associated with the School has traditionally been in the context of 'live project' work, conducted by students at both an undergraduate and postgraduate level since 1997. Many of the 'clients'

have become regular contributors to our programmes in this context, including the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham City Council and Millennium Point in the UK, and Whalewatch Azores and Maya-Sportni overseas. In this context, this year will see the first 'live project' undertaken in Greece, a market and product development strategy plan on thematic tourism (including adventure tourism) on the island of Poros, to be developed in conjunction with the Tourism & Hospitality consultancy group in Athens. This project, as with the majority conducted overseas, will be implemented in conjunction with one of our European institutional partners, the Alpine Centre for Hospitality & Tourism in Athens.

On the adventure tourism undergraduate programmes, the experiential learning project are the expeditions organised in conjunction with Edgbaston Water Sports and for the first time this year with the operator Frontiers. The expeditions will be taken around the world, really capturing the spirit of adventure, with destinations including Spain, Morocco, Nicaragua and Madagascar being tackled.

Our international network of partners has yielded two interesting future project proposals. Greg Vrhovnik, of Chang Mai University, Thailand, has approached the College in respect of collaborative tourism research projects in Thailand whilst an Erasmus Mundus project

proposal has been received from Riga in Latvia to develop a consortium of European universities to engage in tourism knowledge transfer to the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Furthermore, one of our Finnish partners, Turku University, is leading a consortium of European universities in an EU funded project focusing on spa tourism, which offers the opportunity of us working with our colleagues in the School of Sports Therapy and Salon Management.

Over the past year we have been working with Wolverhampton University and Coventry University, in conjunction with TUI UK and Birmingham International Airport, in developing the UK's first Foundation degree in Travel Operations Management. It is proposed that this programme will be largely developed in an e-learning mode using Pebblepad and the College will clearly benefit from the collaborate project in Pebblepad that Jane Edwards and Karen Pinney have undertaken with our colleagues in Wolverhampton and Coventry over the past year. In addition to a new programme, this collaboration has also led to a publication deal with Butterworth Heinemann for a new textbook focused on the travel industry business. This represents a great opportunity for the School to publish many of the materials we have had to generate in this field in the absence of appropriate contemporary texts.

Similarly, the School has already expressed an interest in contributing to the mass tourism group which is emerging within ATLAS (European Association for Tourism & Leisure Education), a development which will clearly enhance our potential contribution to the newly proposed textbook.

A new era promises the opportunity of targeting more specific research activities.

The School has been a member of Atlas for a number of years with a number of staff presenting papers in the past, whilst we have also had representation on the backpacking group. We will be encouraging colleagues to continue presenting papers at this forum, as well as contributing to the forthcoming CHME conferences, with Harry Cameron being scheduled to present at this year's event.

In respect of pedagogical scholarly activity, staff have been active in investigating approaches which will enhance aspects of our programme implementation. Work has been undertaken in areas such as e-tutorials, whilst previous investigations into student-led seminar activity has been refined to the extent that such seminars now form an integral element of final year undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Despite such diverse activity, there is a need for the School to work towards achieving a balance both amongst the varied scholarly activities undertaken and in respect of the discipline areas to which they relate. For example, there is a need to engage in a larger scale market survey in any activity which correlates directly to our programme areas, such as that experienced in the Land Rover Adventure survey work. Indeed, whilst an initial approach made for a further adventure tourism market research survey in 2006 by another well known adventure niche operator has yet to reach fruition (owing to that organisation being the subject of a takeover bid), the hope exists that this approach will be made again in 2007. Some promising work is being generated within the City of Birmingham where we have been approached to conduct a business traveller survey focusing on the leisure activities undertaken and amenities used by this visitor segment in the city during a visit. Similarly, a request for a customer survey at this year's St Patrick's Day festival will be undertaken as part of the live project work for second year undergraduates.

Accordingly, 2007 presents the School with some interesting challenges in respect of scholarly activity and is going to be a busy year!

Melvyn Pryer

Voluntary Initiative

The Voluntary Initiative option was piloted in 2006 to the BA (Hons) Sports Management students, for one semester from February through to the end of May.

12 students completed the option, which consisted of 9 hours theoretical input over 3 weeks, followed by 6 weeks on placement, and another 9 hours (3 weeks) back in the College. In the final 3 weeks students had to conduct a 15 minute presentation to the rest of the group on their experiences, and finally submit a Personal Development Plan (which was completed during placement) and a 3,000 word assignment.

The majority of the placements were organised through Birmingham Sport Volunteers, although students were allowed to arrange their own where possible.

The variety of placements ranged from assisting with coaching for hockey, football and cricket to designing posters for youth clubs and devising activities for scout groups. Students were asked to complete a minimum of 30 hours voluntary work, over the 6 week period as part of the assessment, but were also encouraged to log these hours with Millennium Volunteers. This is a national scheme to encourage 16-24 year olds into voluntary work, and if 50 hours are completed then a bronze award is achieved, 100 hours for a silver award and 200 hours for a gold award. Since 1999 around 19,000 young people have signed up as Millennium Volunteers in the West Midlands and given 2.5 million hours.

A particularly pleasing aspect of this option has been that nearly all of the students are continuing with the voluntary work, and the feedback from the end of unit evaluation questionnaires has been extremely positive with comments such as;

"Great experience which will last with you forever"

"A fantastic opportunity to do something active"

"Most relevant and useful to the course"

In September the module was offered to other courses within the School of Recreation, Sport and Tourism and the School of Business and Marketing. Eight students have taken up the option this semester, and have completed volunteer placements in organisations such as Oxfam, The Richard Burns Foundation, Fight for Life, The National Trust, YMCA and Birmingham Nature Centre. All of these placements were organised by the students themselves

Many more contacts have been made with various other organisations requiring volunteers such as the Sense, Focus, Mencap and Childline. Students will be given these contacts but will still have to organise their own placements, although College will assist with areas such as CRB checks.

The Russell Commission was published in May of this year and looks at ways of engaging more young volunteers. They have set out 16 recommendations which the government has accepted and funding of up to £100 million has been allocated to support implementation.

Clearly the trend is to encourage this type of activity for the obvious skills it provides in terms of helping others, but also it provides opportunities to gain work experience, qualifications and skills and builds self confidence and self esteem. From an employees' point of view, it also demonstrates a willingness to be part of a team, and has proved to be a big bonus on the CV.

We hope that eventually this opportunity will be offered College wide.

Sally Ievers



Sally Ievers



We hope you have enjoyed reading the first edition of Praxis, the College Research and Knowledge Transfer periodical, and found it stimulating and thought provoking. Praxis is your publication and we are always looking for contributions and ideas as to how we can improve. Please contact Dave Jenkins, Andy Roberts or Deborah Kendale in the Knowledge Transfer and Research Centre on the 9th Floor in Summer Row with your suggestions.

The next edition of Praxis will be published around the time of the College conference. Colleagues are invited to submit abstracts for the conference as of now in time for publication in the next edition. There will be six panels at the conference in the themes of:

1. Teaching and learning.
2. New knowledge through research.
3. Application of new and developing skills and methods.
4. Dissemination of new and existing knowledge.
5. Students' panel
6. The Flat Earth Society: polemics, challenges, and alternative perspectives.

Praxis Diary of Events

June 22 - 24 2007	Centre For Research In Lifelong Learning 4th Biennial Research Conference	University of Stirling
July 3 - 5 2007	Higher Education Academy Annual Conference	Harrogate International Centre
July 9 2007	BCFTCS Annual Conference Guest Speaker Sir Digby Jones	Summer Row Site BCFTCS
September 3 - 4 2007	Extraordinary Experiences Conference	Bournemouth University
September 17 - 18 2007	HEA Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Network Annual Conference	Missenden Abbey
October 25 - 27 2007	Eurochrie Hospitality Conference	Leeds Metropolitan University
November 12 - 15 2007	World Travel Market	ExCel Exhibition Centre
February 17 - 21 2008	Hotelympia Hospitality Trade Show	ExCel Exhibition Centre

If there are any events you wish to include in the next edition for the period of September 2007 - June 2008, please contact us in the research department. Remember, if you would like to contribute to Praxis, please e mail us at researchandkt@bcftcs.ac.uk

Views expressed in the articles in this publication are those of the individual author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the College.