Discourse

Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies

The Higher Education Academy

Discourse:

Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies

Editor: Dr David J Mossley
If you have any comments or queries about the content featured in *Discourse*, please contact the editor on:
+44(0)113 343 1166
david@prs.heacademy.ac.uk

Deputy Editor: Julie Closs
If you have any comments or queries about production or distribution issues, please contact the deputy editor on:
+44(0)113 343 4184
jules@prs.heacademy.ac.uk

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Editorial board:

Discourse:

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The journal of the *Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies* of the *Higher Education Academy*

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Editorial: Academic Freedom, Research and Sustainability

You may have encountered news about recent staffing changes and difficulties at the Higher Education Academy's headquarters in York and the subsequent concerns about academic freedom voiced through the press and other media. While we cannot comment on specific cases within the Academy we would like to stress that *Discourse* and the Subject Centre as a whole are committed to open and free research relating to learning and teaching in the disciplines we support. As has been noted in previous issues, diversity and rigorous debate of the highest standards are the hallmarks of our fields. *Discourse* will continue to publish articles about learning and teaching that are both supportive and critical of current trends in higher education as an independent, peer-reviewed journal.

In this issue we have an interview with Helen Beebee, President of the British Philosophical Association; an important and scholarly investigation into the differences between research in TRS disciplines and the pedagogy related to them; a major paper examining the development of researchers in the arts and humanities; a report on ethics, employability and enterprise; a paper exploring methods for cultivating creativity in students; reflections on postgraduate philosophy; an account of case studies exploring innovations in e-learning; and a briefing as the first part of teaching materials for those concerned with teaching ethical issues to medical students.

Included with this issue you will find a pre-paid postcard asking whether you wish to continue to receive a printed copy of *Discourse*. We are making all *Discourse* content available via our website in a searchable format and, for reasons of environmental sustainability, and because we want to provide good value for money across our range of services, we would like know whether you would prefer to access *Discourse* online. We will be introducing an alert service when a new issue is published on the website in the near future. *Discourse* will continue in hardcopy, for those who still

require it, for the foreseeable future.

The website address for *Discourse* is:

http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/publications/discourse.html

We wish you a pleasant and productive summer.

David

News and Information

The Higher Education Academy

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

Its aims and objectives are:

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

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk

The Subject Network

The Subject Network is a network of 24 subject centres based in higher education institutions throughout the UK. It is funded by the four HE funding bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It aims to promote high quality learning and teaching through development and transfer of successful practice in all subject disciplines.

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies is based at the University of Leeds and at a partner site at the University of Wales, Lampeter and covers the disciplines of Philosophy, Philosophy of Science, History of Science (including the History of Medicine and Technology), Theology, and Religious Studies.

Mission statement

To support and promote Philosophical, Theological and Religious Studies higher education in the UK, and to build on its culture of dialogue and reflection.

Strategic Aims

- To work in collaboration with PRS colleagues and students in order to be effective advocates for our disciplines in the development of national and regional policies.
- To fund and take part in projects and events that support the development and recognition of good teaching practice in PRS.
- To participate in relevant research developments.
- To provide a repository of relevant knowledge and expertise within our subject communities.
- To maintain a well managed, flexible and properly structured subject centre staffed by appropriately qualified people with academic and creative strengths.

Visit our website at **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk**
or contact us directly:

Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
Department of Theology and Religious Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
Tel: 0113 343 4184 Email: **enquiries@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**

Departmental Visits and Workshops

Departmental visits and requests

We have visited almost all of the departments in our subject communities—however, we are always happy to come and see you to gather information about existing effective practice and to discover the most pressing issues for your department and for individual lecturers and tutors. Regular contact with the academic communities we serve is a vital part of our mission, as it enables us to ensure that we meet your needs in the best ways possible. If you would like a subject expert in your discipline to come to your department, then please get in touch, or feel free to contact us at any time to discuss matters to do with learning and teaching.

Departmental workshops

With learning and teaching issues of central importance to the future of higher education in university strategies and government policies, it is essential for individual departments and academics to be able to articulate the values that underpin their teaching methods, and to show how these are developed reflectively. Students are taking an ever growing interest in the ways they are taught and the benefits they gain from education at university. Furthermore, the scholarship of teaching attracts more research funding than ever before into departments.

The Subject Centre for PRS runs workshops to facilitate reflection on these issues. These are offered free of charge, and can be tailored to the specific needs of your department.

The Subject Centre has recently published a booklet detailing the workshops we have developed and successfully run for philosophers, called *Thinking About Teaching Philosophy*. If you would like a copy of this, or have any other ideas of work we could do with your department, please get in touch. The list of workshops is also available online at:
http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/events/workshops.html

We are in the process of developing a similar booklet for theology and religious studies and related disciplines, and if you have any ideas for TRS workshops that would be useful to you then please contact us.

Teaching Black Theology Conference

January 8th-9th 2009

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham

Black theology is an area of growing importance for UK institutions of higher education, and the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies has begun planning for a conference highlighting recent trends and developments in the teaching of Black Theology. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Anthony Reddie, Research Fellow in Black Theological Studies for the British Methodist Church and the Queens Foundation For Ecumenical Theological Education, and the editor of *Black Theology: An International Journal*.

The call for papers is under preparation, and will be announced on the Subject Centre for PRS website shortly. In the meantime, if you have any informal enquiries or suggestions, or would like to get involved, please contact Dr. Rebecca O'Loughlin on:

rebecca@prs.heacademy.ac.uk

We would particularly welcome contributions from those writing from a Black feminist or Womanist perspective, whether they consider this to be a sub-discipline of Black theology, or an independent area of enquiry, as we are keen to ensure the representation of women working in these fields.

Doing Philosophy: a Practical Guide for Students – out now

The Philosophy team at the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, based at the University of Leeds, have written a new book, a guide to the study of philosophy at university, published by Continuum.

Transition to higher education is acknowledged to be a major issue in terms of academic achievement and student retention, and when it comes to philosophy, students often encounter a very specific set of difficulties in engaging with the subject at undergraduate level. The book tackles barriers to engagement with philosophy in a practical way and emphasises the value of philosophy as an activity to be engaged in.

Reviewers from institutions in the UK and abroad were enlisted in its development, to ensure that the book would have value for those in a variety of philosophy courses. Students were also consulted, with several focus groups being held during the development process. The result is an accessible guide that provides lots of practical suggestions for dealing with the complexity of undergraduate philosophical study.

Professor Helen Beebee, head of the philosophy department at the University of Birmingham, reviewed the book, and says:

> This is an excellent book, and I'll definitely be advising my first-year philosophy students to buy it. *Doing Philosophy* basically tells the student beginning philosophy at university everything they need to know. The topics include finding resources, reading philosophy, plagiarism, referencing, taking notes, seminar discussions, and more. In particular, I think the chapter on writing philosophy—and especially the examples of essay questions, together with advice on how to tackle them—will be hugely useful.

Another reviewer, Dr Dave Leal from the University of Oxford, says:

> Anyone coming to the study of philosophy at university for the first time will find help here, and some more advanced students might gain from reading it too...by offering a clear account of some of the barriers to successful engagement with philosophical texts and

questions, and helping to overcome them, [the authors] have done a real service.'

Comments from students included:

- 'Better than a study guide...there was so much more to take away from it.'
- 'I think reading it has helped me now...if I'd got it at the beginning of my first year it would've really helped.'
- 'a good introduction to what philosophy requires as opposed to other disciplines.'
- '[written] as though someone is talking to you, taking you through complicated ideas.'

The book is available from all the usual channels, including Amazon, where you can read a sample.

For inspection copies, please contact:

Alison Silver,
Marketing Department, Continuum,
The Tower Building, 11 York Road,
London, SE1 7NX, UK
Tel: 020 7922 0880 Fax: 020 7928 7894
Email: **info@continuumbooks.com**
Website: **http://www.continuumbooks.com**

Discussion, Reports, Articles and Practical Teaching

The *Discourse* Interview

6. Professor Helen Beebee

University of Birmingham

Interviewed by: David Mossley

Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
Higher Education Academy

Continuing our series of interviews with academics with a special interest in teaching issues, David Mossley, Manager of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, talked to Helen Beebee about her philosophical interests, the role of the British Philosophical Association and the challenges to the discipline in the current higher educational climate. The interview was conducted in Birmingham on 28th February 2008.

Thank you Helen, for agreeing to speak with *Discourse*. Could you begin by telling us a little bit about your academic background, and how you got into philosophy?

Well I got into philosophy by accident actually. I was going to do a

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management science degree. I had this vision of myself in a snazzy suit and a cool flat, being an advertising executive, but I had a boyfriend who was a bit of an intellectual and he told me that would rot my brain irreversibly. He thought I should do something more interesting, and suggested philosophy and politics, so I went off to Warwick to do that. I didn't like the politics very much, there was an awful lot of learning things like 23 different systems of proportional representation, so I binned it and concentrated on the philosophy, and took it from there. It all sort of worked out. I didn't really think about having a career in philosophy until I was into my PhD. I liked being at university—reading books and thinking about things and not having to get up early in the morning—and so I thought, 'I'll carry on going as long as I can, and when the funding runs out I'll stop', and it never ran out.

Like a lot of people—more than most people maybe—I had a succession of temporary jobs. I worked at Edinburgh, then St Andrews, then University College London, then I had a post-doc at the Australian National University, and then I finally got a permanent job at Manchester. I was there for six years, and then I came to Birmingham a couple of years ago.

You've researched and written a great deal about Hume, particularly on causation and related matters, and issues such as free will and inductive reasoning. What particularly drew you to these questions, and why do you think they're important?

I think what drew me to the metaphysics was, I was brought up on Quine and Popper when I was an undergraduate at Warwick, so I absorbed the whole Quinean desert landscape aesthetic—you know, don't believe in something unless you really have to, especially when it comes to modality—and also the Popperian anti-inductivist line. Then, when I was a Masters student at Liverpool, Nicholas Nathan got me to read David Armstrong's *What is a Law of Nature*, which features this little argument about how only a necessitarian about laws manages to escape from inductive scepticism. That struck me at the time as quite a bad argument, and in fact I've just finished a paper now, rather late in the day, on why it's a bad argument. Then when I got to London as a PhD student, everybody was basically an inductivist—I remember David Papineau dispatched falsificationism in about half an hour in the

first undergraduate philosophy of science lecture of the year—and I was horrified! So that was what got me started about Humean versus non-Humean metaphysics, and the connection between that and inductive reasoning. The Quinean aesthetic stayed with me, I guess, though I'm a bit more relaxed about induction than I used to be. I think both of those things have affected the way I think about Hume.

It strikes me that one of the ways in which issues about necessity and causation might be important for questions which perhaps are closer to everyday life, is about free will, and the implications for how we discuss free will, and how people are seen to be morally responsible for their actions or not.

Yes, I'm planning on writing a book on free will over the next couple of years. I'm really an old-fashioned compatibilist. I suppose I'm inclined to think that fundamental metaphysics isn't really the most illuminating way of looking at free will, and actually approaching it through the lens of moral philosophy is a more productive way of going, although that's not something that a metaphysician ought to be saying! But that's something I need to think a lot more about.

It's very noticeable when I teach free will to third year undergraduates that almost none of them are compatibilists. They are instinctive hard determinists, most of them, or else libertarians, and it doesn't matter how much I tell them that there are lots of really big problems with those views, it's as though they don't see compatibilism as a genuine option. I find the intuitive pull of libertarianism really hard to fathom. I just don't find it a very compelling way of thinking about what happens when you make decisions—the idea that at the very moment in which you make your choice, you could just go either way—but clearly most undergraduates do, and inasmuch as they represent how people intuitively feel about it, it clearly is quite compelling. And it's not clear to me why that's a particularly productive way of looking at how we choose things and how we make decisions. The idea that somehow, despite your character and your upbringing and so on, as a matter of course you could at the last second do something totally out of character or incredibly immoral—chuck the baby over the bridge or stamp on the kitten or leave the restaurant without paying or whatever—strikes me as really odd. It makes people think of

themselves as more unpredictable and random than they really are. And I think it's also really odd to take the hard determinist line. I mean, I'm not sure whether anyone really, seriously believes that there's no such thing as moral responsibility. A lot of my students routinely claim to believe it, but they don't act like they believe it. So I think that how you think about free will does have some implications about how you think about yourself.

Do you think that the student obsession with libertarianism is similar to the position often found particularly teaching first year courses in ethics, on relativism, where everyone just says, 'we're all moral relativists'?

I hadn't thought of that connection actually. It's certainly true that most students are moral relativists. Again, in my third year metaphysics course I do a few weeks on global realism and anti-realism and I get into it by putting sentences up on the board and asking the students whether it's speaker relative or indexical or whatever. They get the ordinary ones right, you know, 'George Bush is the president of the US'—they all think that's objective—but as soon as you get to a moral one 95% of the class think that that's speaker relative. It never ceases to amaze me just how relativist students are. I find it incredibly bizarre how pervasive that view is, despite the fact that, again, I'm not sure how much people really believe it. Because when you try and press them by saying 'are you saying that someone who's a mass murderer is no worse a person than you?' they start feeling a bit uncomfortable. I think they want to be moral relativists but they also want to think that genuine moral disagreement is possible, and they need to decide which it's going to be.

I hadn't thought of a connection between that and libertarianism. Maybe it's some sort of deeply seated thought that what you do is completely up to you and is nobody else's business, so similarly what you think is right is completely up to you and nobody else's business, and nobody can criticise you for doing the wrong thing.

It's an interesting question. How do you think this might affect the way we understand what a person is, and how education might work for them? With your view on free will, do you think there's a connection there? Because often a metaphysical position carries

with it that sort of content about what a person is, and one view of education is that it's about understanding what people are and how people change, and how they can be encouraged to change themselves. So I wondered if you saw any connection there?

Yes, well again, going back to the issue with libertarianism, you are what you are, so if you want to get better at philosophy, or anything else for that matter, you have a certain starting point—you can't just decide that you're going to get better at it, so that improvement naturally follows. People may decide in principle, but when you get students coming in at the beginning of the year, saying, 'I know last year my attendance was terrible and I handed all my essays in late, but this year I'm going to be different', that's just unrealistic. The idea behind it is maybe, 'I can just switch over and become a completely different kind of person just like that, because it's an undetermined decision', and we all know that's not going to work—you have to put a lot of effort into changing. This isn't a criticism of libertarians, but maybe it's bound up with a kind of common-sense understanding of libertarianism. All of these things take a lot of effort and you have to train yourself to be the kind of person who can sit down and read a philosophy book for six hours without falling asleep, and I think a standard compatibilist view about free will, on some common sense level at least, encourages you to think this is all hard work, you are the kind of person you are, and if you want to become a different kind of person you're really going to have to work at it.

So what do you think education is then?

I don't know what education is! That's a philosophical question I haven't thought about. I think in the case of philosophy it's a matter learning how to do something, learning how to do philosophy, and this is something that I really try to impress on prospective students. It's normally in the context of explaining to their parents why they have so few contact hours. But I try to get them to understand that they have to go away and do the work for themselves. It's learning how to work out what's going on in an argument, working out what the underlying assumptions are, learning how to criticise things, and learning how to think creatively so that you can come up with your own problems and

solutions. In that context education is more about helping the students achieve that, rather than forcing a load of information down their throats. It's like learning to play the piano—you can have good piano teachers or bad piano teachers, but simply sitting there with a teacher hour after hour is not very helpful. At some point you just have to go away and practise your scales.

So what do you think are the key abilities, or skills, that a student needs to be successful in a philosophy programme?

They need to be able to think very hard for extended periods of time. I think that's a skill that students often underrate—philosophy's just very difficult, and you have to stick at it, and thinking very hard is just really hard work, it's really tiring and you have to be in the right frame of mind to do it. They also have to be creative, to be able to think of arguments or positions or whatever for themselves. Again that can be quite hard, coming from A-level, it can take them a while to realise that we really do want them to have a go at criticising someone's view, and not merely repeat what various people have said and construct it into an argument that's completely derivative. And they also need to be very good at expressing themselves. Again, philosophy is very hard, there are a lot of technical concepts, a lot of difficult ideas and arguments, and it's depressing when you read an essay and you think that maybe they've had a really good idea, or they've made a really nice move, you just can't quite understand what it's supposed to be, because they can't get it down on paper. Again, that's just something they seem to improve at, as they go through, but it's hard to know how to give advice to the students that find writing really difficult. Yes, so hard work, and the ability to think and the ability to express yourself.

I think that sounds right to me. The issue of philosophy being difficult, the technical side and the hard work that's required to understand abstract ideas is right, it does present students with a great deal of problems sometimes, and do you find, as many philosophy teachers find, that it's not just the expressing an idea that's the difficult bit, it's the justification, having an opinion of someone's interpretation of a text in front of them tends to be one problem that they have to overcome, to find their own, and then to

go beyond that to say, 'I can justify this because…' or 'I can construct an argument to show that…'?

Yes, again, that's something that they're not very good at when they come in, but they get better at it.

How does that happen? How do they get better at it? Is it just the piano playing?

Yes I think it's a lot like the piano playing. We encourage students to have a pop at coming up with their own arguments, right from the beginning, right from the first year, and I think that's important. When I was doing the teaching course at Manchester—the precursor to the PGCHE I guess—there was this exercise where you got a list of words, like 'discuss', 'summarise', 'compare', 'criticise', and so on, and you had to say which level of undergraduate study they were appropriate for. I think that approach is just totally wrong, at least for philosophy. The first year would be so boring if all the students were expected to do was summarise what other people have said. Of course they find it hard to come up with their own arguments or objections to start with, but they're repeatedly given feedback, saying 'Well that bit was a really good idea, but you squashed it into two sentences, why didn't you write the whole essay on that?', or 'there was a big leap, you went from this to that, and I can't really see the connection between them,' and I think it's just the process of trying it lots of times, seeing whether it works and having someone tell you whether it has worked or not. Obviously also they're exposed to a lot more arguments as they go through, and they're reading arguments all the time, so it's a matter of seeing other people's arguments, trying to emulate the kind of form they take, and just gradually improving at it. You'll be better at playing piano sonatas if you listen to Alfred Brendel doing it and try and figure out why he sounds better than you do. Well, once you've got the notes in the right order anyway.

How do you think that philosophy teaching has changed during your career?

When I look back to when I was at Edinburgh or St. Andrews, there are far more students now than there were then. The number of students

just seems to go up and up, and that has a big effect on how you teach. It's very different teaching a seminar with twelve students to how it is when you've only got three of them. And of course the kinds of students that you get have changed a lot. I think that's something that maybe some philosophers have been a little slower to pick up on than they might have been. I just don't see that there's any point in whining about how the average standard of students isn't as good as it was 15 years ago—of course it's not as good, because when you're taking 50 students a year rather than 20, the average standard is going to be lower. There hasn't been any miraculous improvement in the intelligence of 18-year-olds over the last 15 years! You just have to learn to get on with it and adapt.

I think just the sheer number of students affects what you can teach them, and how you teach them. You need to think about all kinds of things, like how they can get access to the texts they need, how to organise seminars when there's lots of people there rather than a few, what you can realistically achieve in a lecture so that pretty much everyone knows what's going on rather than just the ten best students in a class, those sorts of things, so that's changed a lot.

I don't know if students are more demanding now, but they certainly get a lot more than they did when I started out. I hate to say anything good about quality assurance, it did lots of bad things, but I think that one good thing that the whole subject review thing did was to force people to treat students better. We pay much more attention now to whether they can get adequate access to resources, or whether they're getting good feedback on their work, and I think it was good that we were forced to think about those things, because as I say, it's quite easy to just carry on doing what you've been doing while the student profile changes radically. Quality assurance made people adjust. I'm not sure that was the intention of the whole thing, but I think that was something that happened.

The students get much better access to resources, I think, though a lot of that has to do with access to e-journals and e-books and the *Stanford Encyclopedia* and things like that. Also, it's kind of trivial, but I use a PowerPoint presentation in class, and I stick it on the web, and they can look at it afterwards, whereas before I would've done it on OHP slides and that would be it, they'd go in my drawer, so now they don't have to sit there scribbling down everything I say, they can sit and

listen, and they know they can go and look at it again afterwards, and pedagogically that's an improvement. And again, this is something that's been forced on us a bit, but I think it's a good thing—though I know some of my colleagues would disagree with that.

Students get a lot more feedback too. We spend a lot of time in the department kind of trying to work out the essay deadlines so that they're handing some essays in really early in their first year, so that they get them back in time for them to be able to think about what they're doing wrong for the next essay. Certainly when I was an undergraduate there was no consideration given to those sorts of things. Classic feedback was a few things scribbled in red pen. I remember one essay I got back the day before my Kant final—which I did appallingly badly in, though probably not for that reason—and it had a single comment on it, which was something like 'I don't think I agree with you', and no grade. That wouldn't happen now. Well, not in my department anyway.

I think another sin that we can commit as academic philosophers is to look at students and think, 'I didn't find this hard when I was a student, what's the matter with them?'. Well, you're a professional philosopher, you weren't anything like an average student. When you look at the cohort of 100 students in the third year or whatever, maybe one or two of them, at absolute tops, are going to make it as far as doing a PhD, let alone being a professional philosopher. We're not normal, and you can't treat your students as if they were mini versions of you, because hardly any of them are going to be as good as you were when you were a student. Well actually, I was a distinctly average student in my first two years as an undergraduate, now I think about it. My tutor told me I had no chance of getting funding for an MA. I don't know whether he was just being realistic or whether he was trying to get me to get my act together, but anyway it had a dramatic effect.

You say you put your PowerPoint presentations on the web—do you use any other e-learning methods, such as electronic discussion forums?

We have WebCT which I hate, it's so clunky. It has a discussion forum and I sometimes try to get students to use it, and they just don't. I think, with those kinds of things, if you really invest a lot of energy,

encourage them and help get things going, they will start to use it, but I'm just not sure it's worth the investment of time and effort. When I taught logic, I used quite a lot of electronic stuff. I used to use *Tarski's World*, which is a really nice program. It comes with a textbook, and there are lots of automated proofs that you can do, and it will grade them automatically, so it'll show you where your mistakes are. And there are also lots of little on-line logic test programs out there. There was another bit of software called *Reason-Able*, where you constructed flow charts of arguments, where you would put in the reasons for the conclusion, an objection to this reason, and so on. That was really nice. When I stopped teaching logic, I stopped using it, but that was the place where there was real scope for using a lot of e-resources and I think they were really helpful, because it means that students, if they are motivated to do it, can get so much extra help than what you can give them in a lecture and a seminar a week, and a bunch of ten exercises for them to do for the problem class. But I'm finding that with non-logic subjects, I really do the basics, I'll give them some links to some web resources, and stick my stuff on WebCT and that's it.

Do you think that there's a difficulty in using electronic forums which lack the face to face component that a seminar has, in a subject like philosophy, which is so discursive, where so much more can be communicated than words, in a face to face context?

Well, I suppose the way that we assess students is through written work, and I think that one thing a lot of students are not very good at is getting things down on paper, so in some sense, I think a written version of a philosophical discussion could be quite valuable. If you can't communicate something in words, you're not going to make a very good philosopher. One thing you learn very quickly is that it's a lot harder and more time-consuming to write something down than just having a chat with someone, and maybe that's a valuable thing for them to learn. I think that when you're writing something down you're forced to be much more precise about what you say, you can't just wave your hands around at the end of a sentence and say, 'that's the kind of thing I mean', you've got to say exactly what it is that you mean. So in principle I can kind of see the value in it. It would mean

that students were spending more time writing philosophical stuff outside of an assessed environment, and I can see how that might be a valuable thing. If someone posts saying, 'I really don't understand this bit of the reading' or something, and then another student actually sits down and explains to them in writing, that's just the kind of thing we want them to do in essays, so it could be good. But yeah, it's a lot of work, and students also hate WebCT. If students could do it on Facebook then maybe it would work better, but that's a road I'm not going to go down.

You're currently the Director of the British Philosophical Association, the BPA. What role do you think that philosophy has in the wider public debates, in public policy? I know that's not officially the BPA's remit, but it is basically the sole professional body for philosophers in the UK.

Yes, well that's a very topical question, because there have been a lot of moves coming from the government and filtering through the AHRC, and the other research councils, to talk in terms of the impact of research, and I think it's very difficult, at least for philosophers like me who are working in pretty abstruse realms of philosophy, to make a case that we really have any kind of direct impact. Certainly when the government talks about impact, they tend to mean economic impact, which just demonstrates an incredibly narrow-minded conception of the value of intellectual enquiry, but there are obviously some bits of philosophy that feed very well into policy debates. For the rest of us it's harder and we should probably think more about how the case can be made that we are doing something that's valuable to society, without being able to point and say, 'here's the direct impact'—or worse, 'here's the economic impact'.

Philosophical questions are really important. It matters—and not just to professional philosophers—whether children get taught Creationism as science, or whether the practices of other cultures can be morally criticised, or whether the findings of mature sciences genuinely conflict with what's written in some religious text, or whether we're merely puppets pulled by the strings of the forces of nature, or whether God exists. Perhaps the philosophical community as a whole could make more effort to engage directly with the public with those

kinds of debate, but in the end if nobody's actually doing the research, it'll just be the same debate getting endlessly recycled and progress will just stop.

I suppose that one just has to tell a story about the enrichment of knowledge for its own sake, but I don't know to what extent the government wants to hear that, so yes, it's a tough one. I mean, on the teaching side, you can always tell a story about the kinds of citizens that you're churning out at the end of it, who have the kinds of skills and personal abilities that people in business or the civil service or whatever it is should have, but that's very different from saying that the research itself is serving a wider good, and it's very difficult to do that, to make that case to people for whom the expansion of knowledge for its own sake, the pursuit of truth for its own sake isn't a good enough answer.

Because otherwise, the subject ends up being reduced to a set of skills, which is not the way forward, I think.

Absolutely. It would be terrible if a philosophy degree just came to be seen as a way of picking up skills X, Y and Z that some people happen to prefer to some other degree that inculcates similar skills. Philosophy graduates might be well-equipped to apply their skills to various kinds of employment, but they're also well-equipped to think really hard about very deep questions. That doesn't do you much good in the context of working in HR, but it enriches you as a person, just like being able to get a lot out of poetry or being able to sit down at the piano and play Bach does.

What do you think are the other most pressing factors driving change in the UK and internationally? We've discussed issues around the economic impact of the subject, but are there any other factors that you think are driving philosophy? It's quite a trend-driven subject in some senses, in that subject areas will go up and down and have interest and then die away again.

I'm not sure how trend-driven it is. When I started doing my PhD in London everyone was talking about David Lewis, who I'd never even heard of. One thing that happened in the causation literature was, Lewis

had the counterfactual analysis, people would spit out some counter-examples, and then people would try and add some epicycles, and then someone would come out with some more counter-examples, and for me at least, I gave up on that debate, because the theories were so hard that it was just too much effort to work them out. They were kind of like these mysterious black boxes where you'd feed in a standard counter-example, crank the handle and see whether it spat out the right answer, and I couldn't work out what the mechanism was, and at that point I started thinking OK, I don't like doing this any more, and started worrying about the broader issues to do with Humeanism, because I just found it more philosophically interesting. And other people started thinking about other ways of analysing causation, or thinking that maybe the counterfactual analysis picks out one kind of causation, or it somehow connects to our concept of causation but can't be used as the basis for a reductive analysis. So the debate's moved on. I think looking at the debate from the outside, it might look trend-driven, but in fact there are good reasons, I think, why certain questions or approaches have waned in popularity and others have surfaced. Probably a lot of philosophical debates are like that.

On the other hand I'm sure some things just drop in and out of fashion for reasons that don't have much to do with the internal dynamics of the research programme, if I can put it like that. For example there seem to be loads of undergraduates really interested in philosophy of religion now. I guess religion is getting a lot more press recently, but also—I suppose relatedly—we're getting lots more students who've done Religious Studies A Level and I'm sure that's driving it. That might easily have a knock-on effect within the profession at the research level, as some of those undergraduates go on to be the next generation of PhD students, and if departments start offering more undergraduate courses in philosophy of religion and look to hire people who can teach it.

I suppose another thing that's having a bit of an effect on philosophy is the focus on interdisciplinary work. Again that's partly what some philosophers would be doing anyway, but it's something that people are maybe encouraged to do because universities and funders are pushing for it. There's much more interdisciplinary work going on than used to happen, and I'm sure everyone's university is sending out the message that we should do more of it. I think one thing

that's really distinctive about philosophy is the massive range of different disciplines that you can work with, I've got a colleague who works with a psychiatrist, we have people working with theologians, people in religious studies, politics, medicine, and so on, and it's obvious because that's in the nature of what philosophy is, that you can take pretty much any discipline and raise philosophical questions about it. And I think that's a good thing, and something that leads to philosophy becoming something that people in other disciplines, and maybe the wider public, engage with more than otherwise they might.

Is that reflected in teaching, do you think?

That is a good question, and the answer is not much, in general, I guess. You'll do philosophy of science, or social science, or philosophy of maths, or whatever it is, but a lot of the time when people teach those topics, they're not teaching it in an interdisciplinary way. For example, a lot of philosophy of science is not at all interdisciplinary, there's nothing interdisciplinary about learning about the problem of induction, or reading Lakatos or whatever. I think when you get into the harder stuff and you start really knowing a lot about physics, say, and being able to engage physicists in philosophical discussion, then it starts becoming interdisciplinary, but that's not what you get in an undergraduate philosophy of science course. I guess interdisciplinary stuff could be worked into the teaching a lot more than it is, but at undergraduate level—while I don't at all think it's a bad idea—I don't think it's something I would argue for as a good in itself. And certainly universities who are keen on promoting interdisciplinary research don't seem to be pushing at all for it on the teaching side, or at least not as far as I know.

If teaching philosophy were more interdisciplinary, and therefore a crucial subject to maintain subjects which, in themselves, were able to demonstrate a greater feed into the economy in terms of skills and so on, would this evidence a greater impact of the economic kind, that we were talking about earlier, do you think?

Well, I certainly think it would be a good thing if philosophy was confined less to philosophy students. I'm sure students in the sciences and maths and whatever could get a lot out of thinking philosophically

about their disciplines. But that's not interdisciplinarity, it's just aiming particular bits of philosophy at a broader audience. Like I said earlier, I just don't think the game of trying to demonstrate economic impact is one that we should have to be playing. There's a strong skills-based argument for saying if you want well-qualified employable graduates, philosophy gets you that. So that's a kind of economic impact. But on the research side even the applied and interdisciplinary parts of philosophy are never going to have a strong argument that they are benefitting the economy in some identifiable way—except of course in the sense that it helps to keep academics and publishers and librarians and booksellers in a job—so I just hope that that's an argument we can avoid having to make, because philosophy as a whole won't do well out of it.

Which educator do you think, teacher or person, has had the most impact on you in terms of philosophy, and why?

Well, I guess that takes us back to the beginning of the conversation. When I was an undergraduate at Warwick in the 1980s, I had two teachers, Susan Haack and David Miller, who intellectually had a really big impact on me, and not just because I absorbed some of their views—the Quinean love of desert landscapes and the anti-inductivism I mentioned before. I mean, it was a pretty remote kind of influence, in the sense that I was a pretty detached undergraduate, I just did the work and went to the lectures and seminars and that was it, but they were both philosophically very hard-nosed and I think had quite high expectations, they didn't take any prisoners. Or that's how they seemed anyway. Obviously that doesn't work for everyone, but I was basically your get-a-2:1-without-trying-very-hard kind of student, and their classes were the ones that made me think, this is really interesting, I actually want to really think about this and not just knock up an essay the night before the deadline.

And what would you say was your greatest achievement to date, as a philosophy educator? As a teacher?

This is a kind of bureaucratic answer to a question about pedagogy, but I think maybe the places where I've had the biggest effects have not been standing up in front of the class. It's been more on the

administrative side, spending a lot of time on staff/student committees, or as head of department or whatever, thinking about what it is that students want and need and how to give it to them—what are their main problems and how do we help them overcome them. Are they doing too much assessment or not enough, how do we help first-years get into the subject and into thinking for themselves, which modules are they finding too difficult or not challenging enough, that kind of thing. Those kinds of issues are hard because students aren't all the same, and also because you have to try and get other people on-side, whereas when it's just you teaching your module if something's not working you can just change it yourself and see first-hand whether it's worked. So anyway I try to think about the overall view of what they're getting as philosophy students, helping them to do better, and to enjoy it more, and I think it's in that general way that I feel as though I've had most influence on how things have gone for students, I hope mostly for the better and not for the worse.

Thank you Helen.

Thank you.

Developing Researchers in the Arts and Humanities: Lessons From a Pilot Programme

Clare Saunders

Senior Subject Co-ordinator in Philosophy
Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies

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Context: the 'state of the discipline' of UK graduate education for arts and humanities researchers

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the development opportunities provided for postgraduate research students in UK higher education. 2001 saw the publication of the Research

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Councils' and (the then) Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB)'s Joint Skills Statement of training requirements for their funded research students; swiftly followed (in 2002) by Roberts' review of the skills of doctoral graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM subjects)—both of which sought to specify the skills which our research students should be expected to develop during the course of their doctoral studies. The Roberts review, in particular, identified a significant 'skills gap' between the skills possessed and those needed by doctoral graduates, and recommended the provision of additional training, principally in transferable skills, for such students in the future.

Since then, the UK HE sector has seen a significant growth in more-or-less formal training opportunities for doctoral research students—perhaps most notably in the form of the UK GRAD programme (funded by the Research Councils to provide skills development for their doctoral students) and various university initiatives funded by the 'Roberts money' made available by the UK government to implement the recommendations of the Roberts review.[1] However, this activity is focused on developing research students' generic skills. It has largely been left to individual research councils and university departments to support students in developing the discipline-specific abilities they need to complete their doctoral studies and, potentially, to prepare for future academic practice.

This situation poses a particular challenge for arts and humanities subject areas. It is now widely recognised that different disciplinary fields demonstrate distinctive characteristics, both in terms of the nature of their subject matter (Biglan 1973a) and of their styles of enquiry (Kolb 1981); and that these have a differential impact on (amongst other things) the organisation and practice of doctoral research (e.g. Biglan 1973b, Clark 1993, Becher, Henkel & Kogan 1994, Smeby 1996—for useful reviews of the literature see Becher 1994, Neumann 2001). Typically, arts and humanities research does not follow a linear path or adopt a predetermined topic or methodology; rather, doctoral study in these fields tends to consist in significant part

[1] Further information about UK GRAD can be found from their website: **http://www.grad.ac.uk/**; which also includes a 'database of practice' detailing many of the Roberts-funded institutional schemes.

of a continual process of re(de)fining the research project. Research methods are frequently underdetermined, contested and in flux. This lack of a strong shared paradigm for research (cf. Kuhn 1962) tends to result in doctoral projects that are highly individualistic, and this in turn problematises the provision of appropriate research training (Smeby 1996); thus it is unfeasible to specify a core 'research training programme' which will be appropriate for all (or even most) researchers in arts and humanities disciplines (UKCGE 2000). Indeed, there is a risk that academics and students in the arts and humanities are alienated by the 'research skills training' agenda, seeing it as irrelevant to the nature of their discipline(s):

> … an absence of generalised training is not a consequence of laisser-faire attitudes on the part of staff or an unwillingness to put time and effort into the development of students' research skills. It is, rather, a reflection of the nature of the disciplinary knowledge in question… (Becher *et al.* 1994:106)

Hence there was relatively little formal training provision for arts and humanities research students, and no UK-wide specification of training and skills requirements of doctoral graduates in these fields – until recently. In 2004, however, two key drivers prompted a re-think of this situation:

1. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) published its revised Code of Practice for postgraduate research degree programmes, which included increased emphasis upon structured provision of support, development and training opportunities for doctoral students.
2. The AHRB (as was) became a fully-fledged Research Council, and set out for the first time a framework of research training requirements for postgraduate study in the arts and humanities.

This latter factor, in particular, represented a significant development for academic staff and students in arts and humanities disciplines—a new requirement of subject-specific research training provision. Unlike some other research councils, the Arts and Humanities Research

Council (AHRC) offers no centrally co-ordinated training opportunities, nor does it specify the content and structure of provision to be delivered locally; instead, it devolves this responsibility to the individual host universities and departments of their funded doctoral students. This approach was informed by the considerations outlined above, especially the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)'s (2000) report on research training in the humanities—the AHRC was seeking to establish a framework for supporting research students which allowed the flexibility and diversity appropriate to the nature of the disciplines involved. Instead, host departments for AHRC-funded students were required to submit a statement to the AHRC outlining the support and training opportunities available; and the AHRC supplied additional funding to support this activity.[2]

The stated aim of the AHRC in introducing this approach is as follows:

> The framework is intended as a means of enabling institutions to reassure the AHRC that the doctoral students it funds receive appropriate and relevant preparation, training and support for their development, helping them both to *complete a high-quality doctoral thesis* and to *develop a range of knowledge, understanding and skills necessary for their future employment*. (AHRC 2004, paragraph 1, my emphases)

Arguably, this encompasses two key considerations:

1. Satisfactory completion of doctoral studies. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)'s (2005) study of doctoral completion rates reveals that, even among research council funded students, completion rates are relatively low—approximately 36% of RC-funded full-time students complete their doctorate within the expected four years of study, and 80% within seven years. The study also

[2] The system of departmental statements described here was in place 2004/5 until 2006/7. From June 2007, AHRC joined RCUK's Roberts Skills Monitoring; this replaces the previous requirement to submit a departmental research training statement to AHRC. For further details, see the AHRC's website: **http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/university_staff/postgrad/research_training_framework.asp**

shows that completion rates in the arts and humanities are lower than in many other subject areas. Naturally, all key stakeholders (the AHRC, the HEFCE, individual institutions, departments and students) have a vested interest in seeking an improvement in this situation.

2. Preparing students for future practice. In the arts and humanities, more than in most other discipline areas, this will effectively entail preparing students for academic practice—UK GRAD's (2004) study found that 45% of doctoral graduates from these fields went on to work in higher education. However, it also found higher rates of unemployment, and of employment on short or fixed term contracts, amongst arts and humanities graduates than their peers in many other subject areas. There is also concern to ensure that those who are in employment are well prepared for their future careers; and evidence suggests that there is scope for improvement in this regard in contemporary arts and humanities provision (UKCGE 2000; CUDAH 2002).

The onus was now placed upon individual host departments of research students in the arts and humanities to demonstrate how their provision of training and support contributed to the achievement of these two aims.

In many cases, of course, departments were able to refer to relevant national- or institutional-level provision available to their students which would support such aims. For instance, all UK higher education institutions (HEIs) now offer their students (both taught and research) the opportunity to participate in a personal development planning scheme, which will help them to identify skill development needs and training opportunities (such as the aforementioned UK GRAD programmes). Most HEIs also now offer some form of post-graduate course and qualification in teaching in higher education to train new lecturers, which may also be available to doctoral students – for example insofar as they already also have teaching responsibilities, or given their status as prospective academic staff.

Typically, however, these opportunities are generic in nature, and have little to say about the distinctive subject-specific demands of conducting successful research, and preparing for a career, in the arts and

humanities. Many departments thus struggled to identify what might count as appropriate subject-specific provision, beyond the one-to-one guidance traditionally provided by the individual student's research supervisor.

Developing and delivering such subject-specific provision is a particular challenge for smaller department and disciplines, where there are fewer researchers to form a 'critical mass' which might make structured training opportunities feasible. In recognition of this, the AHRC offered departments and organisations the opportunity to bid for pump-priming funds to establish collaborative research training schemes.[3] Such funding opportunities assist with overcoming practical obstacles—for example, helping to underwrite the costs of setting up a new research training programme—but do not alone resolve the underlying academic challenge of identifying discipline-specific training requirements and developing the capacity to meet those needs.

The role of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies

In light of these considerations, the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS) felt that we were in a position to make a positive contribution to the development of such discipline-specific doctoral training opportunities.

A distinctive feature of the disciplines supported by the Subject Centre for PRS—namely, philosophy; theology; religious studies; history and philosophy of science, technology and medicine (HPSTM); and biblical studies—is that these are small academic communities. Individual departments often consist of only a handful of academic staff and postgraduate students, and thus face the aforementioned problems of scale in providing structured subject-specific development opportunities for their research students.

As part of the Higher Education Academy, the Subject Centre for PRS has a UK-wide remit to enhance the student learning experience—and this applies to postgraduate research students no less than to

[3] Further details of this scheme can be obtained from the AHRC's website: **http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/university_staff/postgrad/collaborative_research_training_Scheme.asp**

undergraduate and taught postgraduate students.[4] The distinguishing characteristic of the work of the HE Academy's Subject Centres is that we provide discipline-specific support which complements the generic provision already available (for example, from educational development units in most HEIs)—thus pioneering a discipline-focused approach which is increasingly recognised internationally as a strength in many areas of educational development (e.g. Biglan 1973b, Becher 1994, Jenkins 1996, Johnston 1997, Neumann 2001). We work with an established network of academics across the UK (and internationally), and were thus well placed to liaise with a range of students and staff in order to identify the skills development needs of doctoral research students in our disciplines, and the means by which those needs might be met.

The Subject Centre for PRS, in common with our sister Subject Centres for other UK HE disciplines, already had an established track record (since our inception in 2000) in offering subject-specific advice and development opportunities for postgraduate students and lecturers in their capacity as teachers—for example, through our database of discipline-specific teaching resources, and our series of national, regional and departmental workshops for new staff.[5] The opportunity to contribute to the AHRC's research training programme would enable us further to develop the support we offer to doctoral students by providing them with opportunities to develop their skills for research as well as teaching—thus enhancing our future academics' preparedness for academic life and thereby furthering the Subject Centre's mission to support and enhance higher education in our disciplines.

In view of these factors, the Subject Centre for PRS, in consultation with academic colleagues in a number of departments, decided to pilot a collaborative research skills development programme which would offer discipline-specific support at a regional and/or national

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[4] The mission of the Higher Education Academy is 'to work with institutions, discipline groups and individual staff to provide the best possible learning experience for all students —for further details, see the HE Academy website:
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/

[5] Further information about the work of the Subject Centre for PRS can be found on our website: **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/.** Further information about our sister Subject Centres can be obtained via the HE Academy's website:
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/networks/subjectcentres

level.

Setting up a pilot research skills development programme in philosophical and religious studies: needs analysis, aims and objectives

Our first task was to identify the precise nature of the skill development needs of research students in philosophical and religious studies, and how the proposed programme might aim to meet these needs. In order to do this, we undertook a needs analysis survey. Our rationale for this approach was twofold:

1. As discussed above, the research skills needed in such disciplines are typically very individualistic, fluid and underdetermined. We therefore felt it was important to involve research active staff and students in the departments in question in the process of designing the programme—this could not reliably be achieved by desk based research alone.
2. Such an approach also helped to foster a sense of ownership of, and partnership in, the pilot programme—the resultant programme was not imposed upon departments and their students, but rather was a collaborative venture. The Subject Centre for PRS's role was to co-ordinate rather than to prescribe the programme's design and delivery.

This needs analysis was undertaken in two stages. In 2004 we surveyed the Director of Graduate Studies (or equivalent post holder) and the postgraduate societies (where such existed) of all UK PRS departments, plus the major subject associations for these disciplines, in order to establish the level and nature of demand for such a programme (see appendix 1). Although overall response rates were low, we received a good response from the subject associations, which gave us some confidence that the responses were representative of the subject community as a whole.

The most common response was that postgraduate research students in our disciplines are relatively isolated—as already noted, typically these subject areas consist in small research communities, and

the research itself is a solo enterprise. As such, researchers in our disciplines stated that they would welcome the opportunity to expand their research environment by gaining the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with a wider range of staff and students in their field. The nature of this response was not unexpected; however, the strength of this recommendation did surprise us—it was considered to be more valuable even than additional funding in helping to enrich the students' research experience!

Other feedback comments were more varied, but the overall thrust was that students typically already received strong support from their supervisors in determining and developing the content of their doctoral thesis. Development opportunities were more variable, and thus support would be welcomed, in relation to strengthening students' understanding of, and competence in, the research process considered more broadly—for example, developing an enhanced awareness of the research environment beyond their own particular sub-discipline—and other aspects of academic practice, such as publications and career management.

In response to these findings, we established the following aims and objectives for our proposed research skills development programme:

- Primary objective: To provide practical, subject-specific support for sharpening skills in researching, writing, presenting and publishing.
- Secondary objectives: To offer regional networking opportunities; to relieve the sense of isolation experienced by many doctoral students in our disciplines; and to identify and develop students' transferable skills.

We decided to trial the programme initially in a single pilot region—Yorkshire and the North East of England was selected on the basis of its relatively large research communities in philosophical and religious studies (outside of the UK's 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London), and its geographical convenience for the Subject Centre for PRS (whose principal base is at the University of Leeds).

We then repeated the needs analysis in our pilot region in 2005,

in order to review the findings of our initial survey and to obtain more detailed feedback which would enable us to tailor the content and approach of the pilot programme to the particular needs of the researchers in this region. This second-stage survey was conducted by means of informal email discussion. All of the departments we consulted took part in the survey and agreed to participate in the pilot programme.[6] We also applied for and obtained funding from the AHRC's collaborative research training scheme (£10,000 over two years) to pilot the initiative during 2005/6 and 2006/7.

Developing postgraduate researchers in philosophical and religious studies: a description of the pilot programme

Our next step was to convene a meeting of the Directors of Graduate Studies in the departments who were taking part in the pilot scheme, to review the findings of our iterated needs analysis and to agree the details of our pilot collaborative programme. Again, the rationale for this approach was to ensure that the project was undertaken in partnership with the departments involved, rather than merely imposing on them the Subject Centre's own vision for the programme.

In keeping with this ethos, each department agreed to contribute to the events programme, with the Subject Centre for PRS playing a co-ordinating role, rather than acting as sole 'training provider'. The division of labour was agreed as follows:

Subject Centre staff co-ordinated the scheme—for example, compiling the programme and recruiting contributors for each event, preparing publicity and handling event administration (venue bookings, delegate registration and so on). We also administered the AHRC's funding of the programme, and provided some matched funding from our own central budget, mostly in terms of staff time to support the programme.

Participating departments provided academic staff to lead the programmed sessions for each event, and also co-ordinated the distri-

[6] The following university departments were involved in our pilot programme: Durham University (Philosophy; Theology and Religion); University of Hull (Philosophy; Theology); University of Leeds (Philosophy; Theology and Religious Studies); University of Sheffield (Biblical Studies; Philosophy); University of York (Philosophy); York St John University (Theology and Religious Studies).

bution of publicity at a local level. Academic staff contributions constituted matched funding of the programme, insofar as the AHRC funding covered speaker expenses, but precluded the payment of honoraria.

During each academic year, we held two regional events—a two-day residential event in the winter and a one-day conference in the summer. The precise nature of the programme varied according to the interests and expertise of the contributors, but the events calendar each year covered the same broad themes.[7]

The winter residential consisted in a series of skills development workshops—students explored a variety of issues from those faced at the beginning of doctoral study, to the challenges of preparing for life after your PhD. Topics typically included:

- Research methods and trends in the discipline
- Building your bibliography
- The conference scene
- Giving presentations
- Breaking into the publishing racket
- Career planning

The summer conference largely consisted in graduate research presentations, giving students an opportunity to practise, in a supportive environment, some of the skills discussed in previous workshops. An additional feature, which distinguished our event from most other graduate conferences, was that presenters received detailed formative feedback on their performance—including advice on the proposals submitted prior to the conference, and constructive guidance on the delivery, as well as the content, of their presentations. The programme also included further workshops on conference-related topics, for example on preparing conference proposals, or on asking and responding to questions in a research seminar situation.

Throughout, the emphasis was on enabling students to learn from peers and academic staff in the particular context of their discipline—as such, most sessions were subject-specific, with parallel discussions for philosophy / HPSTM and for theology / religious studies / biblical

[7] Further details of the event programmes can be found on the Subject Centre for PRS website: **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/ahrc/index.html**

studies, each led by a practising academic in the field. This enabled the programme to address (often subtle, but significant) disciplinary differences within issues which at first might seem generic, or at least common to all arts and humanities subjects. For example, one might initially assume that the publishing cultures of the PRS disciplines are largely similar, as all fall within Biglan's (1973a, b) classification of 'soft, pure' fields which tend to favour publication in the form of monographs rather than journal articles (see also Becher 1989, 1994). However, this overlooks important differences between the disciplines —in particular, the journal-oriented publishing tradition in philosophy —which are crucial to students' mastery of the norms governing research and communication in their subject.

Student participation in the programme was subsidised by the AHRC funding—no conference fees were charged, and all meals and residential accommodation were provided free of charge to delegates. This support did not extend to paying delegates' travel expenses—however, as the event was run on a regional rather than national scale, these were kept to a minimum; and delegates were encouraged to seek departmental bursaries to support their participation in the programme.

85 students attended one or more events over the two-year pilot period, of whom more than 25% attended two or more programme events. Given that, at the time of establishing the pilot, there were only 35 AHRC-funded doctoral students based in the region (although we did not have authoritative figures for the total number of doctoral students), we considered this level of participation to be indicative of success, particularly for a pilot project. We also experienced a very low level of attrition from event registration to attendance, particularly in the second year of the programme's operation—given that events were entirely voluntary, and that failure to attend incurred no financial costs, this was a strikingly positive outcome.

However, we did not observe a significant year-on-year increase in delegate numbers. We can only speculate as to the reasons for this—however, given the relatively small size of our regional 'pool', it is possible that a two-year cycle of events may have been sufficient to approach saturation levels for the contemporary cohort of doctoral students.

It was also gratifying to note that the events attracted interest from across the UK (and indeed internationally—circulation of the

event publicity on discipline-specific discussion lists led to enquiries from Europe and the US, for example). In the first year of operation, delegate registrations from within the target region were slightly below capacity so we were able to include a handful of doctoral students from elsewhere in the UK; however, by the second year of the programme events were over-subscribed.

Evaluation of the pilot programme

We adopted a number of measures to seek to assess the effectiveness of this pilot programme. Quantitative measures were restricted to monitoring student participation rates (see above)—we did not attempt any assessment of student performance, not least because we felt this would have been inappropriate given the collegiate approach taken and the deliberately (indeed, necessarily) indeterminate nature of the learning outcomes involved.

Evaluation data included the use of feedback forms at all programme events, and these indicated a very high level of participant satisfaction (see appendix 2). For example, the residential workshops were rated as 'good / very good' on average by 90% of respondents (from a 70% response rate), with the equivalent ratings for individual sessions varying from 76% to 94%.

Qualitative feedback from delegates on the programme was also overwhelmingly positive. Common terms used to describe the programme included 'helpful / useful / valuable / informative'; 'friendly / supportive'; 'motivating', 'thought provoking', 'reassuring' and 'relevant'. Many participants also testified to the benefits of the networking opportunities the events afforded. A particularly noteworthy outcome was that two students who had attended a previous event explicitly referred in later feedback to the benefits they had obtained from the earlier event, and that this had encouraged/enabled them to participate in subsequent programme activities.

Of course, feedback also included some criticisms and suggestions for improvement. Many of these were highly individualistic (as one might expect, given the nature of humanities research), but two common themes can arguably be discerned:

1. **Subject-specificity.** In several cases, it was felt that the programme still failed to provide sufficiently nuanced support for the individual (sub)disciplines: specifically, for HPSTM and theology / biblical studies (in our programme —as in many academic departments—these were 'clustered' with philosophy and with religious studies respectively). On the one hand, this arguably strengthens the mandate for a discipline-focused approach. On the other, it highlights the challenges of providing a suitably fine-grained programme: in each case, our 'clustering' was motivated by considerations of feasibility (given the small size of the relevant research communities) rather than a disregard for the disciplinary differences involved.
2. **Expert input**. One respondent expressed a wish for a higher proportion of senior staff amongst our academic speakers (although this may reflect an assumption that academic expertise is correlated with age!), and several commented that interactive workshops risked 'pooling ignorance' rather than advancing understanding. This could be construed as a challenge to the pedagogy underpinning the programme's approach—namely, that a dialogic rather than didactic approach is more appropriate in fields lacking a strong shared paradigm for research (Becher 1994, Smeby 1996, Neumann 2001). Arguably the alignment between the programme's objectives and its methods would benefit from being reviewed and/or communicated more clearly.

It is also worth noting, however, that both of these critical points were to some degree counterbalanced by feedback from other participants, who found value in the learning to be gained from their peers and/or from other disciplines. Greater clarity from both organisers and participants regarding the expected learning outcomes from the programme might help to mitigate these tensions in the future.

We also sought to probe the programme's potential impact on students' learning. We designed a 'reflective evaluation form' which was circulated to delegates at each residential event—this consisted in a series of questions which invited students to reflect on what they had

learned from the workshop sessions, and how they might apply this to their future research practices (see appendix 3). This was principally intended as a tool to support students' action planning; however, we also invited students to share their completed forms with us (on an optional basis), and many of them did so. These provided a valuable insight into what students felt they had learned from the programme, and as such formed a useful additional evaluative resource for us.

Finally, we also contacted all Directors of Graduate Studies in participating departments at the end of the pilot programme, to invite their feedback on whether/how the project had benefited their students, and to seek suggestions for future developments. As with the needs analysis, this was undertaken by means of an informal email conversation rather than a structured survey. Approximately half of the participating departments responded, and all were extremely positive about the scheme—comments included:

- Our research students have enjoyed it and benefited from it a great deal.
- I found it a particularly enjoyable event to take part in myself as it was an opportunity to raise some of the practical issues involved in developing a career in academia which are not formally part of the academic teaching and supervision for individual research students… The feedback I had from students who participated was uniformly excellent. They enjoyed the opportunity to meet students from other institutions and to compare experiences, especially as for those who do go on to professional academic life, these are likely to be their future colleagues... The overall effect was greatly encouraging to them, as they saw that the difficulties are real and shared, but also that there are ways to cope…
- It helped [students] to think about their long-term teaching goals and the ways in which their research fit in with their teaching… It is a helpful resource and it assisted in helping PGs from across the country to meet each other and to compare notes on their studies.

Of course such feedback, however glowing, provides only anecdotal

perceptions that the programme is of genuine benefit. However it was unfeasible, given the small scale and short lifespan of the programme to date, to obtain more robust measures of, for example, any impact on doctoral students' retention or completion rates, let alone their graduate career progression.

In this respect, we were particularly encouraged by the positive assessments from academic staff—whereas students typically have only a single experience of doctoral study against which to judge the programme (namely, their own), many of the staff involved have a wealth of experience of supervising doctoral research, and thus arguably are in a position to offer a more informed judgement of the merits or otherwise of the programme. In this regard, it is also particularly encouraging to receive independent confirmation that the programme is seen as a useful complement to existing provision by universities, departments and individual supervisors, and that it is judged to support both students' current research needs and their preparation for future academic practice.

Reflections on the pilot programme and lessons learned

Given the success of this pilot programme, it is instructive to seek to identify the factors which contributed to its effectiveness; and I will argue that the most important feature in this regard was its disciplinary focus.

Feedback shows that both staff and students saw the programme as relevant to their needs because it was subject-specific, in contrast to generic institutional-level initiatives (of which many staff and students alike expressed scepticism as to their relevance and benefit). The event sessions which received most positive responses from students were those which were led by discipline specialists; and, in mirror image of this, the only significant negative feedback attracted by the programme was with regard to sessions which did not succeed in achieving a sufficiently fine-grained disciplinary focus. Of course, such judgements may well do a disservice to the genuine benefits to be gained from more generic programmes; nonetheless, students do not obtain these benefits if they do not perceive the value of engaging with such schemes—as Jenkins observes: 'unless we demonstrate this disciplinary focus, most… will ignore what we have to offer' (1996:56).

However, the benefits of this approach go beyond the merely tactical consideration of 'enticing clients through the door'; there is also a (small, but increasing) body of research evidence to indicate that a discipline-based approach enables such programmes to be tailored more effectively to the distinctive features and demands of the subject, and to the learning needs and identities of its students and indeed staff (for helpful reviews of the literature, see Jenkins 1996, Neumann 2001). Most of these studies of discipline-based pedagogy are based on undergraduate learning and teaching and/or staff development programmes; but doctoral study is no less shaped by its discipline, and thus, as Becher summarises, 'effective research training should necessarily take such differences into account' (1994:158).

It is thus, I argue, crucial to the success of such a programme both to create and communicate its disciplinary focus to one's target audience; and in this respect, I consider that the involvement of academic staff at every stage of our programme was of critical importance. Discipline academics had contributed to the design of the programme, so knew that it had been tailored to their students' needs, and therefore were happy to recommend that their students take part. Sessions were led by discipline specialists with relevant expertise—for example, a workshop on publishing was led by the editor of one of the leading international philosophy journals—and so students were assured that input would be provided by recognised experts in their field.

Thus the programme was—and was seen to be—designed and delivered by discipline specialists, for discipline specialists. Not only did this ensure the relevance of the content of individual sessions; it also granted the additional benefit of enriching participants' research network by giving them the opportunity to meet and learn from colleagues from other departments. Neither of these outcomes could have been achieved to the same extent by a more generic approach.

It is possible also that the imprimatur of AHRC support for the scheme may also have contributed to its positive perception by staff and students alike—it will be interesting to discover whether the programme will retain a similar high standing in the future as we seek to maintain and indeed expand the programme on a self-sustaining basis.

We were also pleasantly surprised by the level of enthusiasm evinced by doctoral students for such professional development oppor-

tunities. Not only did they commit time and travel costs to attending our pilot programme—often participating in more than one event (as outlined above)—but many expressed a wish to see more such opportunities made available to them. Indeed, our pilot project has already resulted in a number of such 'spin-off' events:

- A group of students who attended the pilot events have independently set up their own regional research network to maintain and develop further the links and shared learning they gained from our pilot programme.
- As a result of attendance on the programme by members of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association (BPPA), the Subject Centre for PRS has now been invited to contribute a regular 'professional development strand' at future BPPA events.

Both of these developments indicate a genuine appetite amongst doctoral students for such professional development opportunities—the latter, in particular, suggests that such activity is being seen as an integral part of postgraduate life and preparation for future academic practice.

Of course, the pilot programme presented some challenges too. The first of these is a corollary of one of its success factors—namely, the integral role played by practising academics in delivering the programme. The quality of the programme was thus dependent on being able to identify academic staff with suitable expertise who were able and willing to contribute. Given that academic staff were being asked to give freely of their time and expertise, this required a degree of good will (hopefully facilitated by a sense that their contribution would secure a clear benefit for their department and wider academic community). In light of this fact, and the relatively small research community involved, identifying and securing the contribution of appropriate participants sometimes took a significant amount of effort and persuasion on the part of the Subject Centre staff who co-ordinated the programme.

In co-ordinating the overall programme content, we also had to balance potentially conflicting considerations of achieving consistency

and coherence with the need to grant our academic contributors the freedom and flexibility to determine the content and methods of individual sessions as they felt to be appropriate—although the feedback from the pilot gives us no reason to consider that this approach undermined the quality of the programme.

Another concern was how to ensure that the pilot programme was accessible to as many of our target audience as possible. This is a particular challenge in PRS disciplines, which tend to have a diverse research student population with a high proportion of mature, part time and distance learners. Notwithstanding these considerations, we decided to proceed by means of a combination of day-long and residential face-to-face events, in order to maximise delegates' opportunities to meet and share experiences with colleagues from other departments —and feedback affirmed that students did value this opportunity. (Indeed, one student stated that this structure of fewer, more intensive events was more conducive to the demands of their research than the common model of a seminar series, which requires a more long-term, fragmented time commitment.) Nevertheless, cost considerations may in future lead us to reconsider the current model in favour of a series of shorter events, which are less expensive to host. (The AHRC's funding underwrote the costs of our residential events in the first two years, but these may be more difficult to justify if the programme is to be fully self-financing in the future. We are currently consulting our partner HEIs in the pilot programme to explore funding options for continuation of the scheme.)

We also trialled a weblog as a complementary means of maintaining regional network links between doctoral students in the participating departments, but this has not proved popular. Again, we can only speculate as to the reasons for this, but it may be due to the fact that such technologies are, to date, little used in our disciplines, and as such it would require significantly more support in order to enable students to engage with this approach more fruitfully.

Looking forward: future developments in preparing for academic practice in the arts and humanities

Across the UK HE sector, there is increasing interest in, and support for, enhancing our provision of professional development opportunities

for doctoral students. Perhaps one of the most significant discoveries we made during our pilot programme is that there is also a genuine appetite amongst postgraduate research students themselves for such opportunities—as long as they are seen to be of relevance and high quality. In common with the rest of the university population (staff and students), doctoral students often need to juggle multiple commitments, both within and beyond their life in higher education (e.g. Becher et al. 1994: chapter 9). Consequently, they often do not have the luxury of engaging with programmes from which they are uncertain of obtaining direct benefits (see also Johnston 1997 for discussion of the impact of the multiple demands of academic life on engagement in professional development).

In this context, I have argued that it is important to adopt a discipline-based approach to our research skills development provision, in order to maximise its relevance and benefit, and thus student (and staff) engagement with the programme. I have further suggested that the active involvement of practising academics in both the design and the delivery of such provision is critical to achieving such a disciplinary focus.

In order to secure this level of academic involvement, of course, it is crucial that academic staff are likewise convinced of the benefits of the scheme. We hope that the feedback from the pilot programme will help to achieve this; but it would be valuable also to develop more robust measures of impact where possible—and to this end, we intend to undertake some longitudinal case studies of the 'graduates' from our pilot programme, to ascertain their progress and the extent to which they consider that participating in the programme has helped them to achieve their aims.

Such a discipline-focused approach should thus help to improve doctoral researchers' preparedness for academic practice by enhancing both the relevance of, and student engagement with, the professional development opportunities on offer. However, this alone is not sufficient to ensure maximal impact—we also need to ensure that access to such opportunities is as widespread as possible. As we have already observed, many national or institutional research training schemes have been restricted to RC-funded students (who constitute a minority of the UK research student population) and/or those in STEM subjects—both of which groups evidence a higher rate of retention and completion

than is typical of humanities students, although there is to date no research evidence to confirm any causal basis for this correlation (HEFCE 2005).[8]

Although it is not possible to do more than to gesture towards this substantial topic within the confines of this paper, it is my contention that—notwithstanding the high level of research, policy and pedagogic development activity on widening and increasing participation in higher education—relatively little attention has been paid to supporting and promoting the diversity of our postgraduate student population (and hence, potentially, that of the academics of the future). Expanding the reach of research training provision could prove an important factor in ensuring that we provide equal opportunities and support for all current research students and future academics, thus promoting quality and diversity in all aspects of higher education.

We are under no illusions that our small initiative in philosophical and religious studies can alone effect significant change in this regard; however, we hope that, by co-ordinating such a regional programme, the Subject Centre for PRS might help to 'level the playing field' in this regard and move towards greater equality of support and development opportunities for all students in our disciplines, irrespective of their access to funding or the size and resource capacity of their host department/institution. Given the success of the regional pilot, we hope to expand our programme to other UK regions in 2007/8 and beyond—and have already received expressions of interest from a number of departments in participating in a similar scheme.

We also intend to continue to refine the content and delivery of the programme—for example, expanding its remit to cover other aspects of academic practice such as leadership and management (thus seeking to provide a more holistic programme of academic development, as advocated by Johnston 1997); and increasing the availability of written resource materials as well as face-to-face events in order to improve accessibility for research students who may not be able to attend the workshops. The development of a repository of resource materials should also help to mitigate the demands placed on individ-

[8] From 2007/8, Roberts-funded initiatives are no longer restricted to STEM research students; however it is too early to ascertain whether this has had a significant impact on the humanities research student experience.

ual academic contributors to prepare all their session materials 'from scratch'.

Arguably, more could be done to develop a 'joined up' approach to supporting doctoral students in their research and preparation for academic practice, linking up the various initiatives and opportunities available to present a coherent and comprehensive 'package' from the researcher's perspective. The Subject Centre for PRS will continue to work with regional contacts in UK GRAD and institutional graduate training schools in this regard.

There is also scope for more work in providing support and development opportunities for individual research supervisors who support doctoral students on a one-to-one basis. Arguably, this is a crucial complement to any student-focused development opportunities, given the importance of the student-supervisor relationship in doctoral studies (see especially Becher et al. 1994). Such opportunities are at present largely generic in nature, and in 2007/8 the Subject Centre for PRS will explore demand for a subject-specific supervisors' forum, which would mirror the approach piloted by our programme for research students—namely, emphasising the 'support network' dimension and the opportunities it offers to learn from peers and senior colleagues, rather than offering formal 'training'. Again, we believe that an approach which is thus sensitive to the distinctive features of individual disciplines is critical to ensuring both academic engagement and the relevance and quality of provision.

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Appendix 1: Research skills development in philosophical and religious studies – needs analysis

The following survey was circulated to all UK PRS departments and major subject associations in April 2004:

FAO: Member of staff with responsibility for PG provision
Also, if applicable, dept. PG society

As you probably know, the AHRB has introduced a new 'framework of research training requirements' for their postgraduate (doctoral) scheme—which includes departmental provision of subject-specific research training for postgraduate students.

The Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre is seeking to support departments in meeting these requirements—including the development of collaborative research training provision at a regional or national level, where appropriate (for which AHRB funding is available).

In order for us to be able to help you most effectively, we would be grateful if you would answer the three questions below. This will enable us to identify departments' and students' needs more accurately, and thus to develop appropriately targeted support for postgraduate research training in Philosophical and Religious Studies. Please reply by Monday 10 May 2004; your answers will be treated in confidence.

1. How many postgraduate research students does your department have at present? (NB please indicate, if possible, how this figure is reached, e.g. FTEs.)
2. What provision is currently in place to support the development of postgraduate students' research (and transferable) skills? (Please provide details where possible—e.g. what knowledge/skills are covered? is this provided at subject, school/faculty and/or university level?)
3. What additional support do you think would be helpful to postgraduate research students in your subject/department, if possible? (Please provide details where possible—e.g. suggested topics; appropriate level of provision—i.e. departmental/regional/national.)

Thank you for your time in contributing to this survey—we will of course keep you informed of any additional support which we develop in response to the outcomes. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any queries, and/or for an individual consultancy on this issue.

Responses were received from only six departments; but also from two of the major UK subject associations. This response rate was clearly insufficient to establish comprehensive data on the research student population in PRS, but a narrative analysis of the responses already suggested some trends in existing provision and future needs. A sample of the responses from the philosophy and HPS communities is given below:

Existing provision: Some larger, more well-established departments are

already providing an extensive service. It is striking that two of these responses are from the (very small) HPS community, and that much of this provision is tailored to the particular content of the discipline, or to research skills at the 'social science' end of the spectrum. It is of course risky to speculate about nil returns, but it is possible that the limited data obtained here reflects the fact that many other departments simply have no such formal training provision.

Suggestions for additional provision: All respondents advocated the development of postgraduate research network opportunities. There was also a tendency to focus on research skills and professional development, with relatively little mention of discipline content (with the exception of logic in philosophy).

Given the low response rate, the outcomes of the survey were used simply to develop a provisional proposal for additional subject-specific research training provision (with additional weighting given to responses from subject associations, as being more representative of the disciplines as a whole); and the needs analysis was iterated at regional level prior to developing a detailed pilot programme.

Existing provision	Suggestions for additional provision
ESRC-standard generic social science research skills Philosophy of the Social Sciences: The Analytic Tradition Ethical and Political Issues in Social Research Approaches to Analysing Text, Discourse and Narratives Qualitative Methods: Ethnographic Fieldwork Visual Methodologies in the Social Sciences Advanced Quantitative Methods in Social Science Survey Methods and Data Listening to Children: Research and Consultation Frontiers in Geography Archives and Sources, Explanation and Historiography Computing for Historians (HPS department, ancient university) Uni – core, generic, personal and career development skills Dept – induction sessions, how to supervise, research methods seminars, library tours, museum tours, computing workshops, termly PhD workshops (project management, dissertation writing, publishing, submitting research proposals, preparing for interviews…) Library – electronic resources, bibliographical and library skills SDU/IT – IT and oral presentation skills and technologies Other depts – classical, oriental and modern European languages, palaeographical skills, weekly Latin workshop Careers Service / SDU – career development GTA training College – interdisciplinary PG networks (HPS department, ancient university) Generic/uni (termly) – e.g. ethics, research methodology (PRS department, post-1992 university)	Research methods PG research seminars / reading groups / conferences – incl. funding Cf. AHRB courses – applications, interviews… (Philosophy department, ancient university) Regional PG network (PRS department, post-1992 university) Planning your PhD study Presenting a paper Getting published Writing an academic CV Writing a research proposal Philosophy job interviews Applying for jobs in the US Non-academic employment PG regional networks PG conferences Graduate teaching assistant training Logic for beginners – research/teaching (Philosophy subject association)

Appendix 2: Evaluation of the pilot programme—event feedback

Feedback forms were distributed to all delegates at each programme event. A sample form is shown below:

AHRC-Funded Postgraduate Research Residential

Please tick the appropriate box below (4=very good, 3=good, 2=satisfactory, 1=poor)

	4	*3*	*2*	*1*
A. Content and Organisation				
1. How successfully in your view did the event:				
i) Provide a clear introduction to the aims of the event?	❑	❑	❑	❑
ii) Offer an opportunity for constructive exchange of ideas	❑	❑	❑	❑
iii) Identify and clarify key issues?	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. Did you find the content of the following sessions of the event useful?				
i) Research in context	❑	❑	❑	❑
ii) Research methods and trends OR The research environment and the RAE (please specify)	❑	❑	❑	❑
iii) Building your bibliography	❑	❑	❑	❑
iv) Delivering effective presentations	❑	❑	❑	❑
v) The conference scene (please specify whether TRS or Philosophy)	❑	❑	❑	❑
vi) Converting a conference paper into an article OR Breaking into the publishing racket I: the editor's view (please specify)	❑	❑	❑	❑
vii) Breaking into the publishing racket (II: practicalities – please specify whether TRS or Philosophy)	❑	❑	❑	❑
viii) So I've got a PhD… now what? (please specify whether TRS or Philosophy)	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. How would you rate the organisation of the event?				
i) Before the event?	❑	❑	❑	❑
ii) During the event?	❑	❑	❑	❑

B. Structure of Event

1. Was the format of the event appropriate? In what ways might it be improved?
2. Please add any other comments you wish to make about the event.

C. The Future Development of the Higher Education Academy

1. What are the key issues you would like to be addressed in future events held by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies?
2. Please indicate any contribution you are able/willing to make to the development of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, e.g. article, discussion item, chairing discussion group (please indicate subject).

Some questions varied according to the content of individual events—for example, feedback forms for the summer day conferences replaced section A.2 with the following questions (on the basis that students might be uncomfortable with rating each others' performance in peer-led sessions):

- Which of the workshops did you find most useful or interesting? Please explain.
- What was your experience of the paper presentations? Were there any papers you found particularly helpful or stimulating?

Response rates are shown below:

Event	No. delegates	No. feedback responses	Response rate
Residential 2006	33	25	76%
Day conference 2006	21	17	81%
Residential 2007	41	27	66%
Day conference 2007	19	5	26%

We undertook quantitative analysis of Section A of the forms, as shown in the table below. (Feedback on the residential workshops only is included here, as this was the most intensive element of the programme and thus yielded most data.)

	January 2006 responses (n=25)						January 2007 responses (n=27)						Total responses	
	4	3	2	1	n/a	Av.	4	3	2	1	n/a	Av.	**Av.**	**% (4s+3s)**
A.1 How successfully in your view did the event:														
i. Provide a clear introduction to the aims of the event?	12	11	0	1	1	3.42	20	7	0	0	0	3.74	**3.61**	**98**
ii. Offer an opportunity for constructive exchange of views?	14	9	1	0	1	3.54	21	6	0	0	0	3.78	**3.69**	**98**
iii. Identify and clarify key issues?	14	9	1	0	1	3.54	20	7	0	0	0	3.74	**3.67**	**98**
A.2 Did you find the content of the following sessions of the event useful?														
i. Research in context	9	11	4	0	1	3.21	8	10	6	0	3	3.08	**3.17**	**79**
ii. Research methods and trends…*	10	5	5	4	1	2.88	6	16	3	0	2	3.12	**3.02**	**76**
iii. Building your bibliography	11	9	2	0	3	3.41	12	11	1	0	3	3.46	**3.50**	**93**
iv. Delivering effective presentations	11	12	0	0	2	3.48	6	13	6	0	2	3.00	**3.27**	**88**
v. The conference scene	14	8	1	0	2	3.57	6	14	5	0	2	3.04	**3.33**	**88**
vi. Converting a conference paper… *	15	6	1	1	2	3.52	14	8	5	0	0	3.33	**3.46**	**86**
vii. Breaking into the publishing racket…*	16	7	0	1	1	3.58	19	6	1	1	0	3.59	**3.59**	**94**
viii. So I've got a PhD… now what?	16	7	1	0	1	3.63	10	13	2	0	2	3.32	**3.49**	**94**
Total average ratings						3.43						3.39	**3.41**	
Total % rated 4 or 3						91						89	**90**	

'n/a' figures represents all nil responses, e.g. due to student absence from the session concerned.
* Note: session content varied across years/disciplines according to current issues and speaker interests.

Free-text responses to sections B and C were reviewed by the programme organisers to identify any narrative themes. Sample comments are reproduced below:

B. Was the format of the event appropriate? In what ways might it be improved? Please add any other comments you wish to make about the event.

- I hope further events like this one will take place in the future, as I found it a highly valuable experience and am sure many others will too. (January 2006)
- Extremely useful, lovely people, a rare exhibition of enthusiasm and passion for academia from presenters and participants alike. A welcome and valuable experience and opportunity to meet people and discuss / reflect upon our careers. (January 2006)
- Advice was very frank, specific and up-to-date. Atmosphere was friendly and constructive. Really good to share one's situation and realise others are in the same boat —felt supportive and reassuring. I wish there'd been one of these events earlier in my PhD (I'm writing up)—very motivating… (January 2006)
- A lot of things were said that we needed to hear, and hadn't heard from anyone. (January 2006)
- I thought it was set up very well. Enough time was given to discuss thoroughly. These conferences are very helpful and well run. I have found that my skills have improved from advice given in January, and I know this one will be of great help. (September 2006)
- Very good—informal and relaxed—very conducive to exchange of ideas. Perhaps expand the provision for history and philosophy of science and medicine, which seemed underrepresented. (January 2007)
- Yes. For the most part, it had a good ratio of info / upfront presenting and discussion with enough breaks to talk with each other informally. A very useful conference worth coming to. The best presentations gave more input / information. The ones that were less useful tended to work with

our input and if we had no experience in say writing abstracts, doing presentations, etc. we were just 'pooling our ignorance'. (January 2007)

- Perhaps more interaction between TRS and Philosophy for some of the separate sessions? (January 2007)
- Although I gained some good general points about the subjects discussed, I was slightly put off by the strong emphasis on philosophy. Even one speaker from the history of science would have been good. (January 2007)
- Format excellent within constraints of time and subject coverage. Difficult to see how anything else could have been included. I would have liked more on research methods and tools, on publishing/contributing to publications, etc. but this would only have been possible by sacrificing something else. As it was, a good mix. There were instances where I would like to have attended both sessions held simultaneously! Having shown the programme to my supervisor, who has shared it with others, there was a feeling that such concentrated, intense, residentials or not, are the way forward rather than 'long-string' training that inhibits students from carrying out their research. (January 2007)

C.1 What are the key issues you would like to be addressed in future events held by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies?

- Some sessions on what happens post PhD—doing / applying for postdoctoral work? More papers like we had today are good as it helps to gain an idea of the general state of the field outside your own university. (September 2006)
- Interdisciplinary work. Writing for journals. (September 2006)
- Perhaps more specific conferences e.g. bringing together papers on a (largish) subdiscipline such as metaphysics, ethics or epistemology. (September 2006)
- Developing postgraduate networks more formally, inter-

departmental exchanges, etc. Potentials for electronic/online communities (listservs, etc.) (January 2007)
- Perhaps more subject specific info would be helpful. A lot of the presentations were a little general and perhaps slightly more specific advice would have made a good conference even better! (January 2007)
- Keep it practical – this practical advice is very useful! Supervisor / student relationship? (January 2007)
- The culture/structure of depts at different universities i.e. analytic v continental philosophy and theology v religious studies… (January 2007)

Appendix 3: Evaluation of the pilot programme—students' reflective evaluation

The following form was distributed to delegates at the residential workshops. Students were invited, but not required, to share their reflections with the programme organisers.

This 'Reflective Evaluation' has two purposes: first, it will aid the Subject Centre for PRS in developing future high-quality, relevant training programmes for research students; second, and more importantly, it will help you to think about how you might put the information from this programme to use. You may also want to share your reflections with your academic supervisor or postgraduate tutor.

1. What were your expectations or what did you hope to gain from the programme?

2. Briefly state in what ways (if any) the residential met your needs / expectations.

3. What (if any) ideas or suggestions in relation to conducting research will you take away from this programme? How will you go about implementing these ideas / suggestions? (There were two sessions specifically related to research. It would be helpful if, in your answer, you would make refer-

ence to one or both of them.)

4. In relation to preparing for conferences / delivering conference papers, what ideas / suggestions (if any) did you find most helpful? How will you put these to use in your academic career?

5. What (if anything) did you find helpful in the sessions on publishing? (There were two sessions relating to publishing —'Converting a Conference Paper into an Article' and 'Breaking in to the Publishing Racket'.) Please explain how you will go about implementing any advice.

6. Part of the reason for holding a residential was to allow for students to network and share experiences. How helpful was it to meet research students from other departments?

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Response rates were lower than for event feedback (see appendix 2), reflecting the optional nature of this exercise – completed forms were received from 24% of delegates in total (of which 6 responses were received in the 2006 programme, and 12 in 2007). As with the event feedback, responses were reviewed by the programme organisers to identify any narrative themes. In many cases the findings reflected and reinforced those garnered from event feedback—significant additional outcomes are analysed below.

Expectations (questions 1 and 2): This revealed the diversity of students' motivations and skill development needs. Many responses were rather vague, but others had very specific (and varied) learning objectives. Some typical responses were:

- Meet other postgraduates working in similar areas. Learn about skills/ideas helpful in an academic career. (2007)
- … I was keen to see how the academic research processes in Theology compared to those in English literary studies… (2007)
- Practical tips for enhancing my CV. (2007)

Notwithstanding this variety, most students expressed the view that the programme had contributed to meeting their needs:

- Encouragement: yes, through the presenters and also the participants. Also many helpful suggestions/perspectives. It was probably more beneficial than I expected. (2006)
- … this was an invaluable insight into what lies ahead. It should be mandatory for anyone considering a doctorate… I feel I am much better equipped and happier about the prospect. (2007)
- Really helped to edify my thinking about how to approach academic development. (2007)

Learning points (questions 3-5): Content of responses was very varied, reflecting students' diverse learning objectives—of course, this entailed that not all delegates found benefit in every session; but from the organisers' perspective, it was encouraging to see many specific instances of students planning to implement their learning in future research practice:

- Perhaps most valuable were the insights about publishing papers… and making friends and contacts in the business… These bits of advice were immediately action-able. First I looked at what was happening in the major journals at present and thought about how my interests fit into this scene, if there were things I could comment upon, how I might contribute to extant debates and so on. Second I began to think about what contacts I had, what contacts I could use, what events it would be wise to attend, and who there was in my field who might share an interest in my work. (2006)
- These were very helpful with many valuable practical suggestions. Many had made vague suggestions that I had ideas worth publishing, without giving any guidance as to how I might do this. My intention now is to look at journals which publish articles in my areas of interest and to work towards a submission. (2006)

Networking (question 6): All delegates appreciated this aspect of the programme, although students expressed a spectrum of views regarding the respective merits of peer learning compared to presentational input from senior speakers, and the dis/advantages of an inter/disciplinary setting:

- It was very useful meeting people from other departments, although mixing philosophy and religious studies meant I met many lovely religious studies people (not wishing to be parochial or rude!), perhaps at the expense of making more contacts in my own field. (2006)
- Even though theology and philosophy students don't normally meet…I did find it helpful to hear about the journey that Philosophy students have and to note parallels. Obviously it was good to talk to some who are working in more closely-related fields. But for me, the presentations were the most helpful aspect of the conference. (2006)
- Very stimulating—met some very interesting people in areas I'd never even imagined! (2007)
- Very—both specific instances of helpful suggestions and references and generally supportive atmosphere. (2007)
- Very helpful. Able to share experiences and expectations, which was reassuring and encouraging. (2007)
- Somewhat to my surprise, meeting PhD students from other universities, other disciplines and in some cases people who where in their 2nd/3rd/4th years was hugely stimulating and encouraging—and challenging. I suppose many PhDs have to maintain a high degree of single-mindedness and lone concentration. It was useful nevertheless to discuss, in the sessions and when networking, many common problems or hear of others' experiences. (2007)

The Relationship Between Pedagogical and Discipline-specific Research Methods:

Critical Perspectives

Rebecca O'Loughlin

Subject Co-ordinator (Theology)
Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies

This paper is adapted from the final report of a year-long Subject Centre for PRS project that conducted a full investigation into the current state of pedagogical research in theology and religious studies. The project also developed other resources, including an overview of pedagogical research methods in use in educational research, a full literature review of pedagogical research in theology and religious studies, and a review of other pedagogical research material that might be useful to academics working in our disciplines. These resources will be made available on our website in due course.

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Suggested reasons for the lack of discipline-based pedagogical research in Theology and Religious Studies

A literature review of higher education journals, conducted as part of this project, led to the conclusion that discipline-based pedagogical research in theology and religious studies (TRS) has hitherto been limited. Whether this is due to a lack of interest or engagement in the pedagogical research arena on the part of TRS academics and departments, or a failure to obtain funding for such work for reasons internal or external to TRS disciplines, or a combination of these, is a matter for debate. There are a number of possible factors feeding into the situation:

i. Pedagogical research in the arts and humanities has been underfunded, receiving less financial support than pedagogical research in science, technology, maths and the social sciences.
ii. TRS academics have shown a lack of awareness of (and/or interest in) funding opportunities.
iii. TRS academics have a lack of experience in writing funding applications.
iv. Small disciplines/departments may find it difficult to support a major project.
v. There are already too many demands on staff. Mary Taylor Huber and Pat Hutchings write: 'Whatever its shape or approach, it [the scholarship of teaching and learning] is difficult work that tends to run against the ground of academic culture'. One reason for this is that staff are already overworked, under-resourced and under-paid.[1]
vi. TRS as disciplines have displayed limited engagement with the wider pedagogical literature/field, meaning that

[1] M. T. Huber and P. Hutchings, *The Advancement of Teaching and Learning: Building the Teaching Commons,* The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/A Carnegie Foundation Report on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp. 66-7.

their projects are not sufficiently embedded in the field to be considered eligible for funding.

vii. TRS academics have experienced difficulties in engaging with the pedagogical research agenda because of the differing research paradigms: empirical (educational research) and theoretical/discursive (TRS). The field of pedagogy has been dominated by educational researchers, who tend to adopt social science research models. And so, the pedagogical research paradigm is one of empirical research, whereas research in theology and, to a lesser extent, religious studies, is typically (though not exclusively) theoretical/discursive. The existence of these differing research cultures presents a number of risks (mutual misunderstanding and/or suspicion of other disciplines' research methodologies; language barriers; and thus the perception of pedagogical research as an alien discipline that is 'not for us'). Mary Taylor Huber has said: 'The scholarship of teaching and learning is typically pursued as a kind of practitioner or action research by teachers in their own classrooms, not the circumstances or settings for which the investigative methods used in most disciplines…are well designed. Doing the scholarship of teaching and learning sits, therefore, at the edge of most disciplines…'[2]

Connected to this are issues related to styles of referencing. If we apply the conclusions reached about philosophy by George MacDonald Ross, the Director of the Subject Centre for PRS, to TRS, we may say that TRS scholars feel similarly alienated by the style of referencing in pedagogical articles. It is reasonably safe to assume that theologians at least would prefer footnotes to the social science model of referencing in the text, which they may regard as disruptive and difficult to follow up.

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[2] Mary Taylor Huber, 'Disciplines, Pedagogy, and Inquiry-Based Learning About Teaching', in Kreber, C. (ed.) *Exploring Research-Based Teaching (New Directions for Teaching and Learning,* Number 107). (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006) pp. 69-77 at pp. 72-3.

The quantity of references, and the length of bibliographies, in pedagogical articles as compared with theology ones, could also be regarded as problematic.

viii. There are different 'languages' of pedagogical research compared with TRS research. TRS academics and educationalists have traditionally been at cross purposes in dialogue. Social science research works with language, metaphors and epistemological assumptions not used in theology in particular, which means that they are not accessible to academics working within this discipline.[3] Pat Hutchings has drawn attention to the alienation experienced by academics who have attempted to get involved in pedagogical research but who have found a body of educational research (most of it not focused on their discipline) employing methodologies and languages—usually scientific—which they know nothing about.[4] Mantz Yorke has described pedagogical research as 'the research analogue of a second language' for non-educationalists.[5]

ix. There exists mutual suspicion of the methodologies inherent to other disciplines (for example, philosophical concerns regarding 'evidence-based' approaches). Even in science and social science (the latter being the *locus classicus* of pedagogical research), where discussions of teaching and learning are 'more robust' than in the humanities, the communities of engaged scholars are small, marginalised and viewed with disdain by both mainstream scholars and larger-scale academic researchers.[6]

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[3] Indeed, my own methodological background as a theologian has been something of a disadvantage when trying to engage with educational research texts.

[4] Hutchings, P. 'Introduction', in Pat Hutchings (ed.), *Opening Lines: Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, pp. 1-10. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000)

[5] Yorke, M., 'Pedagogical research in UK higher education: an emerging policy framework' in Heather Eggins and Ranald Macdonald (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*, p105. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 2003).

x. Educational research is dominated by evidence-based practice. Biesta has argued that educational research is directed by the 'what works?' question. In practice, this means that, in the US at least, the 'gold standard' of randomised controlled field trials is the preferred methodology for educational research. Biesta says: 'Although there is some indication of the emergence of a broader and more encompassing definition of what counts as scientific research in education, the call for causal analysis by means of experimental research in order to find out 'what works' remains dominant.'[7] The dominance of evidence-based practice marginalises academics working in non-scientific disciplines and undermines the notion of disciplinary difference. This focus may lead to the dismissal of the more discursive or reflective pedagogical research that takes place in TRS classrooms on the basis that it is 'unscientific' and therefore not worthy of funding or a place in the canon of pedagogical research.

Potential ways forward

In seeking to address the factors above, with the aim of increasing engagement with, and participation in, pedagogical research in TRS, there are a variety of approaches that could be adopted, on their own or in combination. These are discussed in detail below. Pump-priming—giving funds to disciplines in which pedagogical research is underdeveloped or non-existent—could be used to level the playing field and encourage TRS academics to engage with these approaches. Agencies that could play a part in developing them, and perhaps provide more

[6] Huber, M. T. and Hutchings, P., *The Advancement of Teaching and Learning: Building the Teaching Commons*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/A Carnegie Foundation Report on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp. 66-7.

[7] Biesta, G., 'Why "what works" won't work: evidence-based practice and the democratic deficit in educational research', in *Educational Theory*, vol. 57, No. 1, (2007): 1-22 at 3.

guidance for applying for funding and brokerage of interdisciplinary dialogue with educationalists, include:

- The Higher Education Academy
- Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Subject Centres
- Subject Associations

1. Identify and exploit common methodological ground between pedagogical research and research in TRS

Wareing explains that, according to the taxonomy used by Kolb,[8] and adapted by Becher and Trowler,[9] the discipline of pedagogy is 'soft' and applied, being a functional subject with relatively low paradigm consensus (that is, there is usually more than one acceptable approach to tackling a given research question). Colbeck writes: 'In high paradigm consensus or "hard" disciplines, knowledge is perceived as cumulative and concerned with universals, quantification, and discovery.[10] Wareing continues: 'hard' disciplines are characterised by widespread agreement about curriculum content, research collaboration, competition for recognition and funding, clearly defined intellectual boundaries, and the gatekeeping of those boundaries by a powerful elite.[11] In contrast, low paradigm consensus, or 'soft', disciplines

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[8] Kolb, D. A. 'Learning styles and disciplinary differences' in A. Chickering (ed.) *The Modern American College* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 1981), pp. 232-55; cited in Wareing, S. 'Discipline-specific Professional Development: Just Branding?', *Educational Developments*, vol. 6.1, (2005) p.11.

[9] Becher T.and Trowler, P. R., *Academic Tribes and Territories*, 2nd edn. (Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press 2001), cited in Wareing, S. 'Discipline-specific Professional Development: Just Branding?', *Educational Developments*, vol. 6.1, (2005) p.11.

[10] See Becher, T., *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press 1989) and Biglan, A., 'The Characteristics of Subject Matter in Different Academic Areas', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57, (1973) pp. 195-203; cited in Colbeck, C., 'Merging in a Seamless Blend', *The Journal of Higher Education* 69 (6) (1998), pp. 647-671 at p.651; cited in Wareing, S. 'Discipline-specific professional development: just branding?', *Educational Developments*, vol. 6.1, (2005) p.11.

[11] See Becher, T., *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the*

regard knowledge as recursive; scholars use new lenses to explore intellectual territory already mapped out by others. Knowledge is also concerned with particulars, qualities and understanding.[12] 'Soft' disciplines are characterised by idiosyncratic curricula, weak boundaries, independent research efforts and tolerance for unusual ideas or methods.'[13] The point to be made here with regard to TRS is that because pedagogical research is a 'soft' discipline, this will create an affinity with TRS to a greater extent than if it were 'hard'.

2. Adopt a more critical stance vis-à-vis evidence-based practice

Questions have been raised about the appropriateness of the evidence-based approach for the field of education. Some have queried the homology between education and medicine and pointed to the different meanings of evidence in these fields. Others have questioned the positivistic assumptions underlying the idea of evidence-based education and criticized the narrow conception of research entailed in evidence-based education. Still others have criticized the managerial agenda of evidence-based education and its linear, top-down approach to educational improvement. Finally, many have objected to the lack of an acknowledgment of the crucial role of values in educational research and practice.[14]

Cultures of Disciplines (Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press 1989) and Janice Beyer Lodahl and Gerald Gordon, 'The Structure of Scientific Fields and the Functioning of University Graduate Departments', *American Sociological Review*, Feb 1972, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 57-72; Colbeck, C., 'Merging in a Seamless Blend', *The Journal of Higher Education* 69 (6) (1998), pp. 647-671 at p.651; cited in Wareing, S. 'Discipline-specific professional development: just branding?', *Educational Developments*, vol. 6.1, (2005) p.11.

[12] See Becher, T., *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press 1989) and Biglan, A., 'The Characteristics of Subject Matter in Different Academic Areas', Journal of Applied Psychology, 57, (1973) pp. 195-203; cited in Colbeck, C., 'Merging in a Seamless Blend', *The Journal of Higher Education* 69 (6) (1998), pp. 647-671 at p.651; cited in Wareing, S. 'Discipline-specific professional development: just branding?', *Educational Developments*, vol. 6.1, (2005) p.11.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Biesta, G., 'Why "What Works" Won't Work: Evidence-based Practice and the Democratic Deficit in Educational Research', *Educational Theory*, vol. 57, No. 1 (2007) pp.1-22.

Biesta is not convinced that evidence-based practice as it is currently being promoted provides the most appropriate matrix for educational research and is concerned about the tension between scientific and democratic control over educational practice and educational research. He explains: on the research side, evidence-based education favours a technocratic model in which it is assumed that the only relevant research questions are questions about the effectiveness of educational means and techniques, forgetting, among other things, that what counts as 'effective' depends on judgments about what is educationally desirable. On the practice side, evidence-based education seems to severely limit the opportunities for educational practitioners to make such judgments in a way that is sensitive to and relevant for their own contextualised settings. He feels that the focus on 'what works' makes it difficult, if not impossible, to ask the questions of what it should work for and who should have a say in determining the latter.[15]

Biesta believes that evidence-based practice provides a framework for understanding the role of research in educational practice that not only restricts the scope of decision making to questions about effectivity and effectiveness but that also restricts the opportunities for participation in educational decision making. He feels that this is why we need to expand our views about the interrelations among research, policy, and practice in order to keep in view the fact that education is a thoroughly moral and political practice, one that needs to be subject to continuous democratic contestation and deliberation. From this point of view an exclusive emphasis on 'what works' will simply not work.[16]

3. Focus on the growth of discipline-specific pedagogical research

The generic focus of pedagogical research has been challenged in the last few years through the development of organisations for, or explicitly valuing, discipline-based academic development (hence the estab-

[15] Ibid., p.5.

[16] Ibid., p.6.

lishment of the Learning and Teaching Support Network and the Subject Centres in 2000).[17] Various arguments have been developed in defence of the development of discipline-specific methods.

Discipline-specific pedagogical research encourages engagement of experienced academics within the disciplines

A potential solution to the methodological and language-based isolation of academics who are not educational researchers (points VI, VII and VIII above) is to encourage them to realise and exploit the relevance of their own disciplinary backgrounds, and the tools and dispositions they use as academics working in particular subjects. Vaneetamarie D'Andrea has argued: 'If they [academics] are highly trained in the research methodologies of their substantive field, then it would seem that encouraging the use of these methodologies and methods, where appropriate, in the pedagogical arena would be one way forward and consistent with developments in the SoTL [the scholarship of teaching and learning].'[18]

Becher's pioneering work on how research is distinctively conceived and developed in the disciplines is now paralleled by a growing research literature on the particular pedagogies of the disciplines.[19] Mick Healey has said that 'the scholarship of teaching needs to be developed within the context of the culture of the disciplines in which it is applied'. Similarly, Warren Gilchrist has argued that 'There is little doubt that different subjects do raise quite distinct teaching issues…It is further evident that CPD [Continuing Professional Development] in educational issues, as distinct to subject development, would become more attractive to experienced staff if it could be directly related to

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[17] Ibid., p. 50.

[18] D'Andrea, V. 'Exploring Methodological Issues Related to Pedagogical Inquiry in Higher Education', in C. Kreber (ed.), *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 107), pp. 89-98. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006).[18]

[19] Healey, M. and Jenkins, A., 'Discipline-based educational development' in Heather Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press (2003) p. 50. The reference to Becher pertains to Becher, T. Academic Tribes and Territories (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1989).

their teaching problems in their own subject'.[20]

Many pedagogical issues cut across fields, but most academics think about teaching and learning inside the framework of their own fields. As Huber and Hutchings claim, 'For most faculty, the scholarship of teaching and learning flows from engagement with their own fields.'[21] This being so, in terms of pedagogical research, 'the best place to start is where faculty already are'.[22] Hutchings elaborates: 'the methods of the scholarship of teaching and learning are shaped by the methods of the disciplines; beginning with those methods is a right idea not only because they are familiar but because they're warranted by scholarly peers who might build on the work. At the same time, one sees in these cases a good deal of methodological borrowing and influence, across fields'.[23] For the purposes of this project, this means that theologians ask *theologians*' questions about teaching and learning.

Huber elaborates by remarking that, when designing classroom inquiry projects in the scholarship of teaching and learning, many academics choose methods that reflect or resonate with the traditions of investigation in their own fields. In the sciences and harder social sciences, the first choice is likely to be quasi-experimental design using instruments that yield numerical results about the efficacy of a teaching innovation. Scholars in the softer social sciences or harder humanities, more comfortable with qualitative data, have found discourse analysis and focus groups to be useful tools for pedagogical research. Others—often in fields centred on textual interpretation, where the word 'data' is not a professional term of art—have pursued systematic inquiry

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[20] Wareing, S., 'Discipline-specific Professional Development: Just Branding?' *Educational Developments* 6.1 (2005), at 11. The references are: Healey, M., 'Developing the Scholarship of Teaching in Higher Education: A Discipline-based Approach', *Higher Education Research and Development* 19 (2) (2000), pp. 169-189 at p. 169 and Gilchrist, W., 'An Example of Discipline Based Induction and CPD in Education', *Educational Developments* 5.3, (2004) p26.

[21] Huber, M. T. and Hutchings, P., *The Advancement of Teaching and Learning: Building the Teaching Commons*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/A Carnegie Foundation Report on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), p. 4.

[22] Ibid. p. 63.

[23] Hutchings, 'Introduction', in Hutchings, P. (ed.) *Opening Lines: Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2000)

through strategically designed assignments and a close reading of student work.[24] Huber recognises, however, that the dominance of social science methods in traditional pedagogical research presents a challenge to new recruits from specialities where that approach is not much appreciated or used. She wonders, do we *all* have to be social scientists?! Her negative response to this question is based on her belief that a variety of approaches should flourish: 'The challenge here is to reconceptualize relationships between the disciplines, so that the lessons flow in all directions rather than demanding the diffusion of one privileged way of knowing'.[25]

Discipline-specific pedagogical research recognises actual disciplinary pedagogical differences

Whilst she endorses a generic pedagogy, Wareing acknowledges that, based on the 'hard'/'soft' axis, disciplinary differences affect: concepts of evidence, argument and appropriate presentation, including writing style; community practices (rules of interaction; status; concepts of apprenticeship); how information is structured for learners; learning and teaching methods; and how reusable a reusable learning object is.[26] She points out that a subject-specific model of pedagogical research can: a) be led by staff from that disciplinary background (status in the eyes of participants associated with a successful career in that disciplinary area; familiar language, metaphors and epistemological assumptions; shared background knowledge of people and events; fosters and works with a sense of community); b) address particular forms and styles of teaching specific to the discipline (for example, fieldtrips, practical sessions, laboratory sessions); c) address particular skills

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[24] Huber, M. T., 'Disciplines, Pedagogy, and Inquiry-Based Learning About Teaching', in Kreber, C. (ed.) *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 107). (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006) p73.

[25] Huber, M. T. 'Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching: Reflections on The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning' in C. Rust (ed.), *Proceedings of the 1999 7th International Symposium Improving Student Learning: Improving Student Learning Through the Disciplines*, (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University, 2000), pp. 20-31 at p. 27.

[26] Wareing, S., 'Discipline-specific Professional Development: Just Branding?' *Educational Developments* 6.1 (2005), at p. 12.

requirements which affect student progression and achievement (for example, maths, statistics, technical skills, well-developed reading and writing skills; d) address issues relating to recruitment profile; and e) acknowledge existing habits of teaching and assessment.[27]

Discipline-specific pedagogical research expands the scope of pedagogical research

Huber says there are three reasons for taking the disciplines seriously:

- Most importantly, the disciplines offer a way in to the scholarship of teaching and learning, through faculty members' concern for what and how well students are learning in these fields.
- More controversially, the disciplines offer faculty a way to do the scholarship of teaching and learning through the intellectual skills and resources they have access to as members of their particular academic communities. The disciplines vary greatly with regard to which arts of intellectualising are most salient to their particular agendas and styles. This variation means that members of the different disciplines are likely to encounter a different set of teaching problems.
- Because knowledge practices are changing in many disciplines today, this may be an opportune time for the development within the disciplines of a more reflective pedagogy that could reconfigure expectations for what and how people teach and learn in those fields.[28]

Discipline-specific pedagogical research acknowledges the importance of subject-specific issues in learning and teaching

Mick Healey and Alan Jenkins, also advocates of discipline-based pedagogical research, point out that some disciplines are characterised by distinctive forms of teaching: laboratory practicals in science; studio critiques in art; work-based learning in teaching, social work and nursing; and fieldwork in geography and the earth sciences. They feel

[27] Ibid., 14.

[28] Huber, M. T., 'Disciplines, Pedagogy, and Inquiry-Based Learning About Teaching', in Kreber, C. (ed.) *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 107). (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006) p73.

that staff in these disciplines need support in developing good practice, and that scholarship and research inform that practice: 'Yet too often, as in many of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects in the UK, the focus of public scholarship and educational development has been on generic issues, such as assessment'. Healey and Jenkins also point out that all disciplines have particular conceptions of knowledge and concerns with particular areas of 'content' and epistemology. They feel, in addition, that most forms of teaching need to be 'translated' into the culture and concerns of different disciplines: 'While the generic advice and scholarship/research on group work offers insights into this world, that scholarship needs "translating" into those contexts, and we also need primary research that explores these particular group work pedagogies.'[29]

4. Develop hybrid methodologies

Particularly in the case of TRS, which lacks a universally agreed methodology (linguists, historians, sociologists, archaeologists, philosophers, and psychologists may all find themselves teaching in TRS departments),[30] what is perhaps required is a more pluralist attitude to pedagogical research which promotes a synthesis of pedagogical research methods and disciplinary methods. The benefits of methodological pluralism are numerous. Primarily, there is the enrichment that exposure to the traditions of other disciplines brings, but, more pragmatically, it is also true that cross-disciplinary endeavours on the part of academics working in particular disciplinary contexts may enhance the credibility of the disciplines in the eyes of educationalists, making methodological pluralism a political tactic.

In support of methodological pluralism, Healey and Jenkins agree 'that one starts with and should continue to value and even prioritize the research methodologies in the discipline per se', but they feel

[29] Healey, M. and Jenkins, A., 'Discipline-based educational development' in Heather Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) pp. 50-51.

[30] Fearn, Mike and Francis, Leslie J., 'From A-level to Higher Education: Student Perceptions of Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religious Studies', *Discourse*, vol. 3, no. 2, Spring 2004, pp. 58-91 at p.61.

also that it is necessary:

> to recognize that studies of pedagogy are by definition areas of the social sciences,'because it is an aspect of human behaviour that they are engaged in and are studying'. Thus to really understand and improve the pedagogies of the disciplines means adopting and, certainly as a 'baseline', understanding and recognizing the value of these social science disciplinary research methodologies.[31]

They urge discipline specialists and educational developers to work together in order to fully embed educational development within the disciplines, adding that this is a process which necessitates mutual esteem.[32]

Cross-fertilisation between the disciplines is increasingly likely in the academy.[33] Huber and Hutchings have observed that 'contemporary scholarship of all kinds is characterized by a growing permeability of disciplinary boundaries, and the scholarship of teaching and learning is no exception. In the [teaching] commons, people from different disciplines come to find what their own discipline cannot or will not provide...'.[34] In her discussion of the tendency amongst academics to choose pedagogical methods that resonate with the traditions of investigation in their own fields, Huber says:

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[31] Healey, M. and Jenkins, A., 'Discipline-based educational development' in Heather Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) p. 54. The reference within is to Gibbs, G. 'Are the pedagogies of the discipline really different?' in Rust, C. (ed.). *Improving Student Learning Through the Disciplines: Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium.* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University 2000) p. 50.

[32] Healey, M. and Jenkins, A., 'Discipline-based educational development' in Heather Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) p. 57.

[33] Huber, M. T., 'Disciplines, Pedagogy, and Inquiry-Based Learning About Teaching', in Kreber, C. (ed.) *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 107). (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006) p. 71.

[34] Huber, M. T. and Hutchings, P., *The Advancement of Teaching and Learning: Building the Teaching Commons*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/A Carnegie Foundation Report on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), p. 70.

> Pragmatism necessarily prevails in this enterprise, however, and people from all disciplinary backgrounds have responded to the exigencies of doing classroom research by going conceptually, methodologically, and collaboratively where they might not have gone before. In the end, for most who try it out, engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning entails entering a cross-disciplinary 'trading zone' where one finds and experiments with what's on offer in other fields…Yet the transactions are not only between 'education' writ large and the disciplines. This is a zone in which mathematicians are enriching their own understanding of how to interpret student 'errors' by adapting the idea of difficulty in literary interpretation from people in English studies, where a chemist is trying out ethnographic observation, and where a microbiologist and a communications scholar are collaborating in a study of presence in online class environments. Indeed, so great are the pleasures of interacting with others engaged in serious pedagogical reflection and research that it can become something of a burden to return to one's disciplinary home to report on the journey and recruit others to join in.[35]

According to Huber and Hutchings, the trading zone:

- Embodies the fact that all fields have something to offer and to gain from trade—none has a monopoly on the teaching commons.
- Should make pedagogical researchers sensitive to the emergence of a common language for trade: 'Faculty have highly developed vocabularies, or jargons, for discussion of their disciplinary specialities. But when it comes to teaching, few disciplines have made what might best be called their "native pedagogies" fully explicit.'
- Proves that, although interdisciplinary trade enriches peda-

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[35] Huber, M. T., 'Disciplines, Pedagogy, and Inquiry-Based Learning About Teaching', in Kreber, C. (ed.) *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 107). (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006) p. 73-4. The reference to the 'trading zone' can be found in Huber, M.T. and Morreale S.P., 'Situating the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: A Cross-Disciplinary Conversation' in Huber, M. T. and Morreale, S. P. (eds.), *Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Exploring Common Ground* (Washington, D. C.: American Association for Higher Education, 2002), pp. 1-24.

> gogical research and practice, it does not lead to the loss of disciplinary identities: 'Yes, those who enter the trading zone may learn a new language that helps them think and speak more clearly about teaching and learning. They may encounter provocative new ideas…But this does not mean that the ideas they encounter will travel home unchanged.' The disciplines domesticate ideas and language from other disciplines.[36]

Pedagogical research is, then, disciplinary and interdisciplinary at once. The disciplines and the teaching commons both play an important role:

> The situation of scholars of teaching and learning with regard to their own discipline is not unlike that of scholars in other cross-disciplinary endeavors who find new colleagues and new forums for sharing and building on each others' work. Yet even as the teaching commons grows and develops its own infrastructure of cross-disciplinary conferences, journals and the like, there is growing support for pedagogical discourse in the disciplines themselves…[37]

Is lack of discipline-based pedagogical research a problem?

Existing concurrently with efforts to develop discipline-based pedagogical research is the belief within some areas of academia that the lack of discipline-based pedagogical research (in TRS and in other disciplines) is not a problem and therefore does not require a solution. The reasoning behind this claim is that methods from educational research

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[36] Huber, M. T. and Hutchings, P., *The Advancement of Teaching and Learning: Building the Teaching Common*s, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/A Carnegie Foundation Report on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005),pp. 70-71.

[37] Mary Taylor Huber, 'Disciplines, Pedagogy, and Inquiry-Based Learning About Teaching', in Kreber, C. (ed.) *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* (New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 107). (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2006) p. 74.

should simply be adopted by those in the disciplines. In this section, I look at the three important expressions of this view, and summarise the defence of discipline-specific research offered by a pioneer in this area, Ben Knights.

Wareing's arguments for generic models of educational development

A key spokesperson for those who question the value of discipline-specific pedagogical research is Wareing, who believes that disciplinary differences in pedagogy are frequently overstated in two main ways: first of all, she argues, there are many aspects of pedagogy which apply across all disciplines; secondly, discipline boundaries are in many cases social and arbitrary rather than epistemological and essential.[38] Her views in support of this are summarised here.

Evidence based on a review of Subject Centre resources
According to Wareing, in a review of Subject Centre websites and publications, there is no evidence of disciplinary differences in: principles of how students learn—models such as Bloom's taxonomy of learning appear frequently; principles of curriculum design (although she grants that discipline obviously affects the specifics); the most widely used learning and teaching methods (which are lectures, seminars, tutorials, problem classes; where activities are distinctive, such as lab work, fieldtrips or practicals, they often build on the same presumptions as the other activities); and principles of assessment.[39]

The potential of generic professional development programmes
Wareing argues that, in order to take account of the specific circumstances in which participants teach, generic professional development programmes should *and often do* deliver the following: early acknowledgement of disciplinary differences (which will also produce evidence of disciplinary similarities); encouragement for colleagues to apply all theories in their own contexts; assessment tasks rooted in disciplines and personal practice; action research; information about discipline-

[38] Wareing, S. 'Discipline-specific professional development: just branding?', *Educational Developments*, 2005, vol. 6.1., p.12.
[39] Ibid.

based pedagogic scholarship (where it exists); case studies; choices in programme which include discipline-specific activity; awareness that staff from some disciplines may dominate class discussion and small group work. Subject Centre activities may also be counted in lieu of attendance on the accredited programme if learning outcomes match up.[40] That is, generic pedagogical research does not proceed as if the disciplines are all the same, which, in Wareing's view, points to the possibility that discipline-based pedagogical research is surplus to requirements.

The untidiness of discipline groupings

Wareing uses what she perceives to be the untidiness of discipline groupings to make a case for generic pedagogical research. She argues that the sense staff have of a discipline community is based on (arbitrary) social configurations rather than epistemological common ground, and points out that it is not uncommon to have staff within a department undertaking research located on both sides of the 'pure/applied' and the 'soft'/'hard' divides. She cites the example of geography, explaining that there are geography staff whose teaching and research has more in common in method and content with that of colleagues working in politics, sociology, drama or literature studies departments than with that of members of staff in the same department who work on fossils.[41]

Scholarly benefits of generic models of educational development

There already exists a well-developed literature relating to learning and curriculum development, which has cross-disciplinary applicability.

Logistic benefits of generic models of educational development

Generic models of educational development can be led by a minimum of one educational developer (without the need for one for each department). By having an education focus rather than a discipline focus, this person may become a more experienced facilitator, more familiar with learning and teaching advancements, and more aware of institutional change issues. Generic pedagogical research can also attract sufficient

[40] Ibid. p. 13.

[41] Ibid.

numbers to be run within a higher education institution, so it can be locally and easily timetabled.

Pedagogic benefits of generic models of educational development
Generic models of educational development address principles and theories underlying learning and teaching, and concerns like widening participation, arguably common to all students and disciplines. In Wareing's experience, feedback on sessions run by educational developers is better than that given on sessions run by subject experts.

Institutional management benefits of generic models of educational development
Generic models of educational development can create an institutional culture/community of teachers, and foster institutional mission.

Sector benefits of generic models of educational development
Generic models of educational development can foster development of interdisciplinary communities with shared pedagogic values and reduce the sense of isolation for new staff who feel at odds with departmental culture.[42]

Graham Gibbs on the predominance of generic and social science based research models

Graham Gibbs is also sceptical about the value of discipline-specific models of pedagogical research . Gibbs has made the following point:

> It would be difficult to argue against the potential for richer and more varied methodologies that this approach [discipline-based pedagogical research] might offer. It might also be harsh to deny teachers from within disciplines the comfort they might feel working within familiar paradigms. However, it is not surprising that the social sciences have made most progress in making sense of student learning. These, after all, are the disciplines which have developed methodologies and theories specifically to study and explain human behaviour and performance. It would be odd, indeed,

[42] Ibid.p. 14.

> and an indictment of the social sciences, if methodologies from other disciplines proved more powerful or useful to make sense of pedagogy, whatever discipline it took place in.

He elaborates: 'Often the theories and methodologies developed by social scientists need adapting to make them even more appropriate to specific contexts, but that does not invalidate their applicability. The theory and methodology of sedimentology, in contrast, is unlikely to have much to offer to the understanding of the pedagogy of geology, however much it was adapted.' Gibbs' 'own view is that to study and improve teaching, teachers from all disciplines do have to become social scientists, to some extent, because it is an aspect of human behaviour that they are engaged in and are studying, not an aspect of, for example, sediments'.[43]

James Wisdom on the relationship between discipline-specific and generic pedagogical research

In the UK, two voices are particularly prominent in the debate about generic and discipline-specific pedagogical research: that of Ben Knights, who advocates discipline-specific pedagogical research, and that of Shân Wareing, who advocates generic methods. James Wisdom has spoken in favour of Wareing's stance.[44] According to Wisdom, the danger of failing to acknowledge the value of some generic approaches to pedagogical research is that academics may remain entrenched in the teaching of a discipline, repeating familiar patterns and practices, which may become progressively less relevant as contexts and environments change.

Wisdom notes that this is a question about how we can get to the truth; that is, it is epistemological. If disciplinary methods were sufficient for discovering the truth about one's discipline, then it would be

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[43] Gibbs, G. 'Are the pedagogies of the discipline really different?', in C. Rust (ed.), *Proceedings of the 1999 7th International Symposium Improving Student Learning: Improving Student Learning Through the Disciplines*, pp. 41-51. (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University 2000) pp. 41-51.

[44] Material taken from telephone conversations with James Wisdom on 07.06.07 and 15.06.07.

correct to pursue them, but in his opinion they are not. He thinks that the necessary research methods are simply not contained within each discipline; in his words, discipline-specific pedagogical researchers 'need to see the bigger picture'. Wisdom does not believe that distinctive research methods drawn from each of the disciplines have yet emerged.

He holds the view that academics from different disciplines customise educational research methods, using whichever tools they can access. The main difference is that some are comfortable with quantitative research while others prefer a qualitative approach. However, this is not a disciplinary difference. It is a distinction about what constitutes the uncovering of truth.

Wisdom is especially critical of what he sees as the uncontested position of the case study method in discipline-based pedagogical research. While he sees the exchange of good ideas as valuable, he posits that the implementation of such ideas is often far from simple, and advocates that more effort and research be invested in understanding change processes and evaluating the effectiveness of the case-study method.

Wisdom, himself a historian in terms of disciplinary background, challenges the widely accepted disciplinary view that educational researchers are totally separate from the disciplines. However, his view is that if you want to establish usable truth in educational research, you have to master that area. Dialogue between disciplines, and with educational developers, is likely to be a necessary part of disciplinary development.

Wisdom welcomes the Subject Centre network's attempts to encourage academics to work beyond their disciplines. In his opinion, the Subject Centres should serve as a platform to enable academics to move among the disciplines, acquiring pedagogical tools and methods in the process and producing desperately-needed high quality educational research. Unfortunately, though, in his view, educational research emerging from the disciplines at present is of limited applicability. He claims that very little of it is speaking to the wider community in the way the wider community can hear, although it may indeed be useful in a practical sense within the discipline.

Ben Knights on the epistemological value of discipline-based pedagogical research[45]

Knights acknowledges that his view that 'pedagogic research in the Humanities is in the business of opening the doors of awareness as much as creating empirical knowledge' raises questions of the epistemological status of what is produced. By defending the right of disciplinary pedagogical research to lack an empirical basis, Knights does little to dispel Wisdom's concerns about the epistemological value of this kind of research. To the question 'What kind of truth claims can be made by pedagogic research derived from Humanities disciplines?', he responds:

> Clearly we can generate or commission the gathering of evidence of the kind associated with quantitative as well as qualitative schools of social research. Equally we can write more or less theorised case studies of modules or initiatives. But the kind of research and writing suggested here is usually I think more of an appeal to praxis, with a lot in common with the 1980s enthusiasm for the 'reflective practitioner'. Perhaps what we can do through our own kinds of gathering of evidence, reading of situations, devising and applying explanatory theories is overtly offer them as heuristic materials which rely for any truth value they have on teachers trying them out in their own practice, or reading their own experience within a theoretical framework.

Knights grants that much of what has been written on pedagogy from within the disciplines has been expressly pragmatic, appealing to teachers' experience. He thus likens it to small-scale action research.

Whilst academics in TRS departments may appreciate this approach, educational researchers would be likely to have serious reservations, which could potentially lead to an unhelpful polarisation of discipline-based and generic pedagogical research. The opinions of Wisdom as regards discipline-based pedagogical research portend the truth of this claim. However, to see the advantages offered by the disciplinary approach Knights has pioneered, it is necessary to look a little more closely at his methods.

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[45] Much of this material is taken from an email and attached documents from Ben Knights dated 27.04.07.

A closer look at discipline-based pedagogical research: the experiences of other humanities subjects

In this section, I will look more closely at experiences of pedagogical research in two humanities subjects which have relatively developed pedagogical research traditions: English and history. I have chosen to reflect on these disciplines because this will permit comparisons with TRS, since all are humanities subjects and all are text-based. The point is to identify methods and practices which have been developed and applied in pedagogical research in English and history and to determine whether the same or similar methods could be used to advance discipline-specific pedagogical research in TRS.

English

More so than any other humanities subject, English has developed pedagogical research methods based on the practices and patterns of the discipline. This is due in large part to the efforts of the English Subject Centre, and in particular to the enthusiasm for discipline-based pedagogical research of Ben Knights, its director. In an email, Knights described the relationship between the research practices of disciplines and their pedagogy is 'an immensely important area, and one that we have done a lot of work on at the ESC [English Subject Centre]'.

An overview of discipline-specific pedagogical research in English

English appears particularly well-situated to elicit and exploit pedagogical methods from its disciplinary research and practices. According to the English Subject Centre's website, English already contains a strong reflexive pedagogic element[46] and is rich with conceptual languages for

[46] See **http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/events/event_detail.php?event_index=38**

the understanding and enhancement of learning.[47] As Knights says in a document written in the aftermath of a series of meetings about pedagogic research initiatives between the humanities Subject Centres a number of years ago,

> Broadly speaking, the preoccupations of the community with the performative nature of text and discourse, and in reading and comprehension as active processes, provide starting places for forms of work which would in many ways blur the conventional distinction between subject and pedagogic research activity. Implicit in all this is that the English community could do more than it does at present to develop these as equipment for carrying out pedagogic research in ways that might perhaps be helpful to other disciplinary communities as well… A glance at the particular problems of English suggests fruitful areas of enquiry.[48]

English, to the extent that the discipline is represented by the Subject Centre, appears to be appreciative of the fact that academics are more likely to embark upon pedagogical research and approach it with the same level of seriousness as they would disciplinary research if they can be shown that there is a relation between the research practices of disciplines and their pedagogy. Of particular value to TRS is the fact that pedagogical research scholars from English have expressed a will to share their thoughts on pedagogical research with other disciplines.[49]

However, according to their website, the English Subject Centre is not arguing for an insular dismissal of work carried out by educational researchers within social science paradigms: 'That is a tradition of work which English lecturers should respect and from which we all have much to learn.' The website explains that 'We certainly don't want to collude in a sense of superiority towards all "generic" materials. There's some good stuff out there.' It continues: 'We believe it is important that research on learning and teaching should remain plural, and not

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[47] See **http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/scholarship/invite.php**

[48] This document was attached to the email from Knights dated 27.04.07.

[49] Jones, K., McLean, M., Amigoni, D. and Kinsman, M. 'Investigating the Production of University English in Mass Higher Education: Towards an Alternative Methodology', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, (2005), 4; p.262.

dominated by any one school or tradition'; the idea is that the traffic between educational research and English can and should be two-way.[50]

To summarise, the English Subject Centre advocates methodological pluralism in pedagogical research, which is an approach that accommodates both empiricism and non-empirical methods. Knights feels that 'there is no reason why humanities people should not sometimes seek empirical evidence either confirming or contesting our practices. It can be productive and sobering to set our conventional working knowledge alongside the understandings that derive from a tradition of empirical educational research.' Moreover, says Knights, 'in its curiosity about the inferencing work of readers and listeners, English does have much in common with the constructivist tradition in education.' Knights' view is that 'a healthy and plural pedagogic research can be fed from Humanities as well as from Social Science streams', but that because the latter is so well developed, there needs to be more focus on the former. It is not a case of allowing discipline-based pedagogical models to monopolise pedagogical research but nor is it a case of academics in the humanities academics ceding 'the territory to vacuous technicist progressivism'.

Aspects of English discipline-specific pedagogical methods that are potentially transferable from English to TRS

Textual analysis

Pedagogical models from English are potentially transferable to TRS because both are text-based. As the website of the English Subject Centre points out, traditions of textual analysis on the one hand, or linguistic analysis on the other, provide powerful tools for the analysis of the group process.[51]

Historical analysis

The historical focus of TRS also increases the likelihood of transferability of pedagogical methods from English to TRS. The English

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[50] See **http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/scholarship/invite.php**

[51] See **http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/scholarship/invite.php**

Subject Centre's website suggests that histories of the subject can be developed into accounts of the shaping of the identity of the learner.[52]

Drawing on methods from the speculative to the empirical

The English Subject Centre's pedagogical research web pages bear out the point made by Knights that 'In English there is a spectrum which runs from the more speculative / theoretical through to empirical forms of research'.[53] An example of empirical pedagogical research in English is the videoing project being run at Keele University by the English Subject Centre. An early write up[54] outlines the methodology of this project: the video recording of seminars, followed by the close reading of discursive practices therein through the lens of theories about dialogue and communication. There is also a meta-methodology too, in that the person teaching the seminar is viewed as a rhetor, applying the rhetorical method to their teaching. The article explains: according to the Aristotelian definition, rhetoric is 'speech designed to persuade'; that is, to affect an audience and to effect particular actions. To do so, the rhetor (the teacher in the case of pedagogical research) has to discover available means of persuasion and link them to strategies appropriate to situation (in this case, the seminar) and purpose: 'Rhetoric thus stems first from the speaker's reading of the audience and the suasive challenge they present, and secondly from his/her ability to utilize communicational resources appropriately.'[55]

Both methods—the video-recording and the employment of rhetoric as a pedagogical tool—are potentially transferable to TRS, particularly since many TRS courses are also seminar-based. It is interesting—and presumably empowering for academics, regardless of their disciplinary affiliation—that a feature of this methodology is that the

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[52] Ibid.

[53] In his email of 27.04.07.

[54] Jones, K., McLean, M., Amigoni, D. and Kinsman, M. 'Investigating the Production of University English in Mass Higher Education: Towards an Alternative Methodology', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, (2005), 4; p. 262.

[55] Ibid., p. 253.

academics whose teaching provides the subject material become researchers. This is one way to forge relationships between pedagogical and disciplinary research, and as such would be more palatable to many TRS scholars than methods from the social sciences.

Research as 'reading'

In the document written after the meetings between humanities Subject Centres, Knights writes that the idea of 'reading' is helpful in developing humanities-based pedagogical research models. He elaborates by way of a question: 'Given that alongside generating new knowledge a considerable part of what Humanities disciplines do is re-interpret or trace new significances in existing knowledges, how might we "read" the performances through which we model or demonstrate "doing" our subject in the classroom?' He goes on to explain that in English the idea that the group could in some ways be 'read' in the same way as a text was fundamental to the pedagogic action research project DUET (the Development of University English Teaching Project) at the University of East Anglia in 1979.[56] It is not difficult to envisage the use of similar methods in TRS.

Narrative research

According to Knights, most varieties of English care vigorously about narrative. He explains: this could go well beyond questions of how English tutors 'tell the story' of their teaching day, to exploring modules or programmes as narrative: the structuring of their characteristic events in time, and their shaping into beginnings, middles and ends; hero, victim or helper roles, the teacher as realist narrator, and so on.[57] One way in which the narrative approach could be useful in TRS is by providing a way of analysing module handbooks and of conceptualising the teacher-student relationship (hero/victim/helper roles and so on). The 'Editor's Note' from a 2004 edition of *Teaching Theology and Religion* suggests also that there already exists among TRS academics the practice of reading one's own teaching career as a narrative. According to its author, telling one's story as a teacher has

[56] In his email of 27.04.07.

[57] Ibid.

become a familiar and often profoundly moving ritual in many Wabash Center[58] consultations and workshops.[59]

Cultural materialist analysis

Knights also claims that an approach which draws on the analytic repertoire of cultural studies would also be within the remit of the humanities (cultural studies being a domain which has to an even greater extent than English practised the art of creative pilfering from other disciplines). Such a cultural materialist approach would involve decoding the meanings inherent in pedagogic and institutional cultures.[60]

Discourse analysis

According to Knights, from language studies could come critical discourse analysis, and the methods for recording and analysing the languages of the classroom—the negotiation and establishment of footing, of dominance and submission, turn-taking, the handling of questions and interruptions, the assignment of roles in terms of gender or age. Critical linguistics can, he writes, also be powerfully applied to institutional documents like module handbooks.[61] These methods may also apply in TRS, but it should be borne in mind that linguistics has not had a role in the history of these traditions which is comparable with the role it has played in English.

Analogical thinking

All varieties of English draw on 'analogical thinking' and are deeply immersed in the study of metaphor, and the analysis of figurative language.[62] The metaphorical world of the classroom and of educational rhetoric would also be of interest to TRS scholars, though considerable work would have to be done before any firm associations could be made.

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[58] The Indiana-based Wabash Centre promotes and supports the scholarship of teaching and learning amongst TRS teachers. See **http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/home/default.aspx**

[59] Foster, Charles R. 'Editor's Note', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, Oct 2004, vol. 7, 4, pp.179-80 at p. 179.

[60] In his email of 27.04.07

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

Novelist readings

Knights believes that 'subject-inflected pedagogic research might be seen as bearing some correspondence with the novel itself: as so to speak a prosthesis that enables us to articulate and enter into dialogue over the meaning of the experience of learning…In weaving webs of pedagogic research, might we not be involved in the same kind of activity as the novelist?'[63]

Methodological borrowing

Though it is not strictly a pedagogical method, the fact that English has, according to Knights, a 'piratical[64] tendency to pillage other disciplines could be instructive for theology and religious studies.' Knights explains:

> The literature community in particular has over the years created a magpie's nest of shiny intellectual objects snaffled from linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and the more theoretically flamboyant (or less empiricist) enclaves of history. In the last few years the new cognitive neuro-science has given rise to the domain of cognitive poetics. Much of what English might care to deploy in creating forms of pedagogic research rests on borrowings to whose new use the original owners might reasonably object.[65]

There seems to be no reason why TRS could not likewise pillage from other disciplines (religious studies could look to anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis; theology to English, history, philosophy), in the name of methodological pluralism, with a view to the advancement of pedagogical research.

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Using the work of others without authorisation. Compare with Paul Hyland's description of historians as methodological 'cherry pickers' (see 6b) below) (Hyland was Co- Director of History in the Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology from 2000-2007). It seems that pedagogical research in TRS could adopt a similar posture of methodological pluralism.

[65] Appendix to email of 27.04.07.

History[66]

Although pedagogical research in history is relatively well developed, there do not exist equivalent resources for developing a transferable model of pedagogical research from disciplinary research in history as there do for developing one from English research practices. There also seems to be less enthusiasm for such a model amongst historians. Alan Booth, the Co-Director of History in the Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology from 2000-2007, does not believe that historians will in the future explore the possibility of developing pedagogical research methods unique to history. Notwithstanding this, he predicts that historians will point their attention to pedagogical research in particular ways, reflecting the skills they are trained in as historians—this may mean, for example, paying attention to the origins of educational artefacts, processes and events, and to cause and effect in an educational setting—and that they will proceed with the interpretative, qualitative methodologies already in use in history, whilst translating the language from educational research for use by historians.

Paul Hyland, the Co-Director, with Booth, of History in the Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology from 2000-2007, believes that there does not yet exist a theory of learning in history or in fact in any subject. Echoing this, Booth states, reflecting on the English narrative approach, that all disciplines tell stories; the difference exists in the way the narrative is looked at. English scholars will look at narrative in one way (perhaps in terms of language structure) and historians will look at it in another (perhaps in terms of origins and lineage, asking questions like: where does this educational practice come from? What is its history?). And so, there may be different approaches to narrative within the disciplines, but all use the narrative method, meaning that this is not a distinctively *English* method of pedagogical research. Whilst he can see the appeal of citing a distinctive subject-specific method, he believes that history, with its eclectic approach to research and its methods, requires a pluralistic approach.

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66 These reflections are based on telephone conversations and emails with Paul Hyland and Alan Booth, neither of whom is at the History Subject Centre any more, but both of whom have researched and written extensively on teaching history in higher education.

He advises TRS to decide whether it wants to establish its own method or whether it is comfortable with an eclectic approach to pedagogical research, in the manner of history.

Notwithstanding the absence of a uniquely historical approach to pedagogical research, Booth does concur that historians utilise methods from historical research to conduct pedagogical research. He explains that pedagogical research in history in both the UK and the US uses the same standards of rigour as are expected of ordinary historical research, that it adopts 'the same sort of interpretative methodologies',[67] and that it uses a minimum of jargon. Both Booth and Hyland report that few historians are using undoctored social science methods to conduct pedagogical research. Booth claims that historians are reluctant to use these methods directly because they do not feel confident doing so. He notes the example of social and cultural historians, who are using social science methods but who are customising them by imposing the methods and language of history upon them in order to make them more accessible to historians. This development is potentially enlightening for theologians, who would likewise find social science research methods more intellectually palatable were they stripped of jargon and imbued with the characteristics of humanities research. Religious studies academics are something of a different case in this regard, having more familiarity with social science methods than their theologian counterparts.[68] In his opinion, rather than fearing capitulation to social science methods, theologians should be awakened to the fact that these methods can be customised in order to allow the disciplines to ask and answer the kind of questions relevant to them. There are good reasons to believe that it would be more realistic and a better

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[67] It is worth bearing in mind that the interpretative approach used by pedagogical researchers in history—which would also be resonant with the experiences of TRS academics—is not regarded by historians as a method unique to pedagogical research in history, insofar as the opinions of Booth (expressed during our phone call of 15.06.07) are representative.

[68] Time constraints precluded research into pedagogical research in theology and religious studies as—arguably—distinct disciplines. Consequently, a number of the points which are made in this article apply more to theology— my disciplinary background—than to religious studies. A study which analyses the practice and potential of pedagogical research in each of the disciplines in turn, theology and religious studies, would be extremely useful to interested parties.

use of time for TRS academics to exploit resources from educational research and translate them for use by colleagues within their discipline than to invest resources in developing unique disciplinary methods of pedagogical research.

Similarly, and notwithstanding his view that history has not developed a distinctive method of pedagogical research based on methods and practices from within the discipline, Hyland does not know of any historians who are turning to traditional social scientific educational research methods to carry out pedagogical research. He describes historians as 'cherry pickers' who operate with pedagogical tools and methods from a variety of sources. The lack of recourse to social science methods means that pedagogical research in history is not considered sufficiently sophisticated by educationalists to warrant the title 'educational research'. Hyland describes the process of persuading historians to read pedagogical research before writing their own articles on pedagogy as 'an uphill struggle' and he identifies the language barrier as a major factor contributing to this. He agrees with educational researchers that in order to undertake pedagogical research, historians should develop some familiarity with educational research methods,[69] but he also thinks that generic educational theory acquires meaning only with disciplinary application. The problem as he sees it is that pedagogical researchers in the disciplines are 'stuck in the middle', looking for a way to relate the generic theory to the discipline. This same point could be applied across the subject board, and certainly to TRS.

Special issues unique to TRS

In this section, I will outline the special issues and particular problems unique to the study of TRS. I will do so with a view to using this information and that gleaned from the overview of pedagogical research methodologies and pedagogical research in English and history, in order to reach conclusions in the next and final section of this report as regards the methodologies which may prove useful to those conducting pedagogical research in the context of TRS.

[69] The opinions of Hyland and Booth vis-à-vis educational research accord with those of James Wisdom to a greater extent than they do with those of Ben Knights.

Insider/outsider issues

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statement identifies an 'ability to understand how people have thought and acted in contexts other than…[their] own' as one of the qualities of mind that a TRS student should acquire in the course of their studies.[70] This portends the insider/outsider problem, which, as Kim Knott explains, revolves around the question of who can reliably understand and present a religion. That is, can we ever fully understand someone else's experience?[71] According to Russell T. McCutcheon, the insider/outsider problem 'is perhaps the most crucial theoretical and methodological issue that confronts the student of human behaviour and culture today'.[72] He explains:

> In a nutshell, the problem is whether, and to what extent, someone can study, understand, or explain the beliefs, words, or actions of another. In other words, to what degree, if any, are the motives and meanings of human behaviors and beliefs accessible to the researcher who may not necessarily share these beliefs and who does not necessarily participate in these practices? Do students of culture have virtually unimpeded access to the intentions and meanings of the people, societies, or institutions they study or, to take the contrary view, are all human observers cut off from ever being able to see past their own biases, contexts and presuppositions?[73]

Similarly, Eric J. Sharpe argues that the most persistent methodological concern in the study of religions is the religious allegiance (or lack of it) of the student: does the student function best as an insider or an outsider? To this one can only answer that the insider knows by expe-

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[70] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 3.2 (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007). See **http://www.qaa.ac.uk/search/publications/details.asp?Ctr_ID=557**

[71] Reflections by Kim Knott in 'Insider/outsider perspectives' in Hinnells, John R. (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 243-258 at p. 243.

[72] McCutcheon, Russell T. (ed.), *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), from the back cover.

[73] Ibid., p. 2.

rience what to the outsider is mere conjecture: the 'insider' is allowed access to 'mysteries' which remain barred to the uninitiated. On the mundane level of such things as history and geography, on the other hand, the outsider may be the better informed of the two. Sharpe warns: 'Whether the outsider can enter imaginatively into the insider's "spiritual experience" is extremely doubtful.'[74]

However, as Knott explains, some scholars are urging a move away from the insider/outsider dichotomy towards a reconceptualisation of the study of religion so that academics are no longer compelled to compartmentalise the world of faith and the world of scholarship.[75] McCutcheon echoes this when he remarks that in recent years there has been a revolution in the way scholars conceive of themselves in relation to the people they study which has entailed a rethinking of the opposition between insiders and outsiders, subjects and objects. He explains that scholars are questioning the limits of the subject, the limits of the object, and whether anyone can attain neutrality when it comes to studying human behaviour. The question is: where does the detached observer begin and the observed subject end? That is, is the gap between the two as apparent as many have assumed, or is it merely an illusion, constructed and maintained by writers in an effort to generate authority through supposed objectivity? If it is the latter, writes McCutcheon, we might no longer talk about solving the insider/outsider problem as much as deconstructing it. This position is called reflexivity.[76]

Faith versus scholarship/commitment versus non-commitment including reference to the problems inherent in text-based studies

The QAA Benchmark Statement for TRS acknowledges that 'the nature of theology and religious studies means that studying the subject

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[74] Sharpe, Eric J. 'The Study of Religion in Historical Perspective' in Hinnells, J. R. (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, (Routledge: Oxford and New York 2005) p.42.

[75] Knott, K. 'Insider/outsider perspectives', in Hinnells J. R. (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, pp. 243-258. (Routledge: Oxford and New York 2005).

[76] McCutcheon, *The Insider/Outsider Problem*, p. 289 (introduction to the fifth part).

may have a profound impact on the student's life and outlook'.[77] The statement continues: 'Critical analysis may destabilise profoundly held convictions producing sharp rejection of academic study, but may also stimulate real engagement with contemporary concerns'.[78]

According to Philip L. Tite, a pervasive, yet under-discussed, problem in religious studies classrooms is the presence of faith crisis. He claims that many students face a type of cognitive dissonance when confronted with the critical-analytical approach in the academic study of religion.[79] Kate Crosby, Stephen Pattison and Andrew Skilton have noted that in no other subject than TRS does the academic agenda confront so fundamental an aspect of the individual's identity. When experienced as such, this confrontation can lead students to suspend critical judgement and withdraw from the academic process to protect their faith, or to focus on 'safe subjects'. On the other hand, it may lead to their alienation from their own faith background, even to the transferring of their faith on to the academic process as a substitute world-view. Crosby, Pattison and Skilton thus conclude that these responses mean that the academic study of the subject can lead to the very opposite of the explicitly intended outcome: the suppression rather than the mastery of a critical approach.[80] In addition, they point out that although concerns—about answering questions, lacking understanding, looking stupid—might be commonplace in any lecture theatre, TRS adds a further layer of anxiety for students, connected with the fear of exposing very personal aspects of oneself to an audience that is not necessarily sympathetic; potentially misrepresenting their beliefs in a context where statements cannot easily be recovered or withdrawn, or, on the other hand, offending against the anticipated beliefs of others, including the lecturer.[81]

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[77] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 1.13.

[78] Ibid., 1.14.

[79] Tite, P. L. 'On the Necessity of Crisis: A Reflection on Pedagogical Conflict and the Academic Study of Religion', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, (2003), vol. 6, 2, pp. 76–84.

[80] Crosby K., Pattison S., and Skilton, A., 'Project Report: "Supporting Questioning in Theology and Religious Studies"', *The PRS-LTSN Journal*, Summer 2003, vol. 2, 1, pp. 58-89 at p. 59.

[81] Ibid.

According to the QAA Benchmark Statement, students are required to 'read and use texts both critically and empathetically, while addressing such questions as genre, content, perspective, purpose, original and potential meaning, and the effect of translation if the text is not read in the original language'.[82] Apart from the problem of accessing texts in their original language, text-based teaching and learning (on which TRS is, to a large extent, based) also presents particular dilemmas for students of faith because religious beliefs can be challenged by the historical-critical study of scriptures. As regards the Judeo-Christian tradition, according to Roger Newell, there are two irreconcilable approaches to reading the Bible which often collide in a TRS undergraduate's first academic experiences. Religious students find the scholarly approach a disappointment compared with their preferred way of reading, but upon closer examination the limits of an exclusively devotional way or an exclusively academic way soon become apparent.[83]

On a different but related topic, John K. Simmons discusses the pedagogical dilemma of maintaining neutrality in the TRS classroom. He feels that spiritual guidance emerges naturally in the academic study of religion, and that teachers should accept this. Simmons has developed a pragmatic teaching strategy, neutral enthusiasm, which he believes preserves the neutrality of classroom presentation in religious studies courses, yet recognizes the unavoidable evocative power present in the intellectual territory that is religion.[84]

Self-disclosure and emotion

Of all academic subjects, the study of theology and religion arguably demands the greatest degree of self-disclosure from students. Some teachers have harnessed the emotive potential of the subject and constructed teaching exercises around it. Theresa O'Donovan recounts a

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[82] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 3.2.

[83] Newell, R. 'Teaching the Bible along the Devotional/Academic Faultline: An Incarnational Approach to the Quarrel between Love and Knowledge', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, (Oct 2003), vol. 6, 4, pp. 190–197.

[84] Simmons, J. K.'Vanishing Boundaries: When Teaching About Religion Becomes Spiritual Guidance in the Classroom', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, (Jan 2006), vol. 9, 1, pp.37-43.

course she taught in which students were asked to address course content in anything but an essay. She realised that the assignment required her students to temporarily leave the safe ground of distanced rationality and to approach the material differently. She recalls that students often became passionately engaged with the material, which added a risk factor to this research, because tears and anger can (and did in this case) ensue. The risk to the student is on the level of self-disclosure. The risk to the instructor is encapsulated by the question: how does (s)he contextualise the submissions of individual students such that they are respectful to the other students and also serve the interests of the class as a whole? O'Donovan admits that it is not always possible to achieve this.[85]

Similarly, Stephen R. Haynes recommends the method of strategic self-disclosure—the practice of revealing one's own orientation toward a subject matter, a discipline, or the institutional context in which teaching and learning take place—to create the conditions for community and student transformation in the classroom. Haynes is also realistic about the inherent risks. Self-disclosure can, he writes, permanently alter the classroom environment and may tap into the teacher's insecurities.[86]

Absence of an agreed methodology

Mike Fearn and Leslie Francis have made the point that the absence of core subject matter in TRS may be causally related to the absence of a universally agreed methodology. Linguists, historians, sociologists, archaeologists, philosophers, and psychologists may all find themselves teaching in TRS departments.[87] The QAA Benchmark Statement affirms this: 'Much of the excitement of the discipline lies in its contested nature. What should or should not be regarded as belonging to

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[85] O'Donovan, T., 'Doing It Differently: Unleashing Student Creativity', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, July 2003, vol. 6, 3, pp. 159–163 at p.162.

[86] Haynes, S. R. 'How Clearly Must I See? Art and Ethics in Pedagogical Practice', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, (Oct 2001), vol. 4, 3, pp. 133–140 (abstract).

[87] Fearn, M. and Francis, L. J. 'From A-level to Higher Education: Student Perceptions of Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religious Studies', *Discourse*, Spring 2004, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 58-91at p. 61.

the subject, what methods should be used, the different results that come from adopting different presuppositions—these are some of the issues.'[88] Though the lack of an agreed methodology is indeed challenging and thought-provoking, it does present particular issues which may lead to academic dispute and fragmentation.

Guarded attitudes to empiricism

The views of Stephen Pattison are representative of the attitude of a number of theologians toward empirical methods which could, if developed and applied to pedagogy, provide an impetus to the formulation of TRS-specific pedagogical research methods. According to Pattison, in the academy, there exists an implicit reductionism which implies that the less a discourse of activity is science-like, the less legitimacy it has. Pattison claims that scientistic thinking and empirical methods are gradually restructuring the arts and humanities, including practical theology, as they seep in from the social sciences.[89] In Pattison's view, aspects of scientific thought and method are of value for practical theology but, ultimately, practical theology must defend itself against a paradigm take over by quasi-scientific methods by clarifying its own identity and purpose.[90]

Pattison feels that a number of losses may emerge if practical theology—and presumably this could be applied to other branches of theology—capitulates to empiricism. One is 'the fetishism of facts'. He explains: we collect so much data and facts that what is needed is not more data, but connections between and insights into the significance of facts, since we do not know what to do with them.[91] Connected to this is Pattison's theory that in a wholesale empirical model, knowledge supplants judgement.[92] Similarly, he argues that the hegemony of 'sci-

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[88] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 2.2.

[89] This is also arguably true in the case of religious studies, which Eric J. Sharpe describes as a discipline in which theologians have retreated – or at least redefined themselves – and the social sciences have come to the fore (see Sharpe, 'The Study of Religion in Historical Perspective', p. 43).

[90] Stephen Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology: Selected Essays* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), p. 264.

[91] Ibid., p. 276.

[92] Ibid., pp. 276-77.

entific' knowledge encourages narrowness and specification so that researchers know more and more about less and less. However, Pattison points out that if practical theology becomes too narrowly preoccupied with empirically understanding the details of theology, though it may have become more 'doable', finite and explicit, it may lose the very elements which render it valuable to humanity; understanding, for example, that which is of ultimate significance for existence but which cannot easily be treated of in propositional as opposed to creative terms.[93] Pattison also claims that social science empiricism will make practical theologians, who should be engaged in speculative, risky work, defensive and constrained in their concerns.[94] In addition, he points to the decline of narrative-based research and concern about worldviews and discourse which accompanies the move towards empiricism, arguing that, as a discipline that depends on communal and individual stories and which prioritises interpretation, practical theology should not easily surrender to rational instrumentalism based on 'hard' evidence.[95] Finally, Pattison claims that capitulation to empiricism would lead to the loss of subjectivity, insight, wisdom, intuition and the intrinsically valuable and interesting in practical theology.[96]

Pattison, who claims that he is not opposed to the use of empirical methods in practical theology per se, argues that, in order to defend against a complete turn to the empirical, practical theology must adhere to a notion of itself as a discipline of interpretation, wisdom and understanding, resisting demands to become empirically and technologically based.[97] In his words, contemplation, rumination, reverie, hovering attention—perhaps even hovering inattention—need to be valued more highly as main constitutive methods in practical theology. For Pattison, a combination of the empirical and the reflective represents the optimum way of trying to engage in wise and creative activity.[98]

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[93] Ibid., pp. 277-78.
[94] Ibid., pp. 278-79.
[95] Ibid., pp. 279-80.
[96] Ibid., p. 280.
[97] Ibid., p. 282.
[98] Ibid., p. 285.

Pedagogical research methods for use in TRS

Presuming that it would be advantageous for TRS to develop a model of discipline-specific pedagogical research which could be used in parallel with methods gleaned from educational research and from other disciplines, and bearing in mind current models and practices in both generic and humanities-specific pedagogical research and the special issues involved in the study of TRS, there are a number of channels along which this model could develop. These are outlined below.

Qualitative surveys

Questionnaires and interviews, including focus groups (which are similar to the seminar method of teaching in TRS), which are also used in TRS research per se, are a potential method for pedagogical research in TRS, but the semi- or unstructured rather than the structured kind would better suit the temperament and outlook of the subject.

Case studies, which may often employ the qualitative survey method, could be an important method in pedagogical research in TRS, since they are ideally suited to small-scale research (and pedagogical research in TRS is certainly small-scale at the moment, not least as a result of a lack of funding). The ethnographic method popular in religious studies embraces the case study approach.

Quantitative surveys

Although the methods which can be used to resolve the special issues involved in teaching and learning in TRS will inevitably—because of the nature of the subject—primarily be qualitative, questionnaires (for example, student feedback forms) may be of use.

Content analysis

That this is a quantitative method means that it will be rejected out of hand by some TRS academics, despite the fact that it could be used to produce empirical pedagogical research in their subject. One possible approach would be to use this method to analyse module handbooks.

This would be a fitting response to critics (chiefly educational researchers) who accuse subject-specific pedagogical research of a lack of sophistication. Insofar as content analysis deals also with the identification of themes, dispositions, ideologies and beliefs, it is a method in which TRS academics are already well-versed. Though this may not be recognised at first, content analysis has, then, the dual advantage of being an approach which is familiar and which at the same time allows TRS academics to address educational researchers' criticisms of pedagogical research in the disciplines.

Documentary analysis (including literature reviews)

TRS scholars spend much of their time engaged in documentary analysis, making this an obvious choice of method for pedagogical research in the discipline. Its appeal for this group would be further enhanced by the fact that it has not been monopolised by social scientists. These considerations apply to both primary and secondary documentary analysis, and also to archival research.[99] Conceptual analysis, a form of documentary analysis which is interested in ideas and their contested meanings, and with how this affects our understandings of the world, would also accord with the outlook of this discipline, since interpretations and worldviews are amongst its central concerns. In support of this, the QAA Benchmark Statement identifies exploration of the interface between TRS and literature, and engagement with critical analysis of data and arguments, as belonging to the academic standards of the subject.[100]

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[99] Jane Hicks interviewed a group of seven archival researchers working in religious studies, six of whom advocated the use of archives early in the study of religion. They claimed that the use of archives would make history come alive for the students and arouse their interest in religion. Hicks argues that, exposed to the sorts of documents and effects housed in archives, students undertake the construction of academic knowledge for themselves and gain better understanding of the nature and limits of our discipline. She also feels that archives develop students' historical consciousness, bringing the past to life and inviting immediate and creative engagement in ways that can resonate with theological significance (see Jane E. Hicks, '"I Wasn't Prepared for the Emotion": Archival Research in Religious and Theological Studies', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, (Feb 2003), vol. 6, no.1, pp. 43-47 at p. 46).

[100] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 1.2.

In practical terms, documentary analysis could be used in pedagogical research in TRS to assess module handbooks (a researcher could, for instance, compare all module handbooks for Judaism in the UK), lecture handouts, curricula, student essays (although this kind of research has ethical implications) and university websites.

Qualified evidence-based practice

As discussed previously, pedagogical research is increasingly characterised by a 'what works?' agenda. By way of background to this surge of interest in evidence-based practice, I will appeal to Yorke's theory of gradation of educational interpretations. At one end of Yorke's scale lie the relatively narrow, predominantly instrumental, focuses on the practice of teaching, learning and assessment, and how they might be made more effective/efficient.[101] Pedagogical research here is empirical—even technicist—in character, and is concerned with 'what works' or 'what might work better'. Yorke's theory is supported by Angela Brew, who notes that, following the medical model, there are now growing demands for well-argued empirical evidence of the impacts and effectiveness of educational interventions and changes.[102]

Although educational research continues to be directed by the 'what works' agenda, a number of pedagogical researchers are urging caution vis-à-vis evidence-based practice. Yorke maintains that the evidence-based approach risks disconnection with theory, arguing that there is danger in an uncritical acceptance of 'what works', since circumstances vary in education. Returning to his theory of gradation, he explains that the other end of the scale from evidence-based practice is a more encompassing perspective within whose scope anything that might influence teaching, learning and assessment might be found. Within this broader vision, philosophical, sociological and psycholog-

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[101] Yorke, M., 'Pedagogical Research in UK Higher Education: an Emerging Policy Framework' in Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) pp. 104-116, at p. 105.

[102] Brew, A. 'The Future of Research and Scholarship in Academic Development' in Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) pp. 165-181 at p 179.

ical conceptions about values, conditions and purposes will be made apparent, he claims, in a way not often appreciated by the narrowly-focused empiricist.[103] Similarly, Brew warns that it would be naive to assume that medical models of evidence-based practice can be readily applied in the higher education context. She believes that 'academic developers will need to develop new ideas and models of evidence-based practice applicable to their profession'.[104] The challenge for TRS disciplines is to decide where on the gradation scale their pedagogical research should lie.

Practitioner-centred research

Practitioner-centred research aims to improve professional practice by adding to the store of usable knowledge of professional practice. According to Webber, Bourner and O'Hara, the strengths of this methodology lie in the ownership of the research by practitioners. They point out that, in contrast to action research, the research process in practitioner-centred research is managed by the academic practitioner, focusing on their own practice rather than that of an outside professional researcher. The idea is that practising professionals are in a privileged position in engaging in the process as they are able to test out and refine their ideas through application to their own professional practice. Webber, Bourner and O'Hara continue: once clear that the idea can work, the practising professionals are in a position to disseminate the research in a way that will enable other practitioners in their field to experiment with, evaluate and possibly adopt the new development. The individual and contextualised nature of practitioner-centred research means that personal learning can be converted into useful professional knowledge.[105] However, caution must be urged. Potential drawbacks stem from the subjective nature of the research and the fact that, in contrast to action research, there is no built-in scrutiny.[106]

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[103] Yorke, M., 'Pedagogical Research in UK Higher Education: an Emerging Policy Framework' in Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) pp. 104-116, at p. 105.

[104] Brew, A. *The Nature of Research: Inquiry in Academic Contexts*. (London: RoutledgeFalmer 2001). p. 179.

Consequently, practitioner research is dismissed in some academic circles as uncritical.

Action research

According to Hutchings, the scholarship of teaching and learning 'is characterised by a transformational agenda'.[107] That agenda—to foster long-lasting student learning—is exemplified by action research. The QAA Benchmark Statement states that the study of theology and religion should provide 'opportunities for critical involvement in changing the way things are',[108] which suggests a role for action research both in research into TRS as a subject and in pedagogical research undertaken by subject practitioners. Action research is particularly relevant to TRS, since these disciplines encourage self-reflection and self-disclosure and challenge current mindsets, including faith stances. Similarly, since, according to Kemmis, informal criteria for evaluation may be more suitable than formalistic and overtly 'theoretical' ones in action research, because this method is actually practised by teachers in their own social process,[109] it would appeal particularly to TRS academics whose reluctance to undertake pedagogical research stems from an assumption that it is dominated by social science empiricism. In addition, because the data analysis techniques in action research are similar to those used by an interpretative researcher in

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[105] Webber, T., Bourner, T. and O'Hara, S.'Practitioner-centred research on academic development in higher education' in Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) pp. 117-128 at p. 127.

[106] Brew, A. 'The Future of Research and Scholarship in Academic Development' in Eggins, H. and Macdonald, R. (eds.), *The Scholarship of Academic Development*,. (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press 2003) pp. 165-181 at p 179.

[107] Hutchings, 'Introduction', in Hutchings, P. (ed.) *Opening Lines: Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2000) p. 8.

[108] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 1.2.

[109] Kemmis, S. 'Action Research' in Husén, T. and Neville Postlethwaite, T. (eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edn. (New York: Elsevier Science Incorporated 1994) pp. 35-42.

history or ethnography, they would also be familiar to TRS academics, who utilise interpretative methodologies in their research.

In this vein, Pring believes that the solution to the language problem is to make teachers themselves the researchers, rather than the object of research as is the standard practice. He favours action research, which he regards as an ideal way to bridge the gap between research and teaching, since it is practical. He envisages a world in which research could inform educational practice not in the sense of dictating how and what teachers should teach, but as:

> a set of hypotheses…constantly tested in terms of teaching styles, pedagogical practices, resources, school policy, and effects upon the rest of the curriculum…The curriculum should be seen as a set of proposals which is constantly being implemented, tested out, found wanting in some respect, leading to the formulation of new proposals.[110]

Action research could, then, be a useful way of changing classroom practices or adapting module handbooks in TRS, but again caution should be urged. An approach which requires academics to impose their ideas on a situation with a view to changing it may give rise to concerns about imperialism and colonialism among TRS scholars.

Observation research (participant observation/ethnography, including phenomenography, exposure learning and personal encounter with members of faith groups)

The QAA Benchmark Statement lists in-depth study of sacred practices, 'opportunities to consider the artistic, ethical, gendered, social, political and cultural characteristics of religion' and 'fostering empathetic engagement with both familiar and unfamiliar viewpoints' as being amongst the academic standards for TRS;[111] such standards could be attained by means of participant observation, particularly since this is a method already familiar to religious studies academics. To specify

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[110] Mercer, J. A. 'Review of Richard Pring, Philosophy of Educational Research (London and New York: Continuum, 2000)' in *Teaching Theology & Religion*, April 2003, vol. 6, 2, pp.199-121 at p.120. The quote is from p. 124 of the Pring text.

[111] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 1.2.

further, TRS is by its nature more discursive and reflective—'soft'—than it is empirical and statistical— 'hard'—meaning that unstructured observation would be preferable to structured/systematic observation.

However, according to Barbara Patterson, who uses ethnography to teach TRS, fear is one of the most difficult hurdles to overcome when using this method:

> Fears about our right as non-experts to use ethnographic concepts and techniques, fears about the additional time and energy, fears about being too relationally and intellectually integrated with our students and Community Partners [the organisations in which Patterson's students were interned]. I feared that the class would get out of control, that the agenda of the day might reshape the agenda of the course, that our work would drown in some touchy/feely mess. Then, there were fears about how we might enter into another community's space and truly offer something useful to them.

In her experience, only continual communication with her students, other staff and the participating organisations helped the class overcome these fears and attain perspective. Once they had done so, their experiences were positive ones: 'Students…are eager for this kind of course because as research has suggested, not only are their experiential and intellectual needs being fed, their developmental needs are being nurtured as well.'[112]

Phenomenography

Phenomenography, a form of ethnography that investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people experience or think about something, has been used extensively in religious studies research, and is therefore potentially transferable as a method for pedagogical research in the field. It appeals to the preference among religious studies scholars for naturalism and non-obtrusive research methods. It would be a particularly valuable method for researching student learning—coming to an awareness of the different ways in which

[112] Patterson, B. A. B. 'Ethnography as Pedagogy: Learning and Teaching in a Religion Department Internship Class', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, Feb 2003, vol. 6, 1, pp. 224–34 at p.33.

students understand learning and approach studying—which is the way it has been most widely applied in higher education. The method is less familiar to theologians, who would therefore presumably be more reluctant to use it.

Exposure learning: a case study

According to Joyce Ann Mercer, who conducted an exposure learning exercise with theology students in Manila's red light district, exposure learning holds the potential to provide experiences of disorientation/reorientation that call into question existing paradigms held by students, opening the way for the construction of new and transformed ways of knowing. For Mercer, exposures are part of a larger pedagogical framework in which she understands education to be a participatory transformative practice.

Mercer is aware of the risks, such as the student resistance to learning which may ensue when meaning-perspectives are challenged, but she feels that exposures hold the potential of minimising resistance because it is the experience together with shared critical reflection on it, and not the teacher's viewpoints, that unsettle prior interpretive frameworks.[113] She does acknowledge, however, that exposure creates ethical dilemmas, and that there is also an unclear relationship between experience and action in this kind of learning. She elaborates on the ethical issues: one of the most significant critiques of exposure learning argues that it is a kind of voyeurism in which the students add to the exploitation of the people in that context. There are also ethical dilemmas in exposure learning related to the learners themselves. Exposure learning is a form of experiential education that is unpredictable and spontaneous. This gives rise to vulnerability and risks, but then, says Mercer, this is what makes exposures so transformative.[114] She thinks that there is an educational gain to be achieved by accepting, even valuing, the presence of risk in educational design, but what she finds difficult is the highly subjective determination of how much risk and discomfort remains constructive in any given experience. In

[113] See Mercer, J. A., 'Red Light Means Stop! Teaching Theology through Exposure Learning in Manila's Red Light District', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, (April 2002), vol. 5, 2, pp. 90-100 p. 90.
[114] Ibid., p. 96.

addition, exposure learning imposes a counsellor-client dynamic on to the teacher-student relationship which may be deemed inappropriate, although, according to Mercer this could be remedied by referral by the teacher to a counsellor.[115]

In terms of the unclear relationship between experience and action in exposure learning, Mercer feels that the heart of the issue concerns a perspective on transformative education which conceives of education as moving towards action. It was assumed by those who designed the exposure exercise she used that if students transformed their frameworks for making sense of prostitution, then they would necessarily act differently in relation to it. However, it is now clear that the pathway between new thinking and any particular new action is neither straight nor automatic.[116]

These considerations would have to be borne in mind by TRS academics who choose to use this method to develop their pedagogies.

Personal encounter with members of faith groups: a case study

Sophie Gilliat-Ray's experiences as a teacher have led her to the conclusion that the most effective learning about other faiths takes place through personal encounter (where students meet adherents of other faiths, particularly in their natural setting, often a place of worship): 'Any opportunity that took the student out of the formal learning environment and which placed them in a minority situation was positive'. She recommends small group visits, explaining that when students visit places of worship in large groups, it becomes more difficult to feel the atmosphere, to look around and to ask questions. In a smaller group, they can begin to experience what it might be like, for example, in a minority situation. Smaller groups are also have a less intrusive effect on the faith communities in question.[117]

The phenomenological method of empathetic engagement

Bernadette McNary-Zak recommends empathetic engagement as a

[115] Ibid., 97.

[116] Ibid., 96.

[117] See Gilliat-Ray, S. 'Ministerial Formation in a Multi-Faith Society', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, vol. 6, 1, (Feb 2003), pp. 9–17, at p. 12.

method for teaching religious history, but this method could also be applied to research into theology and other forms of religious studies and also to pedagogical research in the context of this discipline. To explain, McNary-Zak quotes the education theorist Stephen Brookfield: '"As with all phenomenological approaches, the purpose is to enter another's frame of reference so that the person's structures of understanding and interpretive filters can be experienced and understood by the educator, or a peer, as closely as possible to the way they are experienced and understood by the learner."'[118] She also cites Ninian Smart, who suggests a form of the phenomenological method as a complement to other methods of study and analysis which deals with the recurring problem of '"describing religious and secular worldviews as they actually are"'.[119] Smart refers to this method as structured empathy. Empathy '"helps us to better grasp the facts for the facts include the way [someone] feels and thinks about the world"'.[120]

To illustrate the method in practice, it may be useful to explain that McNary-Zak's own research was prompted by an African American student's claim that her family's story did not fit with the material covered in a class on the history of American Catholicism. McNary-Zak recalls that the discernment of the student's worldview through a phenomenological process bracketed a particular moment and preserved her experience as legitimate without reducing it. Participation in this process required McNary-Zak to situate the student's remark in its appropriate context. McNary-Zak's ability to 'feel in' enabled her to gain insight into the student's perspective and the source of her remark. Such empathy offered a non-threatening, non-confrontational way of seeing her worldview. Empathy diffused the traditional hierarchical power relation between teacher and student while

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[118] Brookfield, S. 'Using Critical Incidents to Explore Assumptions' in Buxton, T. H. and Prichard, K. W. (eds.), *Excellence in University Teaching* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 80; cited in McNary-Zak, B., 'Wading Through the Quagmire of Religious History', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, April 2002, vol. 5, 2, pp.65-126 at p.102.

[119] Smart, N., *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs* (New York: Scribner's, 1983), p. 14; cited in McNary-Zak, 'Wading Through the Quagmire', p.102.

[120] Ibid., p.15; cited in ibid., pp. 102-3.

still preserving otherness. The diffusion meant that the teacher became the learner and the student became a source of knowledge, and it provided a unique opportunity to view and assess the course's operative assumptions. The result is a revised course.[121]

McNary-Zak outlines the advantages and disadvantages of empathetic engagement. One of the advantages as she sees it is that this method cultivates an awareness of the multiculturalism and the need for deeper social interaction that characterises many classrooms.[122] She also argues that 'Empathetic engagement invites active participation in the ongoing process of interpretation of the past and present. When we encourage the unveiling of operative assumptions in ourselves and in our students we explore the realm of possibility for the study of religious history in the future'.[123] In terms of disadvantages, McNary-Zak points out that the method involves a risk which is often unfamiliar to students. It can lead them to realise that '"what [they] thought of as fixed ways of thinking and living are only options among a range of alternatives"'. Many students do not deem this risk a worthwhile one, and those who do sacrifice the familiar for the unfamiliar.[124] In addition, for those students who choose to assume this risk, the effects of empathetic engagement are initially personal and private. Only the individual can evaluate the dimensions of their empathetic engagement.[125]

Feminist approaches

Feminist research methodologies could be drawn on in pedagogical research in TRS, since they are already influential in research into TRS as a subject. A great deal more could be written about this but the time and scope of the research project which grounds this article precludes this.

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[121] McNary-Zak, B., 'Wading Through the Quagmire of Religious History', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, April 2002, vol. 5, 2, pp. 101-102.

[122] Ibid., abstract.

[123] Ibid. 104.

[124] Ibid., citing Brookfield, S. 'Using Critical Incidents to Explore Assumptions', p. 179.

[125] McNary-Zak, B., 'Wading Through the Quagmire of Religious History', *Teaching Theology and Religion*, April 2002, vol. 5, 2, p.104.

Peer review

Peer review is a fallible method but continues to be a part of the job of a TRS academic.

Comparative analysis

This would be a useful model for pedagogical research in TRS, particularly in light of the QAA Benchmark Statement's identification of one of the academic standards of the subject as the 'in-depth study of…one or more particular religious traditions'.[126]

Interpretative methods

Research in TRS proceeds by way of a close interpretation of texts, historical events, and so on. The interpretative method could, then, without too great a need for adjustment, be applied to the study of classroom situations, module handbooks, and other objects and events of pedagogical significance in TRS.

Classroom Assessment Techniques

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), which allow teachers to receive continual feedback on whether and how well students are learning what the teacher hopes they are teaching, are suitable for application in the TRS classroom. One proponent of CATs, Barry K. Gaeddert, explains that feedback is instant, so changes to teaching methods can occur immediately. According to Gaeddert, student learning is enhanced by teaching staff who are willing to attend to students' expressed comprehension (or lack of) of the material. He also reports that CATs find support in cognitive learning theory, which focuses on the processes occurring in the mind of the learner. He points out that when the learner is an active participant in the learning process, as they are so conceptualised in CATs, cognitive links are more readily established with their prior knowledge and experience. Students are thus involved in the active mental processing associated with new

[126] *Theology and Religious Studies Benchmark Statement*, 1.1.

information and become more aware of themselves as learners. Gaeddert makes the point that, while much emphasis is placed on the use of CATs to improve teaching, they have consistently been linked to improved learning too.[127]

Congregational studies as a pedagogical tool

Joyce Ann Mercer explores congregational studies as a valuable teaching tool for contextualizing theological education across disciplines. As Mercer says in the abstract of her article, as a form of pedagogy, congregational studies situates learning in a particular local ministry context. In addition, such a pedagogy apprentices learners within a particular 'community of practice'—namely, that of professional church leaders of various types having the knowledge and skills that allow them to read diverse contexts of ministry and improvise appropriate and faithful strategies of action within those contexts.[128]

This approach may be regarded as devotional and against the grain of academia by some teachers, and it may also exacerbate faith versus scholarship/commitment versus non-commitment problems, which means that its use in TRS pedagogy must be approached with caution. In its favour, however, this method may help to minimise polarisation between insiders and outsiders.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this report, it may be asserted that pedagogical research is overwhelmingly generic in approach and that it relies extensively on the qualitative research paradigm.[129] There is very little

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[127] Gaeddert, B. K. 'Improving Graduate Theological Instruction: Using Classroom Assessment Techniques to Connect Teaching and Learning', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, Feb 2003, vol. 6, 1, pp. 48–52 at p.49.

[128] Mercer,J. A. 'A Madness to Our Method: Congregational Studies as A Cross-Disciplinary Approach to Contextualizing Teaching and Learning in Theological Education', *Teaching Theology & Religion*, vol. 9, 3, (July 2006), pp. 148–155.

[129] See the website of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk**.

subject-specific pedagogical research, and there are very few examples of TRS-specific material. However, any TRS-specific pedagogical research which *does* exist also relies on qualitative methods. There is, then, considerable methodological affinity between pedagogical research *per se* and pedagogical research in TRS. Admittedly, there are notable differences between the two, chiefly in terms of the fact that the qualitative methods used in pedagogical research in TRS are usually non-empirical and that, although generic pedagogical research makes some use of quantitative methods, these are scarce in TRS-specific pedagogical research.

There are three possible responses to the lack of TRS-specific pedagogical research:

- A retreat from discipline-specific pedagogical research and capitulation to educational research methods, the majority of which are social science-based.
- An initiative towards discipline-based pedagogical research, in the manner of the approach pioneered by the English Subject Centre.
- An initiative towards the development of hybrid methodologies/methodological pluralism, whereby methods from the discipline are melded with methods from educational research and from other disciplines, in the manner of the approach of the Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology.

The most advantageous option for TRS is the third because it will incur more gains and fewer losses for TRS-based pedagogical research than either of the other two. It will allow TRS academics to tap into the tradition of educational research and the expertise of educational researchers and pedagogical researchers from other fields whilst drawing on methods from their own subject to develop rounded and relevant pedagogical research methods for use in TRS. These methods may also prove to be valuable to researchers from other fields, enabling pedagogical researchers from TRS to play an active role in the 'trading zone'. The third option will also enable pedagogical researchers in TRS studies to achieve credibility in the eyes both of educational researchers and their subject peers. Ultimately, it will benefit students to a greater

extent than either of the other two options would because they will be the recipients of best practice from educational research which has been given meaning in a disciplinary context. Option three is the only one which does not cut itself off from any source of knowledge or expertise.

The harnessing of hybrid methodologies necessitates the development of discipline-based pedagogical research in TRS, to complement educational research methodologies, which are already well-established. Taking into consideration existing educational research methodologies, and the various special issues in TRS outlined in this report, there is a great deal of scope for the development of a TRS-studies specific method of pedagogical research, primarily in the form of the qualitative survey method, documentary analysis including literature review, phenomenography, comparative research, and some quantitative methods.

Ethics, Enterprise and Employability:
Towards an Integrated Curriculum

Simon Robinson, Paul Dowson and Alison Price

Institute for Enterprise CETL, Interdisciplinary Ethics Applied CETL & Leeds Metropolitan University

This is a report from a project funded by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies.

Foreword by Professor Simon Robinson

On January 28th 1986 it took only 73 seconds for the Challenger Space Shuttle to explode in one of the most high profile disasters of the last century. Much has been written about this case history, precluding the need to develop all the details here (Robinson 2002, 108 ff.). The case, however, illustrates well the three areas of ethics, employability and enterprise. In particular it asks major questions about the definition of these three terms and shows how in

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practice the three operate side by side. The Challenger was a story involving a major organisation within key issues of ethics, enterprise and employability. Never before had there been such a programme of space flight, setting out hugely ambitious targets that would have political, social and scientific implications. Like any significant project, it involved collaboration and constraints; planning and delivery; co-operation and competition—in fact all the major skills of being enterprising—'having the idea and making things happen!'. Many different firms and government agencies worked together. At the same time there was increasing competition, not least from the European Space Agency. With that came increasing concern about the danger of losing contracts, and attendant financial constraints. All of this raised questions about the purpose, context and limits of being enterprising.

It was also a story about what it means to be employed, as an engineer or a manager, and what you might need for that employment. Is employability defined in terms of competencies and related skills? If so, then the definition of these was constantly being stretched for the engineers employed by Morton-Thiokol Industries. They identified the structural problems in the Challenger, and struggled between 1985 and 1986 to communicate the implications to the management. This case takes the meaning of employability beyond what is needed to be successful in getting a job.

Finally, it is a story about ethics—about the social context, the purpose and values of any action, about the ethical identity of a profession or a job, about how we negotiate and practice responsibility in the context of immense pressures. This in turn poses major questions about how we define and teach ethics.

Practice poses questions about the meaning of each of these terms, but it also shows how the three relate in practice. It is precisely when they are fragmented that problems begin to occur and significant meaning is lost. Perhaps the most chilling moment in the case was when, in the teleconference immediately before the launch, one of the mangers turned to an engineer and said 'take your engineering hat off and put on your management hat'. With such fragmentation came two things:

- Loss of truth and awareness. The estimates about safety

differed wildly. The MTI engineers estimated a Shuttle failure rate of 1.100. NASA estimated 1 in 100,000. Even the subsequent Presidential Commission could not find out how this occurred. However, it reflects two very different focuses that did not communicate—concern for safety, and concern for delivery above safety.

- The denial of responsibility. The Presidential Commission noted a lack of a sense of shared responsibility. This was partly a problem of organisation, with three different levels of management. It was also about fragmented thinking, placing ethics, enterprise and employability into different 'boxes'.

Whilst we rightly want to reflect on ethics, enterprise and employability as discrete areas, in practice they are together and have to be integrated.

Introduction

This report explores the challenge provided by the three core areas of employability, enterprise and ethics within the existing Higher Education curriculum. It details the work undertaken by Leeds Metropolitan University, in partnership with two HEFCE Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)—the IDEA CETL (hosted at University of Leeds) and the Leeds Met CETL Institute for Enterprise—as part of a funded project for the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, part of the Higher Education Academy.

The project sought to bring together Ethics, Employability and Enterprise (EEE) in the curriculum and to identify some initial examples of teaching that involve two or more of these areas, in order to understand how current practice is developing student understanding. This report draws together the work from that event, which attracted over 40 academics, with the practice from over 19 HEIs across the UK.

It aims to provide both a reflection, and an active teaching resource for the academic practitioner to draw upon to support

curriculum development, and, uniquely, also to add to, as resources are developed and this area expanded and supported by those working across disciplines to deepen student learning. Ultimately this report seeks to provide support and inspiration and then form a central part of an active and on-going project of curriculum development which will be housed on the web: **http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/enterprise**.

The curriculum: the challenge

If these three areas are inextricably linked in practice, the question is how do we enable that linkage in the curriculum?

Within higher education, through the design of our courses and the structure of our support agencies, such as Careers Services, it could be argued that we are, on the face of it, in danger of taking quite the opposite route, and reinforcing 'silo' thinking, at policy as well as practice level.

At policy level, the development of the HEFCE national Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) initiative in the varied pedagogic areas is excellent and builds up profound and important practice and research, and it is true that each of the three areas explored here, have differences and can, and should, be studied separately at some point. However, in creating different areas to be championed, we run several dangers:

- Overloading the curriculum, and the teacher. Yet another 'crucial' subject area has to be inserted into the teaching and this means another bit of expertise that the teacher has to develop;
- Transferring the same problems to the student. The student is being asked to view the different areas as discrete ideas and skills to be developed, then appreciate them in context and in practice;
- Fragmenting of the learning experience of the student. If the professional context requires the integration of these themes then the student should learn them in an integrated way.

In the light of all these considerations, and of commitment in Leeds Met University and its associated Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) to develop ethics in the curriculum and integrate our thinking, we wanted to reflect on teaching practice to see how the three areas might relate and be developed together. This allowed us to draw upon the excellent benefits of policy levels change, such as the CETLs, to explore integrated approaches to curriculum change. The specific outcomes that we aimed for were:

- Systematic analysis of the three concepts, such that we could be clear about their meaning, and the ongoing discussions on meaning, and how they relate;
- Sharing good practice about how these areas can be integrated in the curriculum. To this end we invited those working in these areas to bring examples of pedagogy;
- Recommendations about good practice in integrating these areas in the curriculum. The aim was to have material and strategy that could be useful for Applied and Professional Ethics courses, Business Schools and any part of the curriculum.

The approach: workshop

Fortunately there are many practioners across higher education, teaching their disciplines, and blending in critical themes. However in accepting this approach, curriculum constraints set a new challenges for the effective practitioner:

- embedding such thematic learning (within any discipline) whilst making it explicit to the student the additional (non-subject specific) dimensions within;
- exploring the inter-linked, yet distinct areas, without dilution to the subject or the theme;
- exploring themes, without presenting a purely practice or discipline-led 'solution'.

The method determined to best explore the practice of curriculum

development was a national event which sought to bring together examples of teaching involving two or more of the areas of enterprise, ethics or employability. In seeking support from the academic community, the delegates from this event were drawn from five key areas:

- Academics working in the fields of enterprise, ethics and/or employability;
- Practioners working with or across HEIs in these critical areas;
- Academics seeking to build essential themes into their existing curriculum;
- All those interested in reflective and evidence based practice;
- Those wishing to develop their teaching and learning with practical examples.

The outcome of this was to be a reflection and teaching resource, containing the examples of practice and discussions on different pedagogical approaches.

These examples were sought through a standard template (right) which attempted to draw together the experience of the delegates in advance of the event. This provided teaching materials to share and the development of collective knowledge.

Pre-workshop template:
We would like to invite you or another representative from your university to this day, to share your good practice.
Ethics, Employability and Enterprise in the Curriculum.
1. Considering the areas of Ethics, Employability and Enterprise, what connections has your institution made between any of these areas in learning and teaching, in the formal or informal curriculum?
2. Where are such connections being developed – employability, philosophy, theology, careers, others? Give a brief overview of those developments.
Could you describe in more detail *one* particular example in teaching and learning of how you or a colleague has developed connections between Ethics, Employability and Enterprise. It would be helpful for sharing if you could describe it under the following headings:
1. In the practice of your teaching what do we mean by these terms Ethics, Employability and Enterprise, please restrict to one sentence each.
2. Why is it important to make connections between these ideas?
3. Could you describe the teaching method?
4. Describe how it relates to the developments of skills and qualities, virtues, and any other outcomes.
5. What is innovative and creative about this approach?
6. What is the underlying vision of this example?
7. What are your criteria for best practice?

In preparation for a robust discussion at the event, three broad definitions were supplied in order to outline key areas to potential delegates. None of them is exhaustive as Ethics, Enterprise, and Employability (EEE) are all broad and ambiguous areas; even the terms can often lead to confusion, so to reduce this, we offered 'starter definitions' for the workshop, which were proposed as:

- **Ethics**: The study of what is right or wrong in human conduct and how such conduct might be governed. Meta-ethics looks at underlying theories of the good, and Applied and Professional Ethics looks at how ethical meaning is embodied in particular contexts, such as business or medicine.
- **Employability**: A set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation(s) to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.
- **Enterprise**: An inclusive concept which provides both the context in which subject disciplines can be explored as well as an approach to learning'. Enterprise focuses on creativity, challenge, change and the generation of future opportunities both in economic and social contexts.

Workshop Programme:

09:00 – 09:30 Registration & refreshments		
Introduction	Welcome to Leeds Metropolitan University	Professor Simon Robinson Professor of Ethics, School of Applied Global Ethics Leeds Metropolitan University
Workshop Session I	Connections and student perspectives.	Bob Gilworth Director of Careers Centre Leeds University
Presentation Session	Reflective interactive process.	Dr Peter Hawkins
Group Work Session I	Sharing Practice	Professor Simon Robinson Alison Price, Paul Dowson
Lunch		
Group Work Session II	Focusing in more detail on the template	Professor Simon Robinson Alison Price, Paul Dowson
Plenary	Drawing out criteria for good practice	Professor Simon Robinson
Panel Discussion		
4.00	Close	

Overview:

Professor Simon Robinson hosted, chaired and led the day supported by Paul Dowson, outlining the challenges of the day, before presenting key speakers.

Bob Gilworth (Director Career Centre, University of Leeds) provided a careers perspective on the connections between the three areas and an analysis of changing student perspectives. As reflected in a recent University of Leeds event entitled 'Careers, Making a Difference' which attracted 1000 students and 37 exhibitors, students were increasingly aspiring to go beyond making money and looking to contribute in some way to society and the needs of others. Freedom, Bob argued, was a key student aspiration and included the freedom to express their values in their chosen line of work. Matching this student demand, the 'Post-Enron' employer is increasingly concerned with business ethics and promoting corporate social responsibility.

Highlighting the interface between employability and enterprise, Bob added that all the signals from the graduate market (regardless of sector) made it clear that graduates increasingly required enterprising and entrepreneurial skills. In summary, all three areas were gaining significance together in Bob's view.

At the heart of the event, Dr Peter Hawkins, a renowned specialist in Career and Life Management, led a reflective and interactive process which presented a model of how to integrate the three areas in a teaching session or exercise. Peter's six-part Personal Development Planning exercise built around the central metaphor of the objects found in a children's playground involved the event participants in reflecting and sharing in the following areas:

- Producing an 'ethical CV'. Integrating and appropriating the 'low' points of life in the way we look at ourselves and present ourselves to others.
- Achieving balance. By examining the time and energies we give to working, learning, playing and giving.
- Counteracting the acceleration of life, through focusing on what we would like to achieve in the next five years.
- Overcoming obstacles. By identifying what could prevent us from realising our ambitions.
- The relationships that matter. Listing the people critical to our lives and our development.
- Culminating in planning. Defining the steps we must take.

The spectrum of responses to Peter's exercise was illustrative of how learners generally receive holistic approaches. On the one hand, many respond positively to the pedagogy on account of it being innovative, creative, engaging, personal and very much related to real-life. Others, on the other hand, distrust the approach and view it as being invasive or superficial from a disciplinary perspective or 'new-fangled'. The teacher must be prepared for a polarity of responses and given time, attempt to win over some whose initial response is less than encouraging.

Importantly, like other forms of learning, a holistic approach invites learners to take away the product of the teaching session and to work on it, as independent learners, in their own time. It also introduces them to a way of thinking they can, if they so wish, apply to different

areas of their lives. If the approach hasn't impressed, however, it is doubtful that the learner will venture this far.

An important dimension of any pedagogical tool or approach is how it develops the skills of the learner or permits the surfacing and development of virtues. Peter's interactive reflective process enabled the event participants to plan for their personal and professional development; a process which called for reflection on the past and present, and envisioning a future. The interactive approach obviously also involved the participants in engaging with the facilitator and others. This is exactly how many of the core skills and qualities called for by employers and in every life context are practically developed, through interaction with others. It raises the following key questions: Am I able to hear another person's ideas? Can I feel or express empathy and understanding? Am I able to present my own ideas? Can I work with others?

Phase 2: Curriculum Sharing

Drawing together the collective experience of the delegates, three groups were identified, to share their different practice and different reasons for combining EEE elements. Using the pre-event template, and the teaching materials gathered, the task below was set for discussion in groups:

The group should select two examples from the templates in the group to examine more closely:

1) What are the values, skills and qualities/virtues that underlie EEE and how are these brought out in the teaching? Does the teaching help to clarify them? Does it enable awareness of ones own skills, qualities, and virtues? What virtues/qualities are addressed and practised in the teaching itself, e.g. does the teaching develop empathy? (Does empathy have any relevance to enterprise?)

2) How were they brought out through Peter's presentation?

3) Are there any value conflicts between Ethics, Enterprise and Employability and if so how are they handled in the teaching.

4) How does the teaching and the conversations so far affect the concepts of EEE? eg. enterprise and values – how would this be affected by Paul Jackson's value card sorting – where the student is encouraged to analyse the values of different companies and see how they relate to theirs.

5) Sum up what are the criteria for good practice in teaching in this area, e.g.
– practice-centred
– dialogic
– developing awareness of complexity, plurality and ambiguity in all areas
– connective/reflective.

Discussion

Firstly, it is essential to return to the question of definition, to provide an overview of the delegate discussions and focus, taking each in turn:

Ethics: The study of what is right or wrong in human conduct and how such conduct might be governed. Meta-ethics looks at underlying theories of the good, and Applied and Professional Ethics looks at how ethical meaning is embodied in particular contexts, such as business or medicine. Quite where ethics fits is not always clear. Some would argue that ethics is a discipline, or at least part of a discipline, philosophy. This is the position of the University of Leeds IDEA CETL. Others argue that Ethics is really about moral development and thus part of the discipline of psychology (Rest and Navarez, 1994). The Mendoza Business College in Notre Dame University, for instance, bases its curriculum work on this approach. Religious ethicists (Lovin 2005), on the other hand, remind us that the majority of the world's population base their ethics in religious or cultural belief systems that

bear little resemblance to Western categories of philosophy or psychology. Given the global context of business this has increasingly practical implications.

Enterprise: is spotting opportunities, creating new ideas and having the confidence, skills and capabilities to turn these ideas into working realities. Enterprise involves the creation of innovative opportunities, inevitably involving risk. Enterprise capability then involves innovative and imaginative thinking, creativity, risk management, and a sense of drive. In all this enterprise is not only a discipline but is also an attitude and 'an inclusive concept which provides both the context in which subject disciplines can be explored as well as an approach to learning' (Price 2004).

The actual context for the development of enterprise is often the start-up of a new business, though other contexts exist. Intrapreneurship should be highlighted as the art of working within an organisation to effect change, by developing new ideas, procedures or products, by innovating practice and thereby enhancing the business; as should social entrepreneurship which involves using entrepreneurial skills for the public good rather than for private profit, that is using imagination to identify new opportunities and determination to bring them to fruition (Social Enterprise Action Plan: Scaling new heights. Cabinet Office 2006).

Employability: A set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation(s) to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. This definition takes one beyond a simplistic view of success applications to the social and moral context of the job or profession that has been chosen. Employability is not a discipline but is a way of looking at professions from all disciplines. If it has a home in higher education, it is in careers, but this further confuses the major question as to who actually defines the term. Some would argue that it is the employers, with a focus on skills rather than values of virtues.

Additionally it then possible to draw upon Enterprise Insight to determine how is ***employability distinguished from enterprise****?*
'Enterprise is in fact distinct in three fundamental ways. Enterprising qualities have similarities with employability, but enterprise requires a deeper quality that is more focused and action oriented. It has above all stronger resonance with notions of empowerment and a belief in one's own abilities – not simply the acquisition of a range of employment skills. Secondly, employability is about getting a job, and increasingly staying in work, rather than how you make a difference and achieve success in work.
Thirdly, if everyone is employable it benefits the economy but the currency gets devalued from an individual's perspective. Enterprise on the other hand is generated of future opportunities and different in that the realisation of ideas offers a level of protection through unique propositions and intellectual property rights.
The implications of promoting enterprise through education are quite different in some respects as well. Young people who choose to pursue enterprise as a career will look to education to fulfil that aspiration not only in terms of skills and know-how but wider support in becoming student entrepreneurs'.
(The Enterprise Report *Making Ideas Happen,* 2005, Enterprise Insight)

Connections

What is clear even from the brief descriptions proposed for the event, is that these areas do connect. What connects them is reflective practice and effective dialogue, and our aim is to help develop learning which facilitates both. It is also possible to see these three concepts as being conceptually quite distinct, but only if we are not focusing on practice. All the definitions are subject to dispute and ongoing debate, and in that practice-centred debate there are many overlaps between the concepts which affect the meaning of each.

The overlaps and connections are in four key areas: concepts, qualities and skills, process, and context.

Concepts

It is hard to always see the term *enterprise* as value neutral. To the lay reader, the concept presumes a social and moral context that is quite distinct from the idea of social enterprise, and that invites us to

consider the purpose and responsibility of entrepreneurship. For example, enterprise, as innovative and creative work, is at the heart of engineering (Florman 1976), and engineering as a profession operates in the context of responsibility to a number of stakeholders (Robinson et al 2007). Once we move to the connected ideas of risk and the management of risk one moves into critical questions about how these relate to the responsibility of professions such as engineering and business. Risk-benefit analysis is a core part of enterprise and as Beauchamp and Childress (1989) note this occurs within a broader ethical framework. Business itself is increasingly debating the relationships between enterprise and ethics and in particular to the development of corporate social responsibility (Journal of Business Ethics 2005, 60, 3). This has led to the concept of 'corporate social entrepreneurship', something distinct from social entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship. Some religious social thinkers would go further and suggest the very ideas of creativity and creation are a moral imperative. Novak (1990), for instance, would see this as a core part of stewardship.

Employability also takes one into questions about purpose, value and responsibility. Once again it is very difficult to see how a civil engineer, for instance, would be employable if he or she did not attempt to fulfil responsibility to the client, the social and physical environment and in many cases to future generations (Armstrong et al. 1999). It is equally difficult to see how an accountant who did not have the courage to point out financial problems experienced by his clients would be employable. Like enterprise, employability assumes a social and moral context. It does not prescribe what that might be. Indeed, this is the subject of ongoing discussion in one form or another (Robinson et al 2007). As noted above this discussion is one that involves the employers as much as academics.

Applied and professional *ethics* focuses on enabling those within business and the professions to reflect on and develop ethical meaning. Working that meaning through into an ethical response can benefit from the attitude and practice of enterprise. Enterprise involves the kind of imaginative practice that can positively maximise opportunities. The leap to Riceour's idea of moral and social creativity (Riceour 2000) which see ethics as expressed in the social response, is not great. Such a view begins to broaden views of applied and professional ethics considerably. The Globally Responsible Leadership

Initiative (2004), for instance, looks to a holistic view of business ethics and CSR that stresses both personal development and global awareness. CSR has now become so broad that it can extend social responsibility to contributions to restorative justice, especially in countries experiencing social and political transition (Gregory and Tarfa 2004).

Three points should be made here:

- Running throughout the three themes are key concepts such as responsibility and purpose.
- Articulating and reinforcing the connections between the different areas does not involve any attempt to prescribe or control. On the contrary, raising awareness of the connections demands the development of reflective agency, to handle the different nuances and devise appropriate practice;
- The exciting developments in the different areas require careful listening for each of the specialisms to see how they relate and extend thinking Aristotelian and feminist ethicists, for instance, might like look more closely at restorative justice and business as examples of practical wisdom or care.

Related skills and qualities

In the light of such conceptual overlap it is possible to argue for certain core virtues which apply to all the areas and which in turn affect how we practice in each of these areas. We would suggest from the various discussions that these are intellectual, affective and practical virtues:

- Phronesis, Aristotle's intellectual virtue—the capacity to reflect on the underlying good/telos.
- Empathy, the affective virtue, enabling awareness of underlying feelings.
- Enterprise. Enterprise could be seen in terms of a practical virtue: the capacity to see the possibilities in any situation and to create innovative response.

Phronesis enables reflection on the meaning and value framework of any situation, role or relationship. Empathy enables awareness of the other—from the self, to other persons, organizations or the environment. It is traditionally seen as associated with compassion or care. However, it is important for a great deal of judgement in practice, such as diagnosis in medicine or assessment of stakeholder need in business. Enterprise as a virtue enables an awareness of possibilities for the future, and of ways in which those innovative possibilities can be brought to life.

These three virtues reflect the intellectual, affective and somatic (seen in terms of any embodiment of meaning in practice, process or physical/social environment) dimensions of any project. They add value to the practice of any profession, any ethical response, and any particular project enriching experience, value, meaning and possibilities.

They connect to many different skills and capabilities. Yorke and Knight (2004, 5) provide an important analysis of a more profound view of employability which clearly connects to these core virtues. This involves four interrelated components:

- **Understanding**. This is intentionally differentiated from knowledge, signifying a deeper awareness of data and its contextual meaning.
- **Skills**. This term refers to skills in context and practice, and therefore implies the capacity to use skills appropriately.
- **Efficacy beliefs, self theories and personal qualities**. The connection of these to a sense of underlying purpose and value enables the student to feel that it is possible to make a difference in work. They also influence how the person will perform in work.
- **Metacognition**. This involves self-awareness, the capacity to learn through reflective practice, the capacity to reflect on learning itself, and so learn how to learn, and the capacity to regulate the self.

Employability, then, is a complex idea about how the four components above can influence life-long learning and life-long performance. It is evidenced in the 'application of a mixture of personal qualities and

beliefs, understandings, skilful practices, and the ability to reflect productively on experience' (Yorke, 2004, 11).

Similarly the core virtues suggested above link to the skills of enterprise such as creativity, imagination, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, negotiation skills, awareness of opportunities, networking and team working capacities, awareness of customer interest and needs.

In all this, the focus is on enabling the development of agency, relationality, and responsibility. The three core virtues would also tie into the cardinal and theological virtues. The cardinal virtue of courage, for instance, is needed to effect creativity, or even to articulate and sustain any underlying view of the good. One aspect of the theological virtue of hope (Robinson 2001) is precisely the 'capacity to envision the future', and enterprise as virtue looks at ways in which the future can be envisioned, and then created.

A virtue that enables the three themes to work together, and indeed the core virtue, is integrity. Integrity involves several aspects:

- Integration of the different parts of the person: emotional, psychological and intellectual. This leads to holistic thinking, and an awareness of the self alongside awareness and appreciation of external data.
- Consistency of character and operation between: value and practice; past, present and future; and in different situations and contexts. The behaviours will not necessarily be the same in each situation, but will be consistent with the ethical identity of the person.
- Taking responsibility for values and practice. Without accepting responsibility for ethical values and for response neither the individual nor the profession can develop a genuine moral identity or agency.

Absolute integrity is impossible to attain. Hence, an important virtue is humility, the acceptance of limitations, of weakness as well as strengths (Robinson and Dixon, 1997, 341). Equally important therefore is the capacity to reflect, to evaluate practice, to be able to cope with criticism and to alter practice appropriately. This capacity to learn means that integrity should not be seen as simply maintaining values and ethical practice come what may, but as involving the reflective process, such

that values can be tested in the light of practice and either appropriately maintained or developed.

None of these virtues actually generates moral meaning, though our use of these terms assumes a moral context. Hence, even the moral virtue of courage can be used to a bad end. Thus Bauman (1993) and others would look to an irreducible moral attitude of inclusive commitment to the other. More than respect this is summed up with concepts such as unconditional positive regard or agape (love). Such a concept sets out a commitment to the other, but it is clear that any such commitment has to be negotiated (Robinson 2001).

Such a care still requires imagination and negotiation if it is be embodied. However, it provides the core moral meaning. The discussion on the project day noted the importance of such an attitude not being used to impose service or to see care as purely altruistic, or purely unconditional. Hence, it was suggested that there also needed to be some eros, care based upon attraction (Robinson 2001), and which appreciated created goodness. It is precisely such care that can be seen as at the heart of enterprise, in the excitement and joy of creativity.

Reflective practice

Because all three areas are focused in practice then a central connection is the process of reflective practice. Schoen (1983) noted, through observation of a range of different professions, that in practice there was a response that led not to an imposition of knowledge but rather a 'reflective conversation with the situation'.

What emerged was a process like this:

- The analysis of the situation in order to work out what the problem might be and what issues are involved.
- 'Appreciative' or value systems which help to find significant meaning in the situation.
- Overarching theories that might provide further meaning.
- An understanding of the professional's own role in the situation, both its limits and opportunities.
- The ability to learn from 'talkback'. This involves reflective conversation about the situation.

- The professional would also treat clients as reflective practitioners.

In a sense Schoen is simply developing the idea of what it is to be a professional, building on the work of Ivan Illich. Illich (1977) questioned the role of the professional in society, not least in the way that society has become dependent upon professions such as doctors. Such dependence was negative, partly because it led to the individual not taking responsibility and partly because, through lack of awareness, it led to personal and public disasters. Perhaps just as important as that was the simple idea that the technical skill of the professional couldn't be exercised without taking into account the relational context.

Gibbs (see Jasper 2003) provides another simple framework which takes account of the emotions as well as ideas in reflection:

- Description: what happened?
- Feelings: how did you feel about the situation?
- Evaluation: what was good or bad about the situation?
- Analysis: what was good of bad about the situation?
- Conclusion: what else could you have done?
- Action plan: if this arose again what would you do?

Schoen and Gibbs do not fully draw out the ethical dimensions of or values behind reflective practice, but it is possible to do so. The underlying values of reflective practice include:

- The person taking responsibility for his/her own ideas and values, and how they relate to practice.
- Responsiveness to the situation, enabling dialogue with the client and stakeholders.
- Awareness of the professional's role and limitations.
- Respecting the autonomy of the client.
- The importance of continued learning.

Each of these can be seen as an ethical value. Awareness of limitations, for instance, can be seen in terms of humility, an important professional virtue. If a surgeon, for instance, operates unaware of a physical limitation, or limitations of experience, this could put lives at

risk.

Such a spine of reflective practice is, of course, central to any idea of employability, partly defining what it is to be a professional. It is also at the heart of enterprise not least because it is a learning model.

Reflective practice is not precisely the same as any of the three areas. Ethics, for instance, involves moral reasoning, including an analysis and justification of underlying moral values. Nonetheless, reflective practice is at the heart of any professional project and as such connects all the areas. Equally, all three areas add something distinctive to the study and development of reflective practice, including value, meaning, identity and context.

Context

Examining Ethics, Enterprise and Employability together in the curriculum also provide a connection of context. Often ethics and employability can be seen as distant from practice, whilst enterprise could risk being seen as only practice.

The use of case studies provides focus for reflection but often these pay little attention to the purpose and context behind the case. The focus on enterprise locks ethics into values of creativity, imagination, collaboration and the realities of the market. As such it both keeps ethics practice-centred. At the same time adding ethics to that reflection can help to develop the concept of enterprise, be that through theologies/ philosophies of creation or shalom, virtue ethics or ethics of shared responsibility (Jonathan Sacks 2005, Bauman 1993). The focus on employability enables grounded and usable reflection on attributes and virtues and how they relate to professional competence and identity.

What then unites these areas?

In recognising the context and the need to reflect, the core that unifies these dimensions to further build learning and develops life-long cognitive skills to support a life time of decisions, must be identified. It is apparent that the underpinning to all three of these, apparently interlinked, apparently diverse, areas, is decision making. In exploring these themes, from a curriculum and subject based dimension, it is

clear that outcomes, impacts and effects is the learning that needs to be understood. By inviting students to study disciplines in which they explore the enterprising, ethical and employability dimensions, we are seeking them enable reflection upon the outcome, recognise it and ensure it is professionally and personally compatible. The teaching of the EEE embedded within the curriculum is ultimately asking students to develop 'a strategic awareness, appreciation and management of the impacts and effects of decisions' (Price 1994). This is the impact of effective EEE teaching.

Towards method

The question now is, how can this be taught? Obviously such reflective, strategic thinking is only developed over the long-term, through the creation of connections, and within context.

In one sense the connections outlined above point to the teaching of these areas as interdisciplinary. This can be defined as a collaboration of several disciplines in which concepts, methodologies or epistemologies are explicitly exchanged and integrated, resulting in mutual enrichment. Business and other 'host disciplines', ethics (philosophical and theological), psychology, and others can combine in team teaching through multi-disciplinary exploration.

However, that approach can easily become discipline centred, with concerns primarily about how it affects the disciplines themselves. Hence, this field can be seen as transdisciplinary. This focuses more on practice as the starting point of collaboration and involves 'co-operation between different parts of society (including academia), in order to meet complex challenges of society. The prime focus here is about the empowerment of the student (cf. Barnett 1994).

Key Criteria

Exploration of the shared learning has identified three key findings, which will drive our identification of key criteria below:

- Awareness and appreciation of the situation. The situation

includes the physical and social environment, the interconnections and interdependence of the parts of those environments, and the effect that the person or group has on them and vice versa. Hence, this will involve awareness of ethical, enterprise and employability issues and how they connect in practice.
- Reflection on meaning and value as embodied in practice and experience. This includes purpose, identity and responsibility.
- Reflection on and planning for appropriate responses to the situation. This includes the development of responsibility, negotiation and creativity.

Five key criteria for good practice began to emerge through the sharing of practice and discussion involved in the development in the student and the learning environment.

A process approach to learning

Where good practice was defined as being facilitative, not didactic, students learned through a process of engaging with meaningful activities. Such activities have value in themselves, but their principal value is how the learning can be applied to other areas of life. In this process approach the teacher plays a facilitative role foregoing the traditional role of 'expert' and adopting instead an emphasis on journeying with and guiding the learners along a path consisting of self-discovery, dialogue, interaction and experience. Holistic development is at the heart of such an approach—where the interaction of teachers, students and knowledge produces something more than can be anticipated or often even predicted. The challenge with this approach is felt by both the teacher and the student. For the teacher, they are called upon to relinquish control, kudos and any personal agenda. The challenge for the student is the sense that here is something new and something which places more emphasis on the encounter of learning, and calls them to participate.

Student-participation

The term student-centredness is associated with the idea of putting the student at the centre of any learning encounter. The learning is for them, and by implication the aim is to give the student the best learning experience possible. However, a learning experience which invites student participation is not always, from a student perspective, a welcomed one. Indeed, if we define learning as 'any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of experience' (Robbins, 1998, emphasis added) one can easily discern that to learn we may need to accept that student comfort is not the highest aim of the teacher. Participation can be challenging both emotionally and intellectually for the student. It confronts the idea that learning is done for them, prepared for them like a sumptuous feast, where all the student must do is turn up and enjoy the efforts of the host. Remaining with the metaphor, participation counters this by emphasising that the (learning) event is made complete by their interacting and resulting discussion. Any holistic approach combined with an emphasis on student participation makes for a learning experience that will often be felt by the student as being 'personal'. Again this challenges another idea—that academic learning should not or will not affect the personhood of the learner. The student-centredness ideal serves to remind the teacher that at all times the learning process needs handling professionally with great awareness and sensitivity, with concern for the welfare of the student never straying from sight.

Encourage reflection

In learning encounters, learner reflection will always be present. Good practice seeks to make explicit what otherwise could so easily remain implicit; to help students develop an ability to be deliberate about engaging in reflection and even to enjoy it. Collaborative forms of reflection can awaken a student's regard for this key component of learning. Instead of asking the student to reflect alone as an individual the student is encouraged to reflect with others—to bring their ideas 'to the table' and to contribute to creating something (a collaborative reflection) that could not have possibly emerged from reflecting in isolation. This way of doing reflection adds a 'phenomenological' dimension to the reflective process. One student describes something they

have learned or experienced. The next student may enter the discussion with the response 'me too'. An entity experienced by both students (and perhaps others) is identified and named.

Reflection leading to planning

Good practice is not just about sharing insights but converts thoughts into plans, which can in-turn can produce new actions. Personal development planning spans the gulf that can emerge between reflection and action. Without it we are either launching into action without sufficient thought, or remaining rooted in thought without practical outworking. Full cycles of reflection, planning and action are required for the individual or organisation to develop.

'Real-life' applications

A good practice theme that strongly emerged from the event was teaching that had a 'real-life' quality about it. This could take many forms. It could be strongly related to the learner's own life situation; or involve the learner in interacting with real-life clients; or require the learner to engage with a real-life scenario (as distinct from an imaginary or a fictitious one). From a teaching perspective this either transports the learning environment into real-life situations or transforms the teaching session by developing its real-world application. Either way, it can lead the learner to a sense of having made a difference, or to feeling confident about doing so in the future. This then provides the EEE practitioner with interlinked views and themes to embed within effective teaching (below).

<table>
<tr><td>Status</td><td colspan="6">Trans /Inter-disciplinarity</td></tr>
<tr><td>Core</td><td colspan="6">Decision-making</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Shared Learning</td><td colspan="6">Situation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Meaning and Value</td><td colspan="3">Reflection and Planning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Connections</td><td>Concepts</td><td>Qualities and Skills</td><td colspan="2">Process</td><td colspan="2">Context</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Criteria</td><td colspan="2">Student Participation</td><td>Process</td><td>Reflection</td><td>Planning</td><td>Real life</td></tr>
</table>

The complexity working across these fields—EEE—can be seen to have trans-disciplinarity at its heart, as a multi-layered site in which to explore the impact and outcomes of decision-making. Situation provides the meaning and values and demands reflection and planning.

Situations demand a student engages, outlining, and understanding the concepts, qualities/skills, and process within the context.

EEE learning can transform disciplines, the deeper the 'strategic awareness, appreciation and management of the impacts and effects of decisions' (Price 1994) for each learner.

Such interlinking between conceptualisations demonstrates how the key aspects of EEE teaching demand reflections upon real-life, driven by the students, employing their values and learning, to create effective decisions in their professional and personal life.

The criteria have helped establish what we are looking for. It is to the examples of teaching materials that we now turn.

Examples of pedagogy

Initial examples that we received of work in the curriculum showed several things:

- that this is an area of pedagogy that is not well developed;
- that there are, nonetheless, good examples of innovative practice;
- that isolated examples were not sufficient, and that there was need of a more integrated approach. The examples that we give below show something of the possibilities.

It must be stressed that these are only initial examples and that we intend to widen our trawl through HE, across disciplines and within subjects. More research is needed and more practice needs to be developed. However we start with the findings of the dialogue amongst practitioners from sharing.

Detailed Example: LifePlan Short Course

Ethics, Employability and Enterprise in the Curriculum.
1. In the practice of your teaching what do we mean by these terms: Ethics, Employability and Enterprise, please restrict to one sentence each.
Ethics – Making good choices, looking beyond self and seeking out meaning. Employability – Developing skills and qualities, in congruence with one's nature and individuality and finding expression for these in one's chosen career or work. Enterprise – Taking creative responsibility, often transformative in nature.
2. Why is it important to make connections between these ideas?
The common thread to all is activating human potential, not just individually but through connection with others and in organisations.
3. Could you describe the teaching method?
The short-course in life and career planning entitled 'LifePlan' consists of 5 workshops meeting fortnightly over a 2 month period. The group and its interactions are central to the teaching method, based on the premise that relational connection and interaction can produce new knowledge and growth. Where relational connection is achieved new voices will be heard, new perspectives will be formed and new ways of operating discovered. Individual responsibility is stressed through the production of a personal development plan (PDP) that is developed over the duration of the course. Intrinsic to the course is developing the participants' ability to reflect, both individually and collaboratively.
4. Describe how it relates to the developments of skills and qualities, virtues, and any other outcomes.
Participants complete a skills profile which helps them understand in what generic skills areas they are strongest and weakest. Added to this a strengths and weaknesses audit enables participants not only to self-assess their characteristics, but to compare their self-perceptions with how others perceive them. Participants are also introduced to Aristotle's moral virtues and his doctrine of the mean. For each of the virtues this teaches the individual to exercise appropriate behaviour between the extremes of excess and deficiency.
5. What is innovative and creative about this approach?
The holistic emphasis, based upon the idea that it is the whole person who goes to work (employability), who makes decisions that have consequences for others (ethics) and who operates in a transformative manner (enterprise). Personal and professional development belong together in a holistic approach.
6. What is the underlying vision of this example?
a. That individuals discover and develop what could be described as their 'vital design' in the way they both live and work. b. That they also develop the confidence and the ability to take responsibility for their own development, in connection with others.
7. What are your criteria for best practice?
a. Achieving relational connection in the group. b. Facilitating reflection, both individually and collaboratively. c. The production of a personal development plan the individual takes ownership of. d. Developing an enlightening curriculum. Paul Dowson Leeds Metropolitan University

LifePlan is a short course in life and career planning developed by Paul Dowson (Leeds Metropolitan University) aimed at both graduates (through the Graduates Yorkshire LifePlan Course) and work-based learners. It was born out of a vision to assist adults in looking at both career and life planning issues together—a holistic approach based upon the idea that 'it is the whole person who goes to work'.

LifePlan emphasises course participants taking responsibility for their future development through committing to deliberate planning and producing a Personal Development Plan (PDP). This note of personal responsibility is balanced by the importance the course attaches to looking at life and career planning issues in a group context, where collaborative as well as individual reflection is encouraged.

The Course Tutor adopts a facilitator role in LifePlan groups to support and develop relational connection and interaction. Participant evaluations highlight how this approach produces new knowledge and growth. Truly collaborative approaches of this kind permit new voices to be heard, new perspectives to be formed and new ways of operating to be discovered.

LifePlan was piloted as consisting of five workshops meeting fortnightly over a two month period. The workshops introduce such areas as self-awareness; life-long/adult development; work-life balance; self-presentation; working collaboratively; and ethics in the workplace. The course is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on elements from the disciplines of Business/Management; Psychology; and Philosophy; as well as from the core of Careers thinking. In the same way that it makes sense to challenge any 'dualism' inherent in examining one's career apart from one's life in general, it also makes perfect sense to integrate theory and thinking from across disciplines which can shed light on the complex issue of steering one's life and making important life decisions.

The three themes of enterprise, employability and ethics are present together in LifePlan, not as separate entities but as integral themes central to an individual's personal and professional development. Activation and realisation of human potential—what Jung referred to as 'individuation'—involves individuals in: pursuing transformative thinking and action (enterprise); identifying latent as well as obvious skills and qualities to be expressed in a work context (employ-

ability); and making good choices for oneself and others (ethics).

Leeds Metropolitan University is looking to further develop the LifePlan concept by applying its holistic, person-centred approach to facilitating student personal development planning in its undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. It is also exploring the accreditation of the LifePlan courses. In terms of pedagogy, a model which links learner reflection (both individual and collaborative) with producing learner personal development plans in an effective way has been developed.

An example exercise: civil engineering scenario

The following scenario forms the nucleus of a single workshop (duration 120 minutes) within a programme of six workshops in Professional Ethics offered to MSc Engineering students. The teachers take a facilitator role.

Students are asked to read and consider a case at the workshop. They divide into groups no larger than six and work out a methodology of how to respond to the case (including how they would approach the ethics of the case). The groups feed back their methods which are discussed and developed as a class methodology.

The facilitators enable a discussion on method, tying it in to reflective practice. The method provides a framework for developing reflective practice and values, enterprise and reflection on professional capabilities, over the five subsequent sessions. The discussions in these subsequent sessions involve local professional engineers, ethicists, and other professions. The final session examines the identity, purpose and responsibility of the engineer and the engineering profession.

The case: A western civil engineering firm with links into a Colombian private university is asked by the Colombian government to lead a project with the aim of meeting the technological needs of a tribal village in the remote rain forest. After a long and difficult journey the engineers, with a number of students, reach the village and agree that the most urgent priority is an adequate supply of water. The nearest water supply is a large river, about half a mile from the village, and some 15 metres lower than it. The crops on which the villagers depend require a regular and large supply of water, which is not always easily

available during the drier parts of the year—though the river does just continue to flow during these times. The journey to the river is not pleasant involving wading through swamp. The swamp area has been increasingly used as a latrine by the tribe. The swamp area is also infested with mosquitoes and is the cause of disease. Nonetheless, this area is an environment which includes major flora and fauna, including a rare alligator.

The village, of course, has no electricity supply, and there is only a rudimentary technology. Housing conditions, in huts made of timber and willows, are very poor. Illness and deformity are common, and the villagers have virtually no contact with the outside world. The culture, however, is an attractive one. Honesty is a key virtue, and the villagers are accustomed to working hard to keep together body and soul. The corporate spirit of the villagers is very strong, supported by a lively belief system and frequent community rituals. It seems unlikely that anyone will attempt to support or further assist the village once the project is completed.

Criteria: Reflective practice is at the heart of this Civil Engineering Scenario and here as in real-life situations, it is often undertaken in consultation with others or collaboratively. Professional ethics emerge from consideration of the case. The kinds of issues the engineers soon identify include:

- Client autonomy—Was the tribe actually consulted? And who is the client?
- The conflict of values relating to health, culture and the environment.
- Issues about appropriate technology and the effect of technology on different cultures.

Reflection on underlying issues is naturally sharpened by the provision of team inter-textual dialogue, and this exposes different and sometimes conflicting values.

Conclusions

It is now clear that there are linkages within EEE, and the examples of pedagogy provide some good examples of how these different areas can be connected, and of how the connections benefit each of them. The benefits to the learner have been explored and the deeper learning and development identified.

Whilst the challenges of EEE learning are not insignificant, for the student or the teacher, the enhancement is felt to be significant, as a full awareness of the impact of decision-making and actions is determined. The methods required are developing, and whilst this project has aimed to explore and identify key criteria and interesting practice, it is clear that this work is not complete. Initial investigation has highlighted interesting and emerging work but more is needed, to further the learning of students, and to test the key criteria and thinking presented in this report. This report stands as the first step in crystallising the linkages and connections within these areas and developing our understanding, as academics, of the learning potential locked within a trans-disciplinary approach.

The next stage is to expose the outcomes of this workshop to a wider audience, add to our collective appreciation and understanding and continue to support the delineation of this area—and to further this, we seek your help. Be part of the project: please continue to send your examples of EEE teaching to the authors, or direct to **enterprise@leedsmet.ac.uk**

Further examples: taking the journey onwards

Further examples from the day can be found in summary in the Appendix, and we will continue to post new examples on the Institute for Enterprise website **www.leedsmet.ac.uk/enterprise**.There are also many different examples of approaches that have been developed separately in the different areas. In particular we recommend that you consult the websites below that refer to cases that can be easily adapted to include work on all three areas.

IDEA CETL. Many good examples of case studies, and of ways of developing ethical understanding: **http://www.idea.leeds.ac.uk**

CETL Institute for Enterprise: **http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/enterprise**

Higher Education Academy: **http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/** in particular the enterprise materials: **http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/enterprise.htm**

Royal Academy of Engineering. The RAE has developed an excellent ethics map and is working with the IDEA CETL on case studies around ethics. **http://www.raeng.org.uk/policy/ethics/default.htm**

Online Ethics Centre. This has a good selection of cases and writing on pedagogy around science and engineering: **http://onlineethics.org/**

Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies. This showcases some important work on ethics and pedagogy. **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk**

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Case Studies

CASE & CONTACT	CASE DESCRIPTION
	KEY NOTE EXAMPLE
Playground Objects Personal Development Exercise Graduate Into Employment Unit University of Liverpool Peter Hawkins lboulton@liverpool.ac.uk	See **Overview** of Day

	SHORT COURSES & MODULES
LifePlan – Short Course in Life & Career Planning Leeds Metropolitan University Paul Dowson p.a.dowson@leedsmet.ac.uk	See **Detailed Example**
Personal Development & Career Planning Module Leeds Metropolitan University Jacqui Stevenson j.stevenson@leedsmet.ac.uk	Developed for refugees and asylum seekers, this module is delivered through ten weekly three-hour sessions. Aimed at facilitating access to the UK labour market and informing the learners in such areas as the culture and context of working in the UK the module is part of a wider work of research which seeks to be beneficent to these often exploited and marginalised people. Curriculum development of this current module and its predecessor module in Study Skills followed research into the barriers they had experienced to accessing employment and in pursuing their field of expertise or chosen profession here in the UK.
'Working as a Global Citizen' Module Leeds Metropolitan University Gwen Collins r.g.collins@leedsmet.ac.uk	This Masters level module seeks to meet Leeds Metropolitan University's mission stated in its 2004-2008 Corporate Plan, to introduce global perspectives into all aspects of the University's work and to broaden the horizons of home students through developing global perspectives. The overall aim of the module is to equip students to act as responsible global citizens at work and help them to make positive contributions to a more equitable and sustainable future in the work-place. Students report the particular value of the module's global footprint tool, that each student develops in relation to a workplace known to them. Assessments are rooted in such real life applications.

	SHORT COURSES & MODULES
Landscape Architecture Community Design Programme Leeds Metropolitan University Debbie Samuel d.samuel@leedsmet.ac.uk	This module for 3rd year students adds community consultation and collaboration to the palette of skills used by landscape architects. Working in groups of typically five or six, students are responsible for a breadth of projects ranging from school grounds to community gardens. Contact with real clients and student consultation approaches are closely monitored by specialist staff at the University. Curriculum is determined by the demands of each project but will normally include problem evaluation; design development; client/community interaction; and project management. When the process works well an innovative design is produced from community consultation and the collaboration of the group.

	EXERCISES, TOOLS & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS
Civil Engineering Scenario Leeds Metropolitan University Simon Robinson	See **Example Exercise** s.j.robinson@leedsmet.ac.uk
Save the Children – Making a Difference Group Exercise University of Leeds Pauline Kneale & Sam Aspinall p.e.kneale @leeds.ac.uk	Based upon a challenging real-life situation faced by a new graduate working as a Marketing Assistant at Save the Children, this exercise invites a group of students to face the same situation. Learners must deal with a complex case which has implications for the welfare of thousands of children and which requires them to make an ethical decision where taking personal responsibility cannot be avoided. The group present their proposal to academic staff and other learners who fulfil the role of the Save the Children Board of Directors. Added to this, a short press release is prepared outlining how the group proposal would be implemented.
Green Business Networking Case Study University of Leeds Pauline Kneale & Sam Aspinall p.e.kneale@leeds.ac.uk	The aim of this case study is to see where links with potential partners can be made through networking. It involves participants working in groups of around six people, where each group represents one of five example businesses. There are three main phases to the half-day case study: a briefing phase that introduces participants to networking; a networking phase where creative potential links between the organisations are explored and forged; and an output phase where participants present their findings to the rest of the group. Intrepreneurship skills are highlighted and developed illustrating how the endeavours of an individual can really make a difference to an organisation.

	EXERCISES, TOOLS & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS
Guest Lectures on Sustainability Leeds Metropolitan University Mark Warner m.warner@leedsmet.ac.uk	Presentations are designed to stimulate student debate on sustainability, how it applies to their lives and what they can do to influence it. Each presentation is bespoke to the course and highlights how examples from other areas may be relevant. For example, how World War Two influenced the tourist industry. Topics include individual carbon rationing, carbon abatement, eco tourism and people who shaped our lives. The sessions are question orientated and purposely do not give any answers, just opinions. The outcome of the session to encourage further research on which ever aspect of sustainability takes their imagination. Each presentation closes with one question 'What will you do to change the world'?
Employability Card Sort University of Leeds & University of Leicester Paul Jackson Pmj7@le.ac.uk	This popular and effective tool involving working with value cards was developed in response to the fact that many graduates leave their first job after graduation not because of a skill mis-match, but because of the conflict of their personal values with that of the organisation. Students work with value cards to define and sort their personal and professional values. This enables them to reflect on the importance of this factor in choosing a job. An entertaining challenge is also provided by students attempting to match the mission statement to household name employers – an exercise that yields some interesting surprises.

Evaluating the Impact of Teaching Methods Designed to Enhance Academic Achievement among Philosophy Students with Diverse Learning Needs

Keith Crome, Rebecca Elleray, Nigel Hems and Jonathan Hunt

Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Lancaster

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Introduction

In 2005 the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS) initiated a project entitled Enhancing Academic Achievement among Philosophy Students (EAAPS).[1] The project led to the development and implementation of a number of subject specific pedagogical measures designed to improve academic achievement in philosophy lectures and seminars.[2] Following their introduction students were asked to provide feedback on their perception of the success of these new teaching methods. They consistently stated that they thought they had benefited from them. This provided a qualitative indication of the success of the project.

However, as important as is the perception that students have of the ways in which they are taught, the unreliability of qualitative feedback has long been recognised. In the first instance there is often a marked difference—as philosophers have traditionally observed—between what is perceived to be the case and what is the case. Secondly, although the students' responses were anonymous, it would be naïve to assume that they were not informed by a certain loyalty to their tutors and institution. Consequently, it was felt that it would be desirable to establish a more empirically robust index of the success of the measures that had been introduced as part of the original EAAPS project. A significant marker of academic achievement is performance by students in assessments. Consequently, in 2006 PRS and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) jointly supported a follow-up project that aimed to determine the effectiveness of those pedagogic measures through a quantitative analysis of student performance in assessments on a Year One philosophy unit at MMU. This report presents a study of the results of that project.

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[1] A report on the initial project by Yvonne Bremer *et al* entitled 'Enhancing Academic Achievement Among Philosophy Students with Diverse Learning Needs' can be found in *Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies*, Vol 6 No. 1 pp.13-49.

[2] A description of the initial project is given in section 1 of this report.

1. Summary of the original project

1.1. The background and rationale of the project

The initial 2005 project was intended to present some solutions to the challenges arising from teaching philosophy to students with diverse educational needs. As well as students with special educational needs (SEN), this group also included students who are admitted from non-traditional educational backgrounds, such as Access and Foundation courses, and mature students, among others. The initial and principal motivation behind the project was the feeling among academics that the help and guidance offered by Student Support Units at Universities is generic in nature, and that consequently it is also necessary to offer subject specific measures to such students. Beyond that, however, the project had the broader ambition of enhancing the achievement of all students and not merely those who were identified as having special or diverse educational needs.

The first focus group meeting for the project took place in November 2005, and comprised a number of philosophy lecturers from various universities, two SEN advisors, and representatives from PRS. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the SEN advisors would visit each of the participating institutions and look over supporting course material and observe teaching practices in seminars and lectures. Then, in consultation with the academics, they would develop a variety of subject-specific teaching methods and strategies to improve student performance. These were subsequently implemented and the advisors returned to evaluate their efficacy.

1.2 General principles

The specific measures and strategies that were implemented at each participating institution were informed by more general pedagogic principles. Before detailing the measures taken at MMU it is necessary to outline these general principles. They can be arranged under the following four broad headings:

a) Effective teaching and learning in a lecture

Primarily, effective teaching and learning in a lecture concerns the way in which information can be successfully conveyed to students. In part this can be achieved through clearly structured lectures. Integral to this is the use of 'signposting' (for example, outlining the main topics of the lecture in advance) and an explanation of the sequencing of the material delivered. However, it is important to recognise that learning is not simply achieved through the intellectual acquisition and mastery of a given set of materials. To learn successfully students must also be emotionally involved in lectures, lest a loss of interest on the part of students comes to prevail. Negatively speaking, a loss of interest can be prevented by a variation in the style, pace and manner of delivery of information.[3] Positively speaking, allowing students to become emotionally involved in the lectures encourages them to actively engage in the learning process, rather than situating them as its passive recipients.[4]

b) Effective teaching and learning in seminars

The emphasis in seminar teaching is on student participation. Effective teaching and learning in a seminar should not concentrate on the delivery of information but upon student participation. This can be encouraged by the provision of a clear week-by-week outline of required reading for the seminars and by providing questions that will motivate and direct reading; by setting tasks that are limited in scope and achievable; by ensuring that learning is seen as a co-operative process and by being clear about the skills students are supposed to

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[3] It was suggested that one of the simplest and easiest ways of achieving a variation in the style, pace and manner of a lecture, is through the use of PowerPoint. Not only that, PowerPoint can enhance the reception and retention of information by providing students with visual associations for the information being delivered. An evaluation of the usefulness of learning aids for students at London Metropolitan University and Bolton Institute showed that students found visual aids more helpful than non-visual, text-only aids. See 'Learning Objects for Introductory Programming'. A fuller account of the use of PowerPoint in lectures in connection with this project is given by Keith Crome in 'Reflections on Collaborating with SEN Experts' in *Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 1 pp. 51-61

[4] One of the most effective ways of achieving this is by collaboratively setting expectations in terms of learning outcomes and the projected aims of the sessions. We will come back to this point in the conclusion of this report.

practice in the sessions.

c) Effective reading strategies
At issue here is how to encourage students to read, and to do so with the care and attention that is necessary for a genuine philosophical comprehension of a text. It is insufficient merely to set reading tasks. Such tasks must be limited in scope, and guided by the use of directed activities. Moreover, it is important to recognise and address the problems that students will have with specific philosophical terms and modes of articulation, showing them how it is possible to determine the meaning of terms by close and careful scrutiny of a text. In some instances, it may be advantageous to direct students to more general information by selecting appropriate web-based resources and introductory texts.

d) Effective writing strategies
In the sense that it requires the deliberate and careful planning and structuring of both information and ideas, writing is a significant aspect of doing philosophy. It is good practice to allow students the opportunity to rehearse this aspect of writing and acquire the habit of planning in seminars. For example, setting exercises in which students are encouraged to reflect on the mode of articulation in a short piece of work can be used to facilitate their understanding of how to write.

2. Implementation of the strategies at Manchester Metropolitan University

2.1. The strategies developed and employed in the original project

An observational session with the SEN advisors at MMU resulted in the implementation of a number of strategies to improve teaching and learning on one first year philosophy unit. The unit was text-based and required students to undertake detailed reading of a series of texts, which increased in complexity as the course progressed. All the recommendations implemented addressed effective teaching and learning in lectures and seminars. Chief among them were:

- The use of PowerPoint in lectures to provide both explicit signposting of the structure of the lecture and visual stimuli to enhance specific points.
- A varied use of pace in the lecture.
- An attempt to root specific ideas within the horizon of the students' experience in order to make the significance of particular ideas and concepts clear.
- The use of a student scribe in seminars to keep a record of the discussion, which was then written-up and copied to seminar participants the following week.

In feedback students indicated that they felt the teaching strategies introduced had been positive, improving their understanding of the material covered in the lecture, and their ability to stay on topic in seminar discussions. In particular, the students consistently remarked on the benefits of the use of PowerPoint in lectures, which, at that time, was not common practice in the Philosophy Section at MMU. They pointed out that it gave them a clear idea of the main points of the lecture, and in addition overcame the not infrequent problem of the difficulty in reading the lecturer's handwriting where he or she chose to write on the white board to illustrate a point. The Unit Leader also felt that the use of PowerPoint in lectures had been beneficial, allowing him to structure the material clearly, and cue students into note taking.

2.2. Development and Employment of the Strategies in the Following Academic Year

In the academic year following the initial project (2006/7) we further developed a number of the teaching and learning strategies that had been implemented in the previous year, and introduced them across a range of first and second year units. In the particular unit that is the focus of this study, a first year introduction to metaphysics, entitled Introduction to the Problems of Philosophy (PP), this was in part done through the use of PowerPoint slides to accompany lectures in the first term (although not in the second). This had the virtue of permitting the lecturer to both map the structure and key points of the lecture, project supporting material (e.g. short quotations from relevant texts, references to primary and secondary source material), use visual illustra-

tions to clarify certain examples and points, and do so in a way that is convenient and clearly visible to all students in the lecture theatre.

In addition to the use of PowerPoint in the first term, we also undertook a radical simplification of the Unit Document that accompanied the course. By reducing the amount of supporting information in the document we hoped to encourage students to read it, rather than file it away unread or dispose of it. In addition, we also introduced a calendar which not only detailed the main topics covered in lectures (as it had in the previous year) but also specified questions for seminar sessions with the aim of guiding students in their reading and thinking.

It was also agreed by the team who delivered the course that they would, each week, nominate a student scribe to record seminar sessions. The scribe was then required to write-up his or her report and send it to the lecturer who would arrange for it to be made available to the seminar group by the following week. The purpose behind this was threefold: first, to improve students' note-taking and to allow the seminar tutor to give them informal feedback on their writing-skills; second, to encourage students to review the topics and issues covered in the seminar sessions; third, to provide the seminar tutor with (an informal) indication of how students had understood the material covered in a given session.

Finally, we introduced a Web CT area to support teaching and learning on the unit. This was a significant development for a number of different reasons. First, it made it possible for us to simplify the Unit Document provided in hardcopy to students at the start of the unit, since material that had previously been included in the Document could now be posted on the Web CT area (e.g. detailed reading lists with links to library resources, to recommended electronic resources and journals; instructions and examples of how to footnote and reference essays). Secondly, the Web CT area provided a repository for summarised lecture notes (from the first and second term) and PowerPoint slides (from the first term) that students could access. Thirdly, it enabled the seminar tutors to post (edited and corrected) the seminar reports produced by the seminar scribes. Fourth, it also had a link to past exam papers for the unit. Fifth, we were able to provide students with a model essay (answering one of the essay questions set for the first term assessment), including a detailed plan and linked commentary explaining the structure and composition of the essay. This allowed us to both

illustrate and clarify the requirements for a first year philosophy essay.

3. Assessment of the impact of the new teaching and learning strategies at MMU

3.1. Qualitative assessment

As was the case in the previous year, both the students and staff who taught on the PP unit felt that the new measures had a positive impact on the teaching and learning experience. In addition to giving informal feedback, towards the end of the academic year students were required to fill out Unit Assessment Questionnaires. These were completed anonymously. The students consistently responded positively to questions about the new pedagogic measures, particularly indicating a preference for the use of PowerPoint in lectures, and the provision of WebCT based supporting material. No student commented unfavourably on these measures.

3.2. Quantitative assessment

As we noted at the beginning of this report, the principal aim of this project was to attempt to find whether there is an objective indication of an improvement in student performance as a result of the introduction of the pedagogical strategies outlined above. We felt that the clearest indication of this would be evidence of a correlation between the implementation of such measures and the marks students achieved in assessments. To this end we have attempted to analyse student performance (gauged in terms of degree class marks) on the first year PP unit.

On the PP unit students were required to write two 1,500 word essays, one on the first text studied in the Autumn Term (*The Phaedo*), and one on the first text studied in the Spring Term (*Meditations on First Philosophy*). They were also required to sit a two hour exam at the beginning of the Summer Term. The examination paper comprised four parts: A, B, C and D. Students were obliged to answer one question from each part of the paper. Parts A and B were devoted to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (the second text studied in the Autumn Term),

parts C and D to Hume's *Enquiry* (the second text studied in the Spring Term). Parts A and C comprised a number of quotations from the respective texts by Aristotle and Hume, and students were asked to write a short textual commentary on one gobbet per author (guided by a specific question set by the examiner). Parts B and D comprised a number of conventional exam questions of which students answered one for each section. Each essay was weighted at 25% of the overall mark for the course, and the examination was weighted at 50%.

In the previous year, 2005/6, none of the pedagogical strategies developed in consultation with the SEN advisors had been employed on the PP unit. In addition, as has been noted above, the use of PowerPoint slides to accompany lectures was only used in the first term on the unit in 2006/7, and a model essay was only provided for the first term essay (on Plato's *Phaedo*). This has enabled us to undertake an analysis of student performance on the unit, comparing the overall results in each individual item of assessment, and also comparing performance across two academic years (2005/6 and 2006/7).[5]

In order to ensure the reliability of our analysis of student achievement on this unit, we have also compared performance on the PP unit with performance on another first year unit, Existentialism, Literature and Style (ELS), in the 2006/7 academic year. Whilst the assessment items differed on the ELS unit in that students were not required to sit an examination but instead submitted four 1,500 word essays (each weighted at 25% of the overall mark for the unit), this unit offered the closest basis for comparison across all the units taught in the first year of the BA Philosophy degree.[6] Not only were the assessment criteria used in marking students work the same in both cases,[7] but also the units of assessment and the nature of the set tasks did not differ as significantly as they did in relation to other units, and the texts studied in each unit were of a comparable difficulty.

3.2.1. Comparative analysis of performance on the PP Unit in 2006/7

[5] As obvious as it is it is worth pointing out that the analysis put forward in this report applies to two years only and may in the future change.

[6] In section 3.2.3 we point out some of the significant differences between the assessments on the two units.

[7] An outline of the marking criteria used is provided in Appendix 1

Performance in the first term assessment on the PP unit comparative to the second term assessment was significantly better. A higher proportion of students achieved first class and 2.1 marks in the first assignment than in the second. Fewer students were awarded marks in the 2.2 band in the first assignment, and whilst more were awarded 3rd class marks significantly fewer failed to submit their assignment in the first term than in the second term (see Figure 1 below).

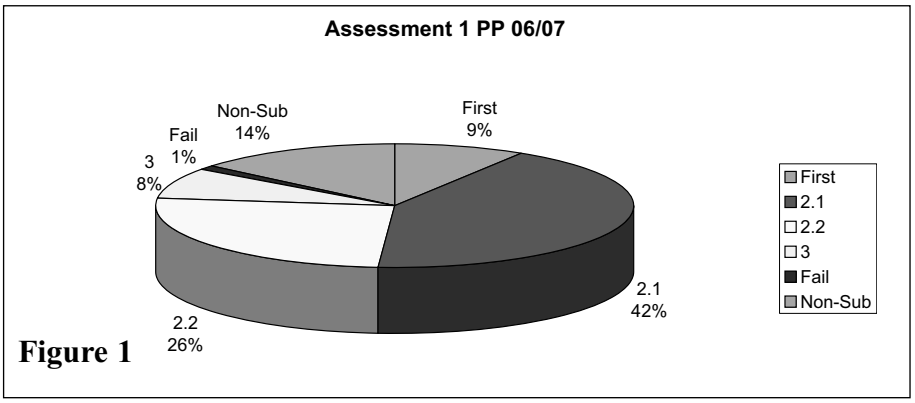

Figure 1

In the examination, performance further declined. Fewer students attained marks in the first class and 2.1 bands than in either of the written assessments; more received marks in the 2.2 class in the exam than in the first assessment, but fewer than the second. There was a correlative increase in the number of 3rd class marks and fails. More students failed to attend the examination than failed to submit work for the first assessment, but more failed to submit the second assignment than failed to attend the exam (see Figure 2 below)

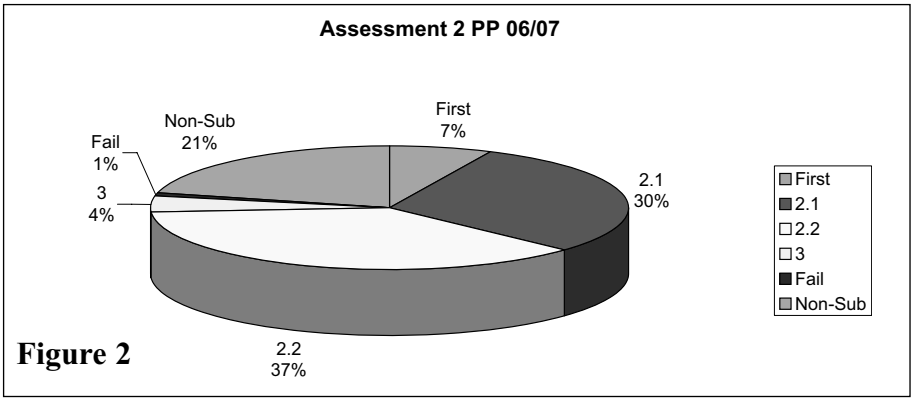

Figure 2

Overall, then, and perhaps contrary to expectation, performance did not improve over time on this unit, but declined (see figure 3 below). This can be understood in at least one of two ways. Either there was an actual decline in performance by students considered as a group, or tutors applied the marking criteria more rigorously as the academic year progressed in line with their (perhaps unconscious or unacknowledged) expectation that students should have acquired more skills over that period. If the former was the case, namely that there was an actual decline in student performance, two further hypotheses must be considered. Either students grew increasingly complacent in terms of studying, or given that the pedagogic measures and strategies introduced on to the PP unit were primarily slanted towards the first term, including the provision of a model essay for the first assessment, they do have a positive influence on student performance.

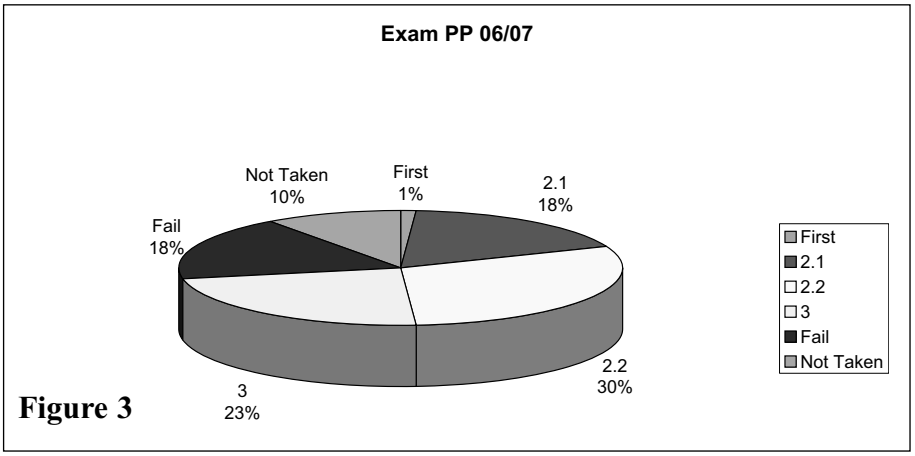

Figure 3

Of course, a combination of two or all of these factors might underlie the decline in performance. However, since we are concerned to ascertain whether or not the pedagogic measures introduced on to the unit impacted positively on student performance, it is necessary to consider two more points.

First, analysis of Web CT usage shows that less than 50% of students in all class marks consulted the model essay.[8] For this reason it is tempting to conclude that this particular measure did not have a beneficial effect on student performance. At this point we do not wish

[8] See Appendix 2.

to draw such an inference, since a positive interpretation can only be ventured after consideration of performance in the same PP assessment in the preceding year and in the assessments relating to the first term for the ELS unit in 2006/7 year. Only then will it become clearer whether there is a significant improvement in performance on the PP unit and whether this can be ascribed to the new measures, including consultation of the model essay, despite the low percentage of students who looked at it.

Second, if the better performance of students in the first essay in comparison to both the second essay and the exam on the PP unit can be attributed to the use of the new measures and strategies, it is then the case that these measures do not have any lasting impact, or at least require reinforcement in order so to do.

3.2.2. Comparative analysis of performance on PP unit in 2005/6 and 2006/7

Comparative analysis of the results for the first assessment on the PP unit in 2006/7 with the results for the same assessment in 2005/6 shows that there was an improvement in performance in 2006/7 compared to that in the preceding year in the top two class bands (see Figure 4 below).

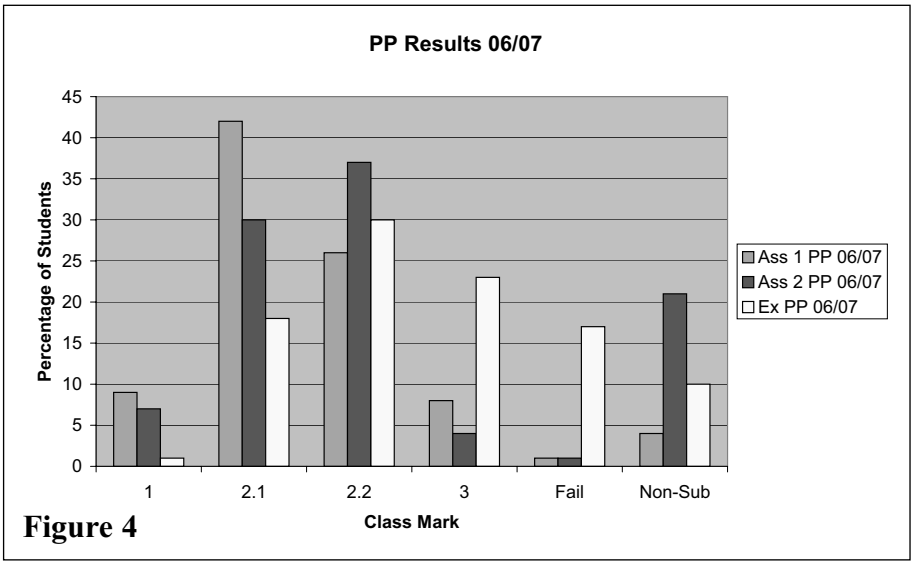

Figure 4

Fewer students achieved marks in the 2.2 band in 2006/7 than in 2005/6. The number of fails and 3rd class marks were the same in both years. However, more students failed to submit work for the first assessment in 2006/7 than in 2005/6.

Thus, although more students produced work in the 1st class and 2.1 band in 2006/7 than in 2005/6, in the earlier year 87% of students attained marks in the top three class marks (thus producing work deemed to be of an average standard or higher) whereas only 77% produced work of such a standard in 2006/7.

Again, whilst it would perhaps be too early to draw a definite conclusion, at first glance it would seem that this indicates that the new pedagogic measures did improve performance in the top two classes. This improvement, providing what we might call a 'performance bonus', was not matched by an improved performance across the board. In particular, given that the 10% variation in performance between the two years is accounted for exactly by a rise in non-submissions in 2006/7, one might draw the stronger conclusion that the measures did improve performance among those students who submitted work, but did not succeed in engaging all students and motivating them. Substantiation of this interpretation is, however, dependant on analysis of further data, for it might be the case that the variation in results between the two years was a result of a variation in the abilities in the two cohorts.[9]

Comparison of the marks awarded for the second term assignment would tend to reinforce the supposition that the measure introduced did improve performance in the top two classes, and that this was not attributable to variations in ability between the two cohorts. In the second term assessment for the PP unit, a marginally higher percentage of 1st class marks were awarded in 2006/7 than in 2005/6, whilst marginally less were awarded in the 2.1 and 2.2 bands. Overall, performance was more or less the same across all three bands in the two years (74% of students recording marks in these bands in 2006/7, 75% in 2005/6). Fewer students were awarded marks in 3rd class band or fail marks in the later year than in the earlier, but again more failed

[9] Admission to the degree in 2005/6 was set at 180 points, in 2006/7 it was raised to 240 points. In practice, however, recruitment had been at 240 points in 2005/6 as well as 2006/7. The average points tariff in both years was comparable.

to submit work (see Figure 5 below).

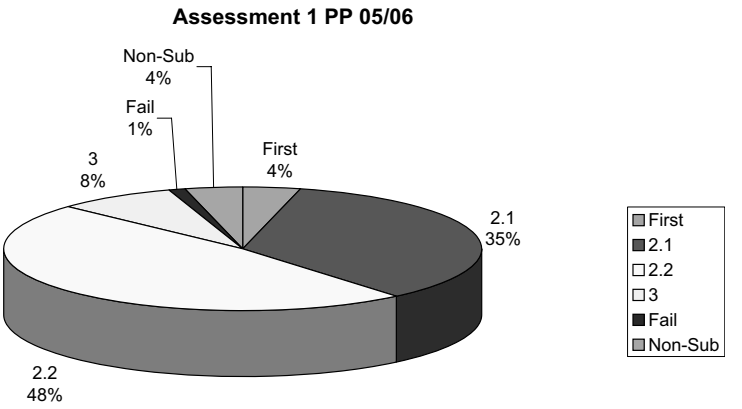

Figure 5

More pertinently, whilst in the first assessment a considerably greater percentage of students attained marks in the 2.1 band or above in 2006/7 than in 2005/6 (51% as opposed to 37%), there was a much smaller variation in results in these categories in the second assessment (39% in 2006/7 as opposed to 36% in 2005/6).

Moreover, comparison of the marks for all the written assessments submitted in both years shows that the higher percentage of students attaining marks in the top three class marks in the first assessment for the year 2005/6 is something of an anomaly, with approximately 10% more students attaining marks in these bands than in any of the other three assessments (87%). Discounting this one result as anomalous, would lead us to the consideration that improved performance in the top two bands resulting from the new measures in the first assessment in 2006/7 was funded from students in the 2.2 band. In other words, average performance was raised in the period in which the measures were implemented, but below average performance was not greatly affected. This would corroborate the hypothesis advanced before that the new measures did not succeed in engaging and motivating all students.

Performance in the examination in the two years favoured 2005/6. A higher percentage of students received marks in the 1st class, and 2.2 bands in the earlier year; a comparable percentage received marks in the 2.1 band; a greater percentage received marks in the 3rd class band in 2006/7 and a significantly greater percentage failed. A

smaller percentage, however, failed to attend in 2006/7 than in 2005/6 (see Figure 6 below).

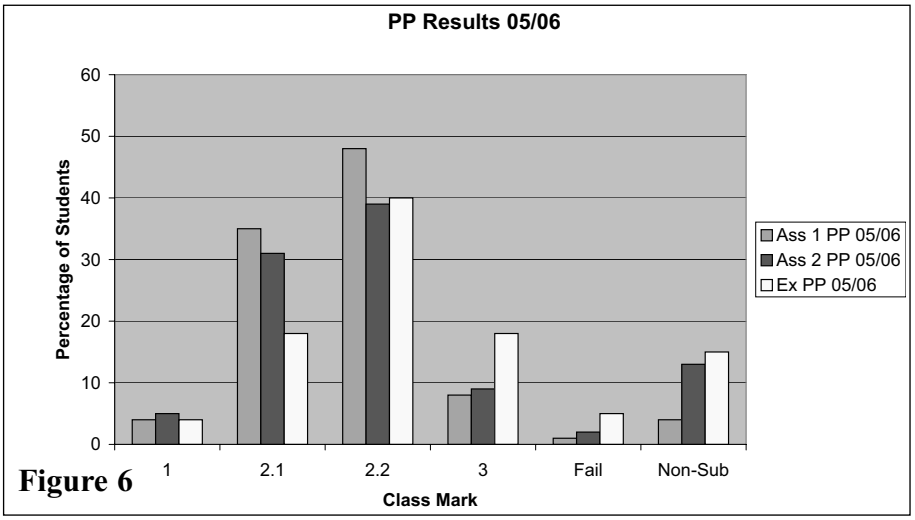

Figure 6

Thus there were a higher percentage of students attaining marks in the top three bands in 2005/6 than in 2006/7, and a higher percentage receiving marks in the 3rd class band or failing in 2006/7. This would tend to underline that any improvement in marks resulting from the pedagogical measures implemented in 2006/7 was not sustained, and consequently that if we are to deem them to be immediately effective, it is nevertheless the case that continued reinforcement is required, perhaps even reinforcement directed towards examination techniques.

As was the case in 2006/7 there was a progressive decline in performance in 2005/6 in assessments on the unit (see figure 7 below).

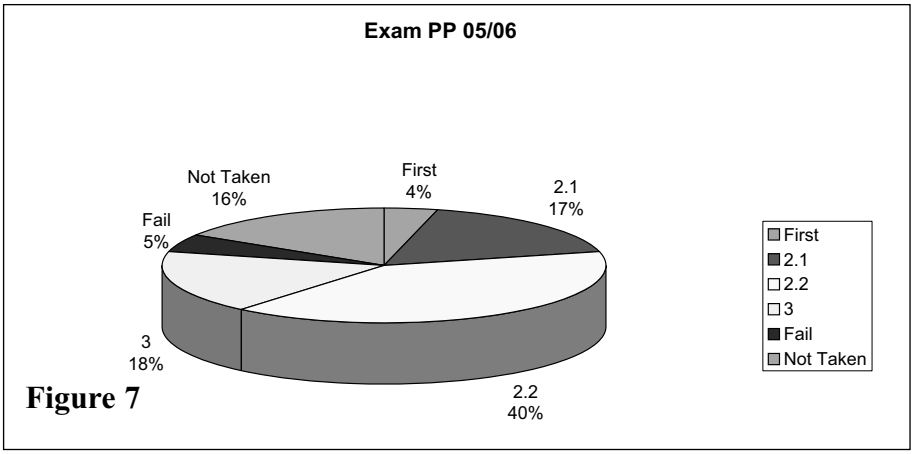

Figure 7

This decline in performance is principally attributable to a failure to perform well in examinations. This allows us to discount the hypothesis advanced in section 3.2.1 above that a decline in performance might principally result from tutor's applying marking criteria more rigorously in the second assessment than in the first.

The rather more obvious conclusion is that, on this unit at least, examinations lower students' results. If this is the case it would imply that either students require greater tuition and training in sitting examinations to bring their performance in to line with their results in essay assignments or that examinations should be made easier (or abandoned) in order to maintain the higher level of achievement that students manifest in their essay work. As obvious as this conclusion is, given both that the majority of students express a dislike for examinations and that there is widespread recognition among academics and educational experts for a need to vary assessment on degrees, we will only further comment on it at the end of this report. However, we perhaps now have further warrant to merit tentatively suggesting that performance in the top two class marks was improved by the new pedagogic measure, although overall performance was not greatly changed. Again, we will return to this hypothesis after we have considered the final batch of data, taken from performance on the ELS unit in the year 2006/7.

3.2.3. Comparative analysis of performance on PP Unit and ELS unit in 2006/7

None of the principal new teaching and learning methods and strategies used on the PP unit in 2006/7 were implemented on the ELS unit in 2006/7 (PowerPoint was not used in lectures, whilst Web CT was scheduled to be introduced in 2007/8).

Performance in the ELS unit in 2006/7 was better in the first and third assessed items than in the second and fourth items, with a higher percentage of students receiving firsts (11% and 15% as opposed to 6% and 6% respectively). However, performance in the first assessed item was markedly better than in the other three assignments (85% of students received marks in the 2.2 band or higher in the first assignment, whereas on 66% received such marks in the next best assignment, the third). Moreover, non-submission rates rose dramatically. Only 7% of students failed to submit the first assignment whereas that

rose to 35% for the second, dropped marginally for the third to 28% and rose again to 37% for the fourth (see Figure 8 below).

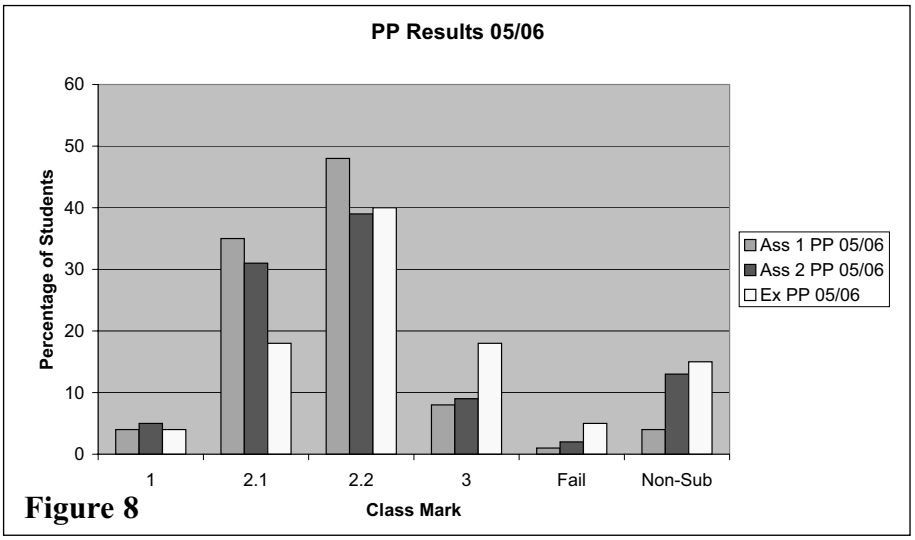

Figure 8

As in the PP unit there was an overall downturn in performance in the ELS unit (see figures 9a-e below), showing itself at its most pronounced in the submission of the second assignment. It might be tempting to reverse the terms in which we express the shift in performance, and ascribe the superior performance of students in the first item of assessment to the (unconscious) leniency of assessors in evaluating the first submission comparative to items 2, 3 and 4. However, this, we think, can be discounted, given that, as we have noted, in the third assignment the percentage of first class marks awarded rose to its highest (15%). If markers marked more rigorously as the course progressed we would not expect to see an increase in the number of firsts awarded, particularly since otherwise the percentage of students in each class mark did not vary that greatly in assignments 2, 3 and 4.

Broadly speaking, performance in the first ELS assignment for 2006/7 mirrors performance in the first PP assignment. It is difficult, however, to make an exact comparison, despite the fact that of all the units offered in the BA Philosophy first year portfolio ELS offered the best basis for doing so. This is because not only did the PP assignments consist in 2 written essays and one exam, whereas ELS comprised 4 written essays, but the work was submitted at significantly different times. The first PP assignment was submitted on the last Thursday of

the Autumn Term, the second on the last Thursday of the Spring Term, and the exam was sat within the first four weeks of the Summer Term. In contrast the first ELS was submitted on the midway through the first term, the second on the first week of the Spring Term, the third midway through the Spring Term and the fourth in the first week of the Summer Term. What is worthy of consideration is that the downturn in performance on both units occurs in the second term. It is perhaps the case, then, that after completing a first term of work there emerge a group of students who are beginning to perform significantly less well, either failing or failing to submit work. This could either be because they: a) have discovered that they have little or no affinity with, or liking for, philosophy; or b) have now established interests or commitments outside of academic study.

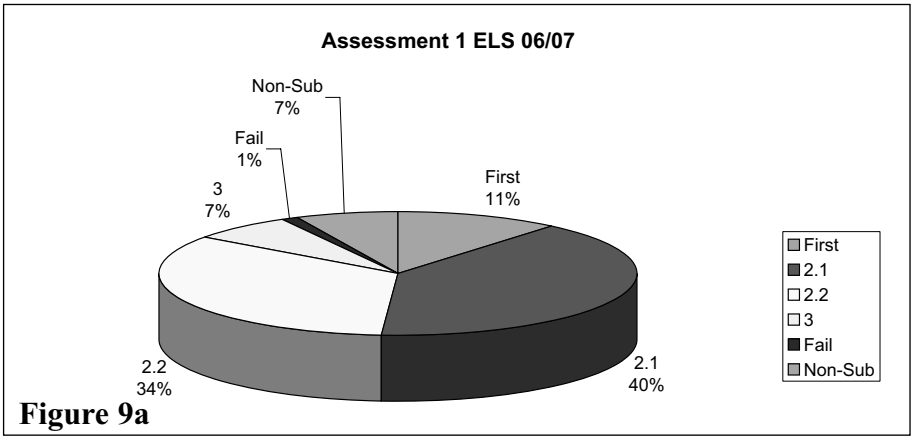

Figure 9a

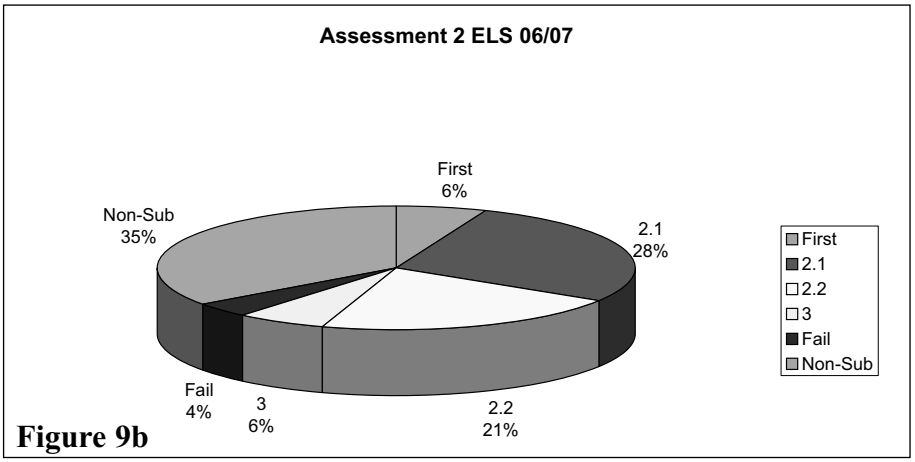

Figure 9b

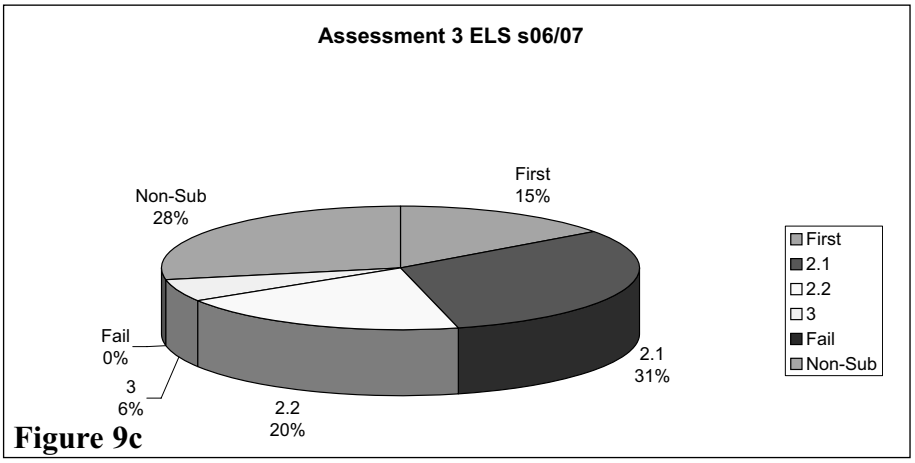

Figure 9c

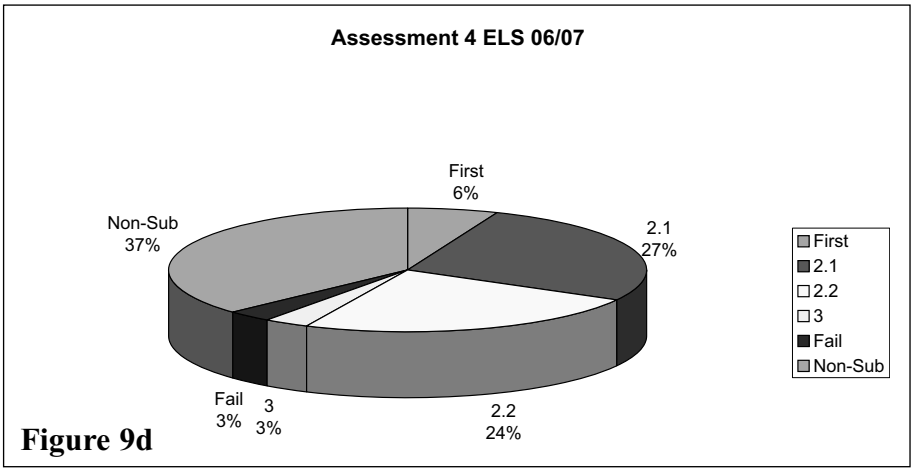

Figure 9d

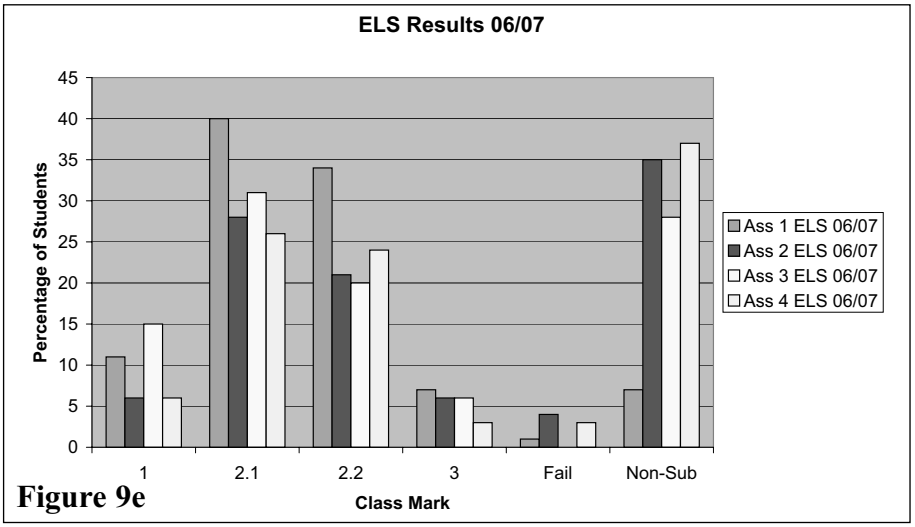

Figure 9e

If the downward trend of marks is a consequence of what is sometimes euphemistically called 'natural wastage' (students discovering a lack of interest in philosophy, etc) it is reasonable to assume that it would be a gradual process, although one that might be more pronounced after the Christmas vacation when students had pause to consider and weigh-up their commitment to the course. However, against this there is a need to consider the undulation in performance on the ELS unit across assignments 2, 3 and 4. As was noted above, results in assignment 3 were better than in both 2 and 4. It could be that (with the exception of the first class marks which improved in comparison with assignment 1), the slump in performance in assignment 3 represents a base level, and the worse performance in assignments 2 and 4 could be attributed to student 'fatigue', i.e. a general exhaustion with the need to write and submit work. However, if this is possible, it should nevertheless be noted that assignments 2 and 4 were submitted at the beginning of new terms, when students had had a break and when they had less other work to submit.

Rather than develop any immediate inferences from this comparison of performance on the PP and ELS units in 2006/7 we would prefer to try to develop the implications within the context of a more general concluding consideration of all the data at which we have looked.

3.2.4 Quantitative analysis: general conclusions

Was student performance, gauged in terms of marks for assignments, improved by the introduction of the new pedagogical measures on the PP unit in 2006/7? Those measures were applied more intensively in the first term of the PP unit than in the second, and a comparison of the results for the assignments for both terms shows that performance was better in the earlier rather than later term. Is it reasonable, then, to suppose that performance was improved by the measures?

Consideration of the full range of data that we have analysed for this study considerably weakens such a conclusion, and does so in a number of ways. In the first instance, we noted that performance on the PP unit in the year in question progressively worsened. We were able to discount that this was a result of tutors applying the marking criteria less rigorously in the first assignment than in the later assessments. However, this then leads us to acknowledge that, at the very least, if the

measures did improve student performance, that improvement is punctual and immediate and not sustained. In particular, on the PP unit, the most dramatic deterioration of results occurs in the examination. The question that then arises is whether it is worthwhile (in terms of student performance) to continue to intensively teach with the support of the new pedagogic measures, and in particular to apply those measures to exam preparation.

When we compared results on the PP unit in 2006/7 with those from the previous year, we saw that the marks in the 2006/7 year were better in the top two bands in the first term, when the new teaching methods were applied most intensively. However, they had little positive effect on students who were failing or failing to submit work. In other words, if they were effective, then they were only effective for those students who were motivated to engage with the course; they could not be said to have motivated those who, for one reason or another, lacked such motivation.

Consideration of the marks from the ELS unit for 2006/7 was undertaken in order to see whether the variation in marks from the two years for the PP unit could be attributed to a variation in the abilities of students on the two cohorts. In part, the results from ELS supported this. The results for the first assignment showed students performing at their best (with a higher percentage of first class and 2.2 marks awarded than in the PP first assignment). Thereafter performance worsened as it did in the PP unit for the 2006/7 year. This is perhaps not sufficient to allow us to conclude that the new pedagogic measures and strategies introduced on the PP unit had no effect, since against this we must take into account the differences in the study demands on the two units, and the fact that in the second term assignments on the PP unit in 2005/6 and 2006/7 performance was comparable. However, it does underline the fact that in the first year, performance does not improve with time, but rather deteriorates.

Overall, and on the basis of the limited data that we have been able to analyse for this study, we think the following conclusions are tentatively warranted. The supporting techniques and strategies introduced in teaching and learning on the PP unit do have an impact on student performance. However, that impact is vitiated in at least two ways: first, it is not sustained; second, it only has a measurable impact on grades that are average or above. Given the progressive deteriora-

tion in performance the challenge is to reduce the percentage of students failing or failing to submit work throughout the unit. Before we offer a conclusion as to how this might be achieved, we wish to turn to a consideration of the broader issues that are raised by the implementation of the new measures.

4. General conclusion and recommendations

As we have already stated, the aim of this project was to put in place measures which would enable student groups with diverse learning needs to improve the standard of their work. Through more effective methods of teaching and learning it was hoped that students' ability to acquire and retain an understanding of the subject and knowledge of best writing practices could be improved. However, as the analysis of the data has shown, the measures which were put in place were of only limited success. We should now like to consider whether this is due to an inherent limitation to the effectiveness of the measures themselves.

To re-cap, the general pattern of student achievement deteriorates across the individual terms and across the year as a whole. This was still the case in the PP Unit in the year 06/07 when, for the first term, the full range of the new measures and strategies were employed. Although only fifty percent of the cohort used the model essay and Web CT resources for the first term assignment, there was a significant increase in the number of students gaining average marks and above for that essay. This is all well and good with respect to an immediate improvement in the skills acquired by the students. However, as the data showed, the cohort to which the new measures were available did not perform significantly better in the second assignment than the cohorts that did not have the new teaching and learning resources available to them.

We have suggested above that in order to ensure a constant and consistent improvement in results (when compared to those cohorts that did not have the resources available to them) each assignment should be supported by the same teaching measures, the same level of guidance and instruction, as was provided in relation to the first assignment. We have done no more than suggest this since we believe that sustaining such a level of support for a unit in its entirety is not unprob-

lematic.

The problem can be summed up in the following question: would the repetition of such a high level of support amount to spoon-feeding students, diminishing rather than encouraging them in developing a sense of autonomous learning and self-responsibility for their studies, the avowed aim of Higher Education? The data we have analysed could be construed to support such a presumption. Contrary to what might have been expected, the initial improvement in performance that resulted from the teaching and support measures did not increase student motivation. Rather, there was the same pattern of rising non-submissions and increasing failures in the second and third assessments as in the previous year and on other units in the same year. Thus one could be led to conclude that either the measures were ineffective in relation to the long-term goals of the project, or even that they were counter-productive since relative to the first term performance there was a more pronounced overall deterioration than in the previous year on the PP Unit. This deterioration could be ascribed to the de-motivating effects of losing that level of guidance and instruction offered by the new techniques and strategies as they were gradually withdrawn through the year. If this was the case, and we have no reason to discount it, it would raise a concern over the need for students to build a progressive independence in relation to retaining and practicing good study skills. If, as we have said, such is the broader aim of Higher Education in general, the failure to achieve this amounts to a failure of education.

It would not be satisfactory to conclude on such a note. To express our conclusion in more positive terms in relation to the aims and scope of the project, the data we have looked at highlights that in conjunction with the teaching measures and strategies that were implemented in the project, students must also be encouraged to develop a perception of their own responsibility towards their studies. Whilst the data clearly shows that those students who are willing, but not necessarily able at first, to gain higher marks do benefit from such measures and it is not implausible to assume that with the appropriate support they will continue to do so throughout the year. Thus, the project does go some way to achieving its desired goal. However, we also think that the limitations that we have highlighted compel us to recognise the need to take into account student responsibility when evaluating such

measures, and thus the need to develop measures and strategies which enhance this quality in students themselves.

We need to be clear: certainly, the impetus behind the initial project was to improve students' experience of doing philosophy and in that way raise student performance. The strategies and measures that were developed in order to attain this end chiefly focused on what we might call 'the technical enrichment of learning and teaching'. They were not, however, the exclusive focus of the project. However, the danger is the attraction exerted by the tangible nature of such technical measures and strategies, allied with the immediate (but not permanent) improvements, would make this way of addressing the need to improve student performance appear the only effective way of assisting students to engage with the subject. The data we have examined has shown that such an inference is unwarranted. If an overwhelming importance is accorded to the technical enrichment of teaching it is, or would be, at the expense of a problem requiring more attention, namely students' motivation towards their studies. As our analysis of the data from the PP unit has shown, what is needed are a range of methods that address the problem of students' motivation, or lack thereof, whilst also supporting those students whose learning needs require technical enrichment.

It is clear that whilst universities as a whole have to confront the question of student motivation, it is the teacher or lecturer who has most immediately to address this—who has to motivate students in their studies. Generally, then, it is our belief that it is necessary to address the question of the difference between the technical enrichment of teaching and 'face-to-face' learning. It is not possible to address this question in any detail here, although it does warrant further study. However, we should like to end by noting that one of the recent ways in which universities have sought to tackle the issue of student motivation and encourage in students a sense of responsibility for their learning is through the introduction of Personal Development Planning (PDP), a process open to, but not compulsory for, students.[10] The PDP

[10] For a succinct outline of PDP and the rationale behind it see the *Guide for Busy Academics No.1 Personal Development Planning* issued by Learning and Teaching Support Network Generic Centre; for an assessment of the effectiveness of PDP see Gough DA, Kiwan D, Sutcliffe K, Simpson D, Houghton N 'A systematic map and synthesis review of the effectiveness of personal development planning for improv-

is presented to students as a measure through which they can develop a way of monitoring and reflecting upon their own learning experience. This is not to suggest that the PDP would be a universal panacea; but used at a unit specific level, it could become an important element in actively engaging students in the process of teaching and learning.

Appendix One

Marking criteria

70% + = first class
60%-69% = second class division one
50%-59% = second class division two
40%-49% = third class
0%-39% = fail

First Class Excellent/outstanding
90%-100% Brilliant and original writing of a standard comparable to professional publications in the field.

80%-89% Exceptional work, close to professional standards for publication, and of such perception that it might well challenge the examiner's own views. Work that demonstrates a wide breadth of knowledge and its application, together with the ability to develop and sustain a depth of argument across the whole course of an answer. The work provides evidence of originality in the approach to theory and/or method and/or application, or constitutes an original creative achievement. Reaches an excellent standard of evaluation, synthesis, and critical analysis. In assessed course work, the organisation and presentation of material as well as its content is excellent. Work in examinations falling in this band is often quite brief because the candidate has such mastery of the question that (s)he goes straight to the heart of the matter and concentrates on what is truly important.

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ing student learning', in: *Research Evidence in Education Library* (London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, 2003).

70%-79% Fine work that demonstrates all learning outcomes for the task or assignment in a well balanced way. In examination scripts, the question is fully answered, with excellent understanding and independent critical thought. There is evidence of the capacity to make connections with issues not directly raised by the question in such a way as to show wide reading and/or research. Appropriately extensive familiarity with secondary literature, relevant research findings, or, for example, thorough understanding of both primary and secondary sources. In assessed course work, the same features will be present together with a high level of accuracy, insight and clarity in analysis, a cogent and logical structure backed by research in depth, full, accurate citation and the critical use of materials. Presentation is excellent throughout.

Second Class, upper division: 2(i) Very good
60%-69% Learning outcomes achieved at an advanced level. All the strengths noted in the 2(ii) descriptors with, in addition, the following indications of very good work: in both assessed course work and examinations there is an accomplished demonstration of understanding and coherent organisation, expressed in clear and accurate use of language, with few, if any, errors or misunderstandings. There is evidence of substantial knowledge, for example through the relevant use of secondary sources, together with accurate analysis, consistency of argument, method or approach. The work is thoughtful, not merely rehearsing memorised material. Assessed course work is well presented, with logical structure, fluent expression, proper use of referencing and bibliographical material. Work near the top of the category will show some evidence of complexity and subtlety. Work near the bottom will be proficient at least, but possibly mechanical. Feedback will stress all relevant strengths, whilst suggesting precise areas for even better performance in future.

Second Class, lower division : 2(ii) Good
50%-59% Satisfactory work, achieving learning outcomes at a level significantly above threshold. In both assessed course work and examinations there is an obvious attempt to answer the question or address the topic, for example by showing evidence of reasonable familiarity with, understanding of, and acknowledgement of, relevant

basic sources of information. There will be a fair indication of knowledge, but less reliance on lecture notes or the uncritical use of introductory texts would improve the work. Analysis and evaluation are present, but could be more thorough or better integrated. Structure and presentation are good enough to make the argument clear, although this might be improved by more attention to grammar, style or presentation. Work near the bottom end of this category could be improved by fuller content, addressing the required criteria for the task more directly, more consistent application of relevant skills. Work near the top of this category will be generally competent. Feedback will indicate signs of promise whilst emphasising room for improvement in a variety of possible areas as a way of progressing to better quality or more consistent performance in future.

Third Class: Threshold achieved

40%-49% All learning outcomes demonstrated at basic threshold level. Feedback will acknowledge that the minimum pass standard has been achieved, but also emphasise room for improvement through fuller, more sophisticated understanding of fundamental issues, greater knowledge or evidential base, improved deployment of skills listed in the assessment criteria required for the specific task or assignment. In examinations this improvement might take the form of better understanding of the question or topic, improved clarity in argument or approach, more focus on relevant material, greater consistency of argument. In assessed course work this might take the form of less use of quoted or paraphrased material, better formal acknowledgement of sources. Exposition, analysis and evaluation could also be improved. If appropriate, advice from the Learning Support Unit should be suggested.

Fail: Below threshold

35%-39%: Marginal failure; unit may be eligible for compensation if required learning outcomes for Stage or Programme have been demonstrated. Unsatisfactory work that fails to demonstrate at least one of its required learning outcomes. This might include failure to achieve the level of discussion of a threshold pass answer, or be unfinished. In examinations, this could take the form of inadequate engagement with the question because of misunderstanding, or poor time management

leading to a seriously incomplete answer. Assessed course work could be scrappily presented, poorly expressed or structured, badly organised, contain errors or omissions, or show significant failures of comprehension. However, certain learning outcomes might have been achieved to minimum threshold standard, and there could be a rudimentary grasp of the topic, evidence of understanding of, or competence in, the general area, and this should be noted in feedback, together with recommendations for action to improve, possibly including advice from the Learning Support Unit, if appropriate.

20%-34%: comprehensive failure; unit ineligible for compensation

Extremely weak work that fails to demonstrate almost all of its required learning outcomes. Little or no attempt to answer the question, manifesting major or total misunderstanding. Hardly any assessed course work will be poor enough to fall in this band: if it does, all advice has apparently been ignored and there is little attempt to produce work of acceptable standard. Examination scripts are badly garbled and/or almost entirely inapplicable to the question asked. Feedback will warn that repeated work of such quality will prevent progress on the unit or programme, and suggest urgent actions for improvement including, if appropriate, help from Learning Support or Student Services.

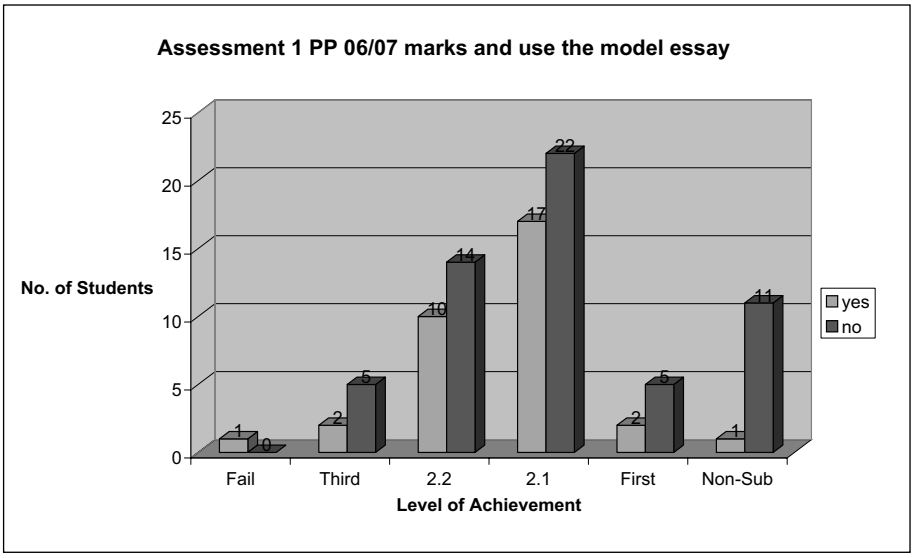
10%-19%: irrelevant or barely started work

No required learning outcomes demonstrated. No attempt to address the question or an answer of, for example, no more than approximately one hundred words. In assessed course work this band is probably unachievable without a deliberate intention to submit either nonsense, irrelevant material, or virtually nothing at all. In examinations this band covers those answers that range from nothing more than a paragraph, to pages of meaningless text without coherent discussion. Such work indicates serious problems, urgent steps should be taken to identify these and take appropriate action.

0%-9%: Virtually worthless work

Total irrelevance, complete avoidance of the question. Evidence of serious problems, to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Appendix 2



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Commodification of Body Parts, Tissues and Fluids:
Background Briefing

Sue Roff

Centre for Medical Education
Dundee University Medical School

The following briefing paper is a resource generated by a project funded by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies: 'Development of Case Based Teaching Materials for Inter-disciplinary Ethics Teaching about Organ Donation under the new Human Tissue Acts'. The aim of the project was to create materials that could be used to explore the new religious, philosophical and applied ethics issues that arise out of the Human Tissue Acts in the UK. Course materials have been developed for inter-disciplinary education for organ transplant coordination teams, which commonly consist of

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Vol. 7, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 187 - 206

religious and social work counsellors as well as health professionals. The materials have been piloted in ethics classes at the University of Dundee and there will be a report on this side of the project in a future issue of *Discourse*.

Abstract

The recent insistence by a senior adviser to the WHO on issues relating to global trafficking of organs that transfer of body parts for transplantation through either illegal market mechanisms or even regulated organ donor systems is a form of 'sacrificial violence' comes at a moment when the volume and reality of the trade in organs and other body parts and tissues is itself a major argument for its legalisation through regulation. Nancy Scheper-Hughes, who made this statement[1], is an anthropologist who has studied the illegal organ trade for decades. But it is important to put the growing 'commodification' of body materials that have increasing utility and therefore value in modern medicine into perspective by looking at it from several aspects, as the following briefing does.

Introduction

Twenty years ago a prominent American legal theorist wrote a seminal article in the *Harvard Law Review*[2] on 'market-inalienability' of body parts, tissues and fluids. Professor Radin maintained that 'We feel discomfort or even insult, and we fear degradation or even loss of the value involved, when bodily integrity is conceived of as a fungible object.' (p.1881) But in fact we allow the sale of many body parts and services. The fact that 'bodily integrity' is being 'violated' on a daily basis in all our societies suggest that hers was an ivory tower view. In other words we have to 'get real' and put the ethical issues surrounding

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[1] Scheper-Hughes N., 'The Tyranny of the Gift: Sacrificial Violence in Living Donor Transplants'. *American Journal of Transplantation* 7 (2007) pp. 507-511.

[2] Radin, Margaret Jane, 'Market-Inalienability'. *Harvard Law Review* 100;8(1987) : pp. 1849-1937.

the fungibility of commodified body elements—the sale of human tissues, fluids and organs—into the current social context of rapid changes in medical technology that makes transplantation as likely to be as an option for many of us at some stages of our lives as open heart surgery and valve repair or replacement is today. We refuse to countenance the possibility of a regulated, ethical, live kidney market, for instance, at a time when a black market is flourishing and the demand for kidney transplantation is increasing as it is recommended 'pre-emptively', even prior to dialysis, for many patients. Why are we being so precious about kidneys when we permit so much else of the body to be 'commodified'?

Stolen parts

Nearly two hundred years ago a new word entered the English language—'burking', meaning murder for dissection. The two most notorious practitioners were Burke and Hare who murdered 15 people in Edinburgh for the express purpose of selling their corpses to anatomists teaching medical students. The Aberdeen anatomy lecture theatre was called 'the burking shop' when it was burned down by angry crowds in 1831. Burking became profitable because the teaching of medicine became more scientific and anatomy became more important, to the extent that some medical students paid their fees to the private teachers with bodies that they had procured in the poorer quarters of the cities and countryside. Cadavers were in short supply because until the Anatomy Acts of 1829 and 1832 they were supposed to be those of hanged murderers, for whom dissection after death was decreed as an additional punishment. (Holland also allowed anatomists such as those at Leiden to publicly dissect the corpses of executed criminals as a further punishment as well as a resource for medical teaching; reconstructions of the tiered anatomy theatre can be seen in the Boerhave Museum.)

The Anatomy Acts now authorised the use of 'unclaimed' corpses, usually from the indigent, for anatomy teaching. The poor usually regarded that as a punishment for being poor, and I can remember in my own childhood in the 1950s in Australia that keeping up the funeral fund contributions when the collector came round fortnightly was a very real concern. Because body snatching had become

such a real danger in Britain, many funeral practices involved guarding the corpse until it could be buried. Funeral processions were often accompanied by guards bearing truncheons to fight off snatchers. The wealthy encased their coffins in metal grids and stored them in stone mausoleums. Some graveyards still have stone 'death houses' where bodies were laid to decompose before being buried so that they would be of less interest to the body snatchers.

Burke and Hare's first sale was of a lodger who died owing Burke rent. They found a market ready to pay £7.10 shillings to help recoup the outstanding monies. Much of the parliamentary rhetoric in the debates leading to the new Acts was about recouping the costs of keeping paupers in workhouses by selling their corpses to the medical teachers. As Ruth Richardson writes in her definitive account, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*[3] 'What had for generations been a feared and hated punishment for murder became one for poverty.'

The fact that Burke's body was publicly dissected as a much-publicised 'fitting' additional punishment to his execution (and his skin rumoured to have been made in to a wallet still on view at the Edinburgh Surgeon's Hall Museum), and that several hundred bodies a year were supplied by parish workhouses, prison hulks and hospitals because they were 'unclaimed' by family or friends who could not afford their burial in the 1830s and 1840s, did not endear the prospect of dissection to the British public. The philosopher Jeremy Bentham donated his body for dissection in 1832, but the scientific and medical classes did not rush to similarly serve the public good of enhanced medical teaching. The practice of public authorities selling unclaimed bodies to medical schools continues today in the US, as evidenced by recent reports[4]from Portland, Oregon of a corpse of an unclaimed man being sold for $37.50 to the local medical school whose students did not realise that the bodies they were dissecting were procured in this way. It is alleged that very little or no effort was made to contact the man's relatives because he had been homeless in the city in earlier years and was thought to be without family or friends. In 2006 an exhibition of the anatomists' art using bodies from Dalian Medical

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[3] Phoenix Press, 1988, 2001 p.xv.

[4] Michelle Roberts. Death on a Portland street turns into a sorry tale of disrespect. *The Oregonian*. March 25, 2007

School in China opened in London, shortly after Gunther von Hagen's similar *Bodyworlds* exhibition of 'plastinated' bodies, also from Dalian. Uneasiness over the origins of the bodies and the level of consent to their posthumous use was countered by the promoters by appeals to the educational and artistic value of the exhibitions. However the UK Department of Health reported[5] a drop in donations of bodies for anatomy teaching and medical research. The Chief Medical Officer wrote to all doctors in England in early 2006 to urge them to leave their bodies to institutions such as medical schools and the Royal Colleges of Surgeons. The English Department of Health maintains[6] that in the 1990s very few medical schools accepted bodies without the personal request of the donor, and none since 2000.

George Washington is said to have had a tooth implant from a dead soldier, and the poor commonly sold their teeth in the eighteenth century. Sir William Osler reputedly said to a drunken beggar 'There is only one thing of value about you, and that is your hobnailed liver'—which he received a fortnight later when the man died.

In recent years, the public's willingness to donate their cadavers for medical teaching and research has been further dented by the misappropriation of body parts and tissues on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the twentieth century ended, two major programmes of unconsented 'organ and tissue retention' came to public attention almost simultaneously. In the early 1950s the US Atomic Energy Commission had instituted a secret collection of bones and other material from stillborn and other deceased children as well as adults from several countries including Australia and the UK. Called *Operation Sunshine*, the objective was to test the 'uptake' of Strontium 90 (named after the Strontian region in Scotland where it was first found) from the 'atmospheric' atomic and nuclear weapons tests that were being carried out at the height of the Cold War. It was beginning to be realised that the 'fall out' from these tests was more substantial, more injurious and occurring more quickly than had been anticipated. Thousands of samples were collected—more than 21,000 samples in Australia alone. The bones, particularly femurs, were taken from the

[5] Department of Health. More body donations needed to sustain medical education, training and research. Issued May 14, 2007.
[6] ibid.

corpses before burial—and without consent of the newly-bereaved parents or other next of kin. The bones were reduced to ash, which was sent to the US for radioactive analysis. The collectors were recruited through professional contacts around the world, and were working in what has been termed by US reviewers as a 'twilight between openness and secrecy.' Pathologists and their assistants were paid to collect these samples without consent. In the correspondence subsequently reviewed by the Independent Review Group convened under Professor Sheila McLean in Scotland (which had also supplied thousands of samples) there is a statement from Dr Willard Libby of the AEC—'If anybody knows how to do a good job body snatching, they will really be serving his country.'[7] In fact, the study was significant in bringing about the ban on atmospheric nuclear tests in 1963 but when the practice came to light in the late 1990s there was strong condemnation of the lack of consent even under conditions of national security. Papers were published in the medical journals about the studies, which tended to undermine the 'official secrecy' prerogatives claimed by the collectors at the time and in retrospect.

Revelations about *Operation Sunshine* coincided with the realisation that several UK hospitals—particularly in Alder Hey and Bristol—had been 'stockpiling' more than 100,000 organ, bone and tissue samples without informed consent from patients or their next of kin. Although intended for medical research, there was often little evidence of plans to use the material. At much the same time, there was evidence of the selling of some material such as pituitary glands to commercial drug companies without informed consent.

The fact that the doctor at the centre of the Alder Hey scandal, Professor van Velzen, could not be prosecuted under the existing law (although he was later struck off the Medical Register by the General Medical Council) highlighted the need for a review of the legislation covering the retention of human material at *post mortem* and the level of informed consent required from patients and their families. Major consultations were initiated throughout the UK leading to the Human Tissues Acts in Scotland and south of the border in 2006. Some—particularly medical researchers—consider the Acts' provisions an over-reaction to the practices of the previous fifty years but in fact, as

[7] **http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/scotorgrev/Strontium%2090%20Report/roos90.pdf**

we will see, they widen the opportunities for the giving of kidneys from living donors in particular. It was estimated that of the approximately 37,000 people affected by the 'organ retention' scandals, about 2,000 claimed compensation which cost the NHS nearly ten million pounds. There was a sharp drop in the number of autopsies being agreed to, such that pathologists warn of problems in securing material for medical research—and problems in the public perception of their profession.

In the USA, the public have become aware that body parts—bones, tendons, ligaments, heart valves, teeth—are being appropriated from corpses for sale to dentists and surgeons for implantation in patients. When the family of the broadcaster Alastair Cooke scattered his ashes in Central Park from Starbucks cups as he requested, they did not realise that several bones had been removed and sold for $7000. The *Guardian* reported[8] that 'Funeral directors were reportedly paid $500 for a corpse, which would then be dissected. The relevant body parts were then taken away and PVC pipes used to fill out the clothed bodies that would go into open caskets. The body parts would later be separated, frozen and shipped by express mail to legitimate companies which would undertake further processing before final sale and transplant. Meanwhile medical records, including the age of the deceased and cause of death, would be altered to make the body parts more attractive to potential buyers.' It has been estimated that the final market value of one corpse can be up to $200,000 in a market, both legitimate and illegal, estimated at $1 billion a year. Some state Medical Examiners' offices have standing arrangements with commercial companies to alert them to potential donors—but the donors' families are not always told that commercial transactions including annual fees to the officials are involved. Even major universities such as the University of California, Los Angeles reportedly[9] have been involved in the trade. Patients—including for instance British footballers who go to the US for cruciate ligament replacements—cannot be sure their transplanted and implanted 'parts' have not come from such sources, or that they have been properly

[8] December 23, 2005

[9] Official accused of profiting from dead. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. April 20, 2007 p.10

checked for HIV, Hepatitis C or other pathogens. American body parts have been exported to Australia and Europe. These latest 'body snatching' scandals will hopefully lead to mandatory regulation by the American Association of Tissue Banks rather than the current voluntary process, but observers warn that the industry has powerful reasons to oppose such legislation.

Medicine is moving so swiftly now that the genome has been mapped and many more procedures and research opportunities are opening up that will need both deceased and living materials from patients to benefit us all in the near future. 'Tissue banking' and its licensure are critical priorities for our Departments of Health. The new Human Tissues Acts are a first effort to develop 'fit for purpose' legislation for the twenty first century, and they already include compromises. The Secretary of State for Health told the House of Commons[10] on the publication of the report of the inquiry into the Alder Hey retentions that Professor van Velzen 'systematically ordered the unethical and illegal stripping of every organ from every child who had a post-mortem. He ignored parents' wishes even when they told him explicitly that they did not want a full post-mortem, let alone the retention of their child's organs…van Velzen lied to parents. He lied to other doctors. He lied to hospital managers. He stole medical records. He falsified statistics and report and encouraged other staff to do the same.' Yet he could not be prosecuted under English law as it stood at that time. Five years later the vice president of the Royal College of Pathologists reminded us in an editorial on The Human Tissue Act in the *British Medical Journal*[11] that the previous year the Nobel Prize for Medicine had been awarded for the discovery of *Helicobacter pylori* as the main cause of peptic ulcers. 'This work started by staining sections from 100 archival gastric biopsies—highly speculative research, without consent, external funding, or peer review.' As we move inexorably in to the new era of 'spare parts medicine' we need to balance these two imperatives.

[10] 30/01/01

[11] 9 September 2006 p.512

Defective parts

The collection of the 'renewable' body fluid, blood, provides an important case study in the issues surrounding the provision of 'spare parts' for medical purposes. Nearly forty years ago, Richard M. Titmuss, Professor of Social Administration at the University of London, wrote what is widely considered to be the classic study of The Gift Relationship: from Human Blood to Social Policy.[12] However, even in 1970, Titmuss noted that only Britain, Eire and two or three other countries were relying on totally voluntary, unpaid donation of blood. Most countries were paying 'donors' for their blood even then. Titmuss issued a stinging critique of paid blood provision, raising several issues that we need to address today not only in relation to blood but to all the other tissues, organs, fluids and 'services' such as surrogacy that 21st century medicine will need. He wrote in 1970: (p.277)

'From our study of the private market in blood in the United States we have concluded that the commercialization of blood and donor relationships represses the expression of altruism, erodes the sense of community, lowers scientific standards, limits both personal and professional freedoms, sanctions the making of profits in hospitals and clinical laboratories, legalizes hostility between doctor and patient, subjects critical areas of medicine to the laws of the marketplace, places immense social costs on those least able to bear them—the poor, the sick and the inept—increases the danger of unethical behaviour in various sectors of medical science and practice, and results in situations in which proportionately more and more blood is supplied by the poor, the unskilled, the unemployed, Negroes and other low income groups and categories of exploited human populations of high blood yielders. Redistribution in terms of blood and blood products from the poor to the rich appears to be one of the dominant effects of the American blood banking systems.'

But Professor Titmuss's views about the superiority and sustainability of the 'gift relationship' as the basis of sourcing of human blood supplies were based on shaky data even in 1970. Blood provision has been 'incentivised' by various strategies in the United States, ranging from out right cash payments to trading stamps, and tickets to movies

[12] Penguin Books Ltd. Harmondsworth 1970, 1973

or baseball games. In South Carolina and Mississippi 'discounts on prison sentences' were offered if prisoners donated blood; in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts five days for each point of blood remission on sentences over 30 days. Members of the armed forces are given additional leave if they provide blood.

By 1970, according to Titmuss, in Japan approximately 98% of all blood was bought and sold. The quality control was poor—65-95% of patients developed serum hepatitis from bought blood at one Tokyo hospital. The transmission of syphilis was as big a danger as that of hepatitis.

Apart from being a 'renewable resource' in the donor or provider, blood proved to be storable, and separable into various valuable constituents such as plasma and albumin. Not every medical use required whole blood. Nearly a hundred years ago, in 1912 the French doctor Alexis Carrel was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for his work on the storage of tissues for transplantation, especially blood. The market potential was immediately recognised in the United States, and various forms of commercial and non-commercial 'blood banking' were set up. They relied predominantly on bought blood, although there is an active donation programme around churches and hospitals in the US. The production of blood products was intensified, as were many other procedures such as the bulk production of penicillin during the Second World War as the government worked with the private sector to increase supplies and distribute them in freeze-dried form to war zones on several continents.

The first clotting products for haemophiliacs were developed in the 1960s, and in the 1970s the UK imported large quantities of Factor VIII from the US because its voluntary donation system could not keep up with the demand for blood products—despite Titmuss' assumptions in his 1970 book. But these imported products were made from blood collected from high risk groups—and the British authorities were aware of this by the early 1980s—perhaps even by 1976. A meeting held on July 3, 1983 on the Committee on Safety of Medicines was told that patients who repeatedly receive blood clotting-factor concentrates were at risk of contracting AIDS. The Committee was advised that 'It is to be hoped that there is no 'ticking time bomb' for haemophiliacs.' However, because of the shortage of the products for haemophiliacs and others, the UK authorities continued to import from the USA. The

UK government acknowledges that 4,760 patients with haemophilia were exposed to hepatitis C through contaminated NHS blood and products and 1,243 of these people were also exposed to HIV. By mid-2007 1,757 had died, and many are terminally ill.

An independent enquiry into what Lord Winston calls 'the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS'[13] in mid-2007 was told that haemophiliacs were not informed of their HIV status when it manifested, and were kept for years in ignorance of the danger to themselves, their partners and their families. One such person, Robert Mackie, told the enquiry: 'I believe non-consensual research was conducted by doctors of haemophilia in this country. We were all used as lab rats. There is no other way I can put it—we were all just guinea pigs.'[14] Other victims and their families likened the situation to the Tuskagee syphilis trials which ran from 1932 to 1972 in Alabama. Nearly 400 poor Afro-American sharecroppers diagnosed with syphilis were not treated with penicillin when it became available and shown to be effective in the 1940s. They and their partners and families were not even informed of their diagnosis but were told they had 'bad blood' and could receive free medical treatment, rides to the clinic, meals and burial insurance in case of death in return for participating in the study. President Clinton apologised for the Tuskagee trials during his presidency; the UK government has established a compensation scheme of up to £45,000 for the victims of the contaminated blood products, but not their families. However, the Department of Health refused to send officials to the independent enquiry chaired by Lord Archer of Sandwell in 2007, although it was being held on the same street in London. The former Labour health minister Lord Owen told[15] the enquiry in July 2007 that government documents relating to the contamination had been 'selectively' destroyed.

One problem was that the production techniques used in the last decades of the 20th century in the US for blood products pooled thousands of blood donations, so that large numbers of their products were

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[13] Sarah Hall. Government knew of HIV risk from imported blood. *The Guardian* May 25, 2007 p.1

[14] Gerri Peev. 'Used as HIV guinea pigs but no-one even told us we had been infected.' *The Scotsman* May 25,2007 p.2

[15] Rachel Williams. Documents on blood risk were pulped. *The Guardian* July 12, 2007

infected by a few virus-carriers. In a bitter irony, British blood and blood products have shown to be contaminated with vCJD and are now banned in several countries where they had been sold. Individuals who have received blood transfusions in the UK since 1980 are banned from donating blood back in to the system. It is thought that the problem arose from just 23 donations made by 9 donors who went on to develop vCJD—an indication of the virulence of the disease. The Canadian Red Cross also distributed contaminated blood supplies which infected thousands of Canadians with HIV and hepatitis C. French administrators have been found guilty of lack of due diligence in similar problems. The new Scottish National Party government has announced an official enquiry into the continued provision of contaminated blood in Scotland after the warnings were sounded. The same month a major London hospital was planning to 'donate' blood samples from haemophiliacs to American researchers trying to develop a test for vCJD—without the patients' permission, and much to their chagrin. Similar chagrin is being expressed today by the Yanomani tribe of Venezuela and Brazil who agreed to give blood and other human tissue samples to medical anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s for what they thought would be medical help for their increasing problems as they interacted with other societies in the modern world. Apart from the fact that it has been suggested that the research teams provoked a measles epidemic rather than containing it by their vaccination programmes at the time, the Yanomani have seen little return and now understand that their blood samples were used for DNA and other tests to establish the perils of radiation exposure at Hiroshima, Nagasaki and other atomic and nuclear testing sites. Remaining material has been handed over to the Human Genome Project without full consultation with the tribe, who are also offended by the long term storage of blood and other materials from deceased relatives, much against their beliefs and funerary practices which are based on cremation.

In its new market economy of the last decades of the 20th century, Chinese officials have not heeded the lessons from these countries. There are an estimated 55,000 commercial blood and plasma donors infected with HIV in China.[16] Most providers are peasants selling their blood and plasma to officially condoned, and sometimes operated,

[16] 'Blood Debts'. *New Scientist* January 20, 2007 p.67

buying stations. In some villages virtually the whole community participated, often in repeated donations over short periods of time, using soy bottles and plastic bags to store the blood. Yan Lianke has written a novel about the blood-selling scandal in his native province of Henan—the novel has been banned in China.

A study[17] conducted ten years ago in the UK suggests that the two million current blood donors were a shrinking resource even then. Altruistic inclinations are apparently declining in young Britons in particular, and many reported a fear of needles, of making a fool of themselves by fainting or of discovering they had a serious disease. The European Parliament has recommended a shift to wholly voluntary unpaid donors. Studies in Sweden[18], Spain[19], the USA[20] and the UK[21] have explored the motivation of donors and conclude that many volunteers would be offended by payments beyond £10 or in-kind compensations such as cholesterol screening or PSA tests for prostate cancer. But the class basis of these findings is not clear and it may be that more affluent donors are not motivated by cash payments while indigent providers are highly motivated by them. It is estimated that the EEC still imports over $600 million worth of plasma and derived products from US manufacturers who pay the providers. Clearly there is a two-tier 'economy' of blood donation and provision. Kieran Healy surveys the system of voluntary and paid blood collection in European countries in the early 1990s in his 2006 book *Last Best Gifts*[22]. The vCJD crisis in the UK shows that donors are not exempt from the need for as strict quality controls as sellers.

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[17] Ferriman, Annabel, 'Decline in altruism threatens blood supplies', *BMJ* 317;p.1405.

[18] Nilsson Sojka, B. and Sojka P., 'The blood-donation experience: perceived physical, psychological and social impact of blood donation on the donor'. *Vox Sanguinis* 84(2003):pp.120-128.

[19] Suarez, Isabel Maria Belda et al. 'How regular blood donors explain their behaviour'. *Transfusion* 44 (2004):pp. 1441-1446.

[20] Glynn, Simone A. et al, 'Attitudes toward blood donation incentives in the United States: implications for donor recruitment'. *Transfusion* 43 (2003)pp.7-16.

[21] Giles, M., McClenehan, C., Cairns E, and Mallet, J., 'An application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to blood donation: the importance of self-efficacy'. *Health Education Research*. 19(4) (2004) pp. 380-91.

[22] University of Chicago Press.

From prostitution to surrogacy via IVF

The selling of sexual services is as old as humankind. There are an estimated 1,400 female prostitutes working in Scotland. In Edinburgh and Aberdeen 'toleration zones' similar to those in Amsterdam exist. But they have been encroached upon by rapid urban development and 'anti-nuisance' laws could eradicate them. New laws coming in to effect in late 2007 establish fines of up to £1,000 for soliciting sex. In other words, the buyers are being targeted rather than the sellers of these 'body services'. Throughout the UK there is thought to be an 'expanding market' of sex workers coming in from countries in Eastern Europe or South America. Many of these women say they have been tricked and forced into working as sex slaves. One murdered prostitute's mother said[23] she was proud of her daughter for choosing to pay for her heroin habit by prostitution rather than mugging. But she found that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority would pay only £5,000 for the loss of her daughter, half what would be paid for the murder of a 19 year old woman working in any less dangerous capacity.

Jane Austen's novels, like many of the last two centuries, treat marriage as the negotiation of financial agreements. This is one reason why marriage is declining in Western countries. Some women who value their financial independence over the perils of marital relationships even view the fathers of their children as mere sperm donors. The UK television 'hospital soap' *Holby City* has a story line involving a 40-something senior doctor using her 30-something male trainee as a sperm donor and fighting his access to the child. I have known children of broken marriages refer to their absent father as 'the sperm donor'.

The initial reaction to the loss of anonymity for sperm donors in the UK in 2005 was a dramatic reduction in the number of sellers and donors. We seem to have no ethical problems with the sale of life-creating material from the male for relatively small amounts of money—usually £50 or $100 a phial. The quality control over this material is also uneven—Spanish fertility doctors have recently

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[23] Interview with Dianne Parry. *The Guardian* 5.08.06 p.3 Family

[24] Castilla, Jose Antonio, Sanchez-Leon, Maria, Garrido, Antonio, Ramirez Juan .P,

called[24] for much more stringent procedures. In the US sperm banks commonly seek to match the buyers' preferences with the profile of the sperm seller—possession of a doctorate enhances the monetary value of the sperm—sometimes referred to as 'the Ivy League effect'. In the aftermath of Chernobyl there was a marked increase in sperm sales from US banks driven by people in Eastern Europe wanting to obviate the possible genetic effects of radiation exposure.

A study[25] of 1101 men who contacted Newcastle Fertility Centre in the UK in the period 1994-2003 found that fewer than 4% were 'released' to become donors. Nearly 31% dropped out, and around 65% were rejected, mainly for poor semen quality. Nearly 90% of the applicants were aged 36 or under; more than half of them were students, and more than half without a partner. Around 85% were unmarried. The pregnancy rate from the sperm in this clinic over this period was about 24%, comparable with the national UK rates.

Our attitudes to the 'replenishable' provision of sperm seem very different to the harvesting of eggs from females. While women are born with a finite number of eggs, which become available in the menstrual cycle, most of us 'use' only two or three for conception in our lifetimes. At a time when fertility experts such as Lord Winston have stated[26] that IVF services are becoming rapacious in the UK, with cycles costing £3-5000 and having barely 20% success rates, women who are undergoing stimulation therapy are being encouraged to donate extra eggs to less fortunate couples. In July, 2006 the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) permitted 'part-payment' of the IVF services with extra eggs. The HFEA extended that principle to the collection of extra eggs for research. Now women who are not involved in IVF treatments are permitted to 'donate' eggs for research, for up to £250 compensation for 'lost earnings'. The US has permitted the sale of eggs in a free market that often leads to payments of around $10,000. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of the UK has

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Clavero, Ana and Martinez, Luis, 'Procedure control and acceptance sampling plans for donor sperm banks: a theoretical study'. *Cell and Tissue Banking* DDOI 10.1007/s10561-007-9041-4 (2007)

[25] Paul,S., Harbottle, S. and Stewart, J.A.,'Recruitment of sperm donors: the Newcastle-upon-Tyne experience 1994-2003', *Human Reproduction* 21:1:pp.150-158 (2006).

[26] Jha, Alok, 'Winston:IVF clinics corrupt and greedy'. *The Guardian* May 31 2007, p.1.

urged stronger protocols to ensure the wellbeing of women who are undergoing ovarian hyper-stimulation which can lead to a life-threatening syndrome. There is evidence of cross-border selling of eggs, with women being brought in to Britain for the purpose and of British women travelling to other countries for the treatment because the waiting lists are long on the NHS and even in the private IVF clinics in the UK. A London woman aged 54 advertised for egg donors in a month-long poster campaign on buses and says her clinic received about 60 responses. One unpaid donor made it clear that she felt she was providing material for conception rather than becoming the mother of the resulting baby. She sees 'that this is an unfertilised cell. I would not think of myself as the child's mother. The recipient carries the child, gives birth to and makes milk for the baby and brings them up.'[27]

The number of women in the UK aged more than 40 seeking IVF treatment has increased more than 10-fold in the last 15 years.[28] At the same time, restrictions are being placed on the number of fertilised embryos that are implanted because of the rising number of multiple births that put strain both on the mothers medically and on the NHS financially because the babies are likely to be premature and need extra post-natal support. It is not uncommon to see multiple sets of twins and triplets in UK primary school classes. There are 85 fertility clinics in the UK in an industry estimated to be worth up to half a billion pounds a year. As Lord Winston commented in May, 2007: 'One of the major problems facing us in healthcare is that IVF has become a massive commercial industry. It's very easy to exploit people by the fact that they're desperate and you've got the technology which they want, which may not work.'[29] Debora Spar, a Harvard Business School professor who studied *The Baby Business*[30] commented: 'When people learn they are infertile the diagnosis is received as harshly as a diagnosis of cancer. When people want children and can't produce they will do virtually anything in order to get these children. That means from a

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[27] Sarah Harris. (2006) Why I donated my eggs to IVF. *The Guardian* November 14.p.19 G2

[28] Zosia Kmietowicz. (2007) More women over 40 seek fertility treatment. BMJ 334:1187

[29] Alok Jha op cit

[30] Harvard Business School Press 2006

commercial point of view this is great. You will have customers that will do anything to get that product.'[31] And the IVF techniques have extended women's childbearing capacity into their sixties if they are determined enough, as a 63 year old consultant child psychiatrist demonstrated using a donor egg obtained in Russia fertilised by her husband's sperm and carried in her womb—resulting in effect in a 'three biological parent' child born in 2006. At the other end of the age spectrum, eggs have been 'harvested' from a five year old Israeli girl suffering from cancer to enable her to conceive in adulthood. Ownership of frozen embryos has become a highly litigious issue for many couples whose relationship collapses, or in some cases where a partner dies without making explicit statements about the status of the reproductive material. The fertilisation and storage of embryos in Petri dishes also raises philosophical and religious issues not considered by our moral advisers in previous centuries. And the introduction of a 'surrogate' womb when a second woman is involved to carry the child—usually for 'living/loss of earning expenses' which commonly amount to $30,000 in the USA—further complicates the issues. There is increased reporting of mothers carrying their daughter's (i.e. their own grandchild) baby for them, and of siblings providing the same service.

Many of the same techniques that make up IVF can also be turned to 'foetal reduction' and 'foetal selection'. Some embryos are discarded in the laboratory; some are terminated in the womb to prevent multiple or defective births now that a wealth of genetic testing techniques are available. The most common 'selection' principle has been gender and this has been outlawed in India because it has resulted in a male-prevalent birth rate in recent decades. But 'pre-implantation genetic diagnosis' which became available in the 1990s can identify far more attributes and problems than gender; and 'post-implantation' diagnoses began with amniocentesis techniques thirty years ago and now are vastly wider and more sophisticated, leading to challenging decisions for some parents. Less invasive techniques than amniocentesis have been used in Denmark for all pregnant women, and resulted in a doubling of the number of foetuses diagnosed between 2004 and 2006 suffering from trisomy 21 but also a halving of the number of

[31] Andrew Cole. (2006) Assisted conception business should be better regulated. BMJ 332: 748

children born with Down's syndrome.[32] And parents can also work with their doctors to achieve a 'designer baby' who will have genetic attributes required to save a sibling from a life-threatening disease such as Diamond-Blackfan anaemia or thalassaemia major. 21st century morality concerning abortion has to take account not only of the increased ability to help infants survive outside the womb at an earlier stage of gestation but also of the 'continuum' with foetal selection and reduction at the earliest stages of conception. Abortion rose 4% in the UK in 2006 over 2005[33] and it is thought that teenagers in particular are increasingly using it as a form of contraception. Even so the UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe. It is estimated that only 1% of UK abortions are performed for medical reasons. At the same time, wider familiarity with ultrasound pictures is making us realise that foetuses may have feelings earlier than assumed, and make it more emotionally difficult to terminate 'unwanted' or unexpected pregnancies. New techniques now make it possible to pursue stem cell research without destroying the embryos. The decidedly alarming prospect of human cloning and its attendant problems—including philosophical issues around the notion of 'personhood'—is virtually upon us. Umbilical cords have assumed ever increasing values in medical research and therapy and their futures market is likely to be strong. Child-raising is estimated at a quarter of a million pounds for the middle classes in the UK; the *Financial* Times columnist 'Mrs Moneypenny' refers to her children as 'costcentres.' And each new UK birth generates 160 times more climate-related environmental damage as a new birth in Ethiopia, or 35 times as much as a Bangladeshi newborn, according to a report by the Optimum Population Trust in July 2007. The same week it was reported[34] that an Indian grandfather had buried his infant granddaughter alive because he did not want to bear the cost of raising another girl. Other Indian girls were having their hair 'harvested' for the wig trade in North America and Europe.

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[32] Susan Mayor. (2007)Denmark halves Down's births by non-invasive screening in early pregnancy. BMJ 334:1291

[33] Lucy Ward. Abortions increase by 40% in one year. *The Guardian* 20/06/07 p.12

[34] Baby girl buried alive by grandfather. *The Scotsman* 06/07/07 p.28

Renting bodies

There are already in operation several 'incentive models' for the involvement of human beings in medical activities which are not of direct benefit to themselves.[35] In both the UK and the US living kidney donors currently have their expenses related to the operation and recovery reimbursed by NHS, Medicare and/or insurance companies or in the state of Wisconsin by tax rebates to the value of $10,000. Private sector employers and the US Federal government provide several weeks of leave for organ donation. This *Reimbursement Model* is closer to a 'service' model of compensation for income lost than a 'market' model of sale of a commodity. The service model is well established in the payment of research subjects who are paid for their time/loss of earnings (on a *Wage-Payment Model* that references the national minimum wage) and the risk factor and unpleasantness of the procedures they are subjecting themselves to. While a US study found a range of $5 to $2,000 for medical research participants, UK drug testing companies commonly offer £2,000-3,000 for unpleasant regimes requiring residence in a testing unit. Another American study found that while monetary payment had positive effects on respondents' willingness to participate in research regardless of the level of risk, higher payments did not appear to blind respondents to the risks of a study. This may not hold true in the UK where after the Northwick Park trials that resulted in life-threatening problems for several participants, there was a reported increase in enquiries from potential subjects to clinical trials managers. Many research organisations pay completion bonuses in order to motivate subjects to stick it out through unpleasant regimens.

As we have seen, we already permit the sale of body parts and fluids on the *Market Model*. Blood and gametes are distributed and redistributed for a monetary value. The UK is one of the minority of countries to still rely on predominantly volunteer donations of blood. Although the sperm and ova have the awesome power of creating new human life, we do not seem to worry too much about their 'fungibility'—the fact that in these transactions they are being traded and

[35]Rabbit Roff, Sue, 'Thinking the Unthinkable: Selling Kidneys'. BMJ 2006; 333:51

provided as 'things'. Which is to say that we have gone a long way towards 'commodifying' body parts, tissues and fluids and accepting their 'fungibility' in the process of enhancing their utility in both curative and preventative medicine. And indeed in elective procedures such as abortion, foetal reduction and selection.

We have also already determined 'tariffs' for the value of certain body parts in *Compensation Models* for workers' accidents or criminal injury or injury incurred during military service. The UK Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority pays £2,500 for a fractured coccyx, £3,800 for a hernia and £22,000 for loss of one kidney. The UK Veterans Agency has just issued a 15-level list of tariffs which is compatible with the Judicial Studies Board Guidelines for the Assessment of General Damages in Personal Injury Cases. More than a billion dollars has been paid out under the US Radiation Exposure Compensation Systems and the Marshall Islands Nuclear Claims Tribunal (which pays $75,000 for cancer of the kidney).

Conclusion

Is it so great a step to developing an ethical, regulated market for kidneys? An unethical, unregulated market in body parts flourishes and its volume is the single greatest argument that the time has come to engage in a public debate about a regulatory framework that would be ethical and efficient as the gap between 'donors', deceased or living, and the number of patients in need is set to widen even further with the acceptance of pre-emptive kidney transplantation as a better clinical response than dialysis. Several such frameworks have been proposed in recent years but there has been no attempt to examine public acceptance of the potential to extend existing notions of fungibility and commodification of other body parts to kidneys, or partial liver and lung transplants from living providers. At a time when the UK is likely to move to 'opt out' organ donation, we should look carefully at the alternatives.

Creativity and Enjoyment in Philosophy Teaching: Lessons From Adult Education

Andrea Kenkmann

Research Associate, School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice
University of East Anglia

This paper describes some of the differences of teaching in adult education and higher education. It is argued that higher education in general seems to be more reluctant to incorporate strategies of active learning and learner-centred approaches than further and adult education. However, as the latest literature of higher education theory demonstrates, there are increasingly attempts to change higher education into a more involved and creative learning

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environment. Yet when one looks at the examples given in the literature one quickly realises few of them refer to teaching philosophy.

Philosophy—theoretical almost per definition—does not lend itself easily to kinaesthetic learning. But does this mean we can only continue in what has been up to now the conventional way of philosophy teaching? Whereas universities that provide small seminar and tutorial groups can probably afford to do so, universities where groups are larger and the student body is more inclusive might have to come up with more innovative ideas to capture students' imagination. This paper tries to provide some tentative suggestions as to what these might be.

Introduction

When I first started teaching in adult education it took me a while to unlearn my preconceptions of what education is. I had always enjoyed education, but I had also regarded it as a somewhat serious business with rigid structures. The teacher or lecturer would explain the material and then tasks would be set for students to accomplish. Teaching in higher education still follows this pattern to a large extent: the lecture is the presentation of material and the seminar discussion and the essay are the tasks to consolidate what one has heard.

Adult education however is fundamentally different.[1] There is a greater emphasis on the enjoyment of education and there is more creativity in the classroom. The mix of students in many ways provides a challenge to the teaching in adult education, but it also provides variety and colour. It requires a more open and learner-centred approach to teaching, as otherwise the different needs cannot be met. As students attend classes to socialise and enjoy themselves as well as to learn, the key to high quality adult education is the idea of making learning fun as well as stimulating.

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[1] There is a substantial literature on how adult education differs, see for example Rogers, J *Adult Learning* (Milton Keynes & New York: OUP 2001), Knowles, M et al *The Adult Learner* (Butterworth Heinemann 1997), Petty, *G Teaching Today* (Nelson Thornes 1998)

The contrast of adult education and higher education became very pronounced to me during a semester where I taught adults in the evening and then the next morning I would give a lecture and seminars at a university. Whereas in my evening class we often roared with laughter, played games and moved around in the classroom, some of the university students often slouched in the back row of the lecture hall disinterested and unwilling to contribute anything and when asked to move the tables for a more communicative layout for the seminars, they often struggled to do even this and ended up still sitting in rows.

So what is it that causes these two settings to provide such different experiences of education? There might be a variety of factors leading to the overall different experience, but my argument in this paper is that teaching methods in adult education are considerably more stimulating than standard teaching methods in higher education. They provide a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere of learning where students are encouraged to be creative, to develop their potential and to express themselves.

It is my belief that higher education can learn useful lessons from adult education and the present literature on higher education teaching suggests that there is already a gradual development towards more involved teaching methods. However, when reading the literature on higher education teaching one realises very quickly that few of the examples comes from the teaching of philosophy and they do not seem to be easily adaptable to a subject which has a reputation for being almost entirely theoretical.

But does this mean that philosophy tuition at university can only continue in what has been up to now the conventional way? Whereas universities that provide small seminar and tutorial groups might be able to afford to do so, universities where groups are larger and the student body is more inclusive might have to come up with more innovative ideas to capture students' imagination and stop them from being and becoming passive consumers. This paper tries to provide some tentative suggestions as to what such teaching methods might be.

Some differences between adult and higher education

Although in this paper my interest lies in teaching methods, it would be naive to ignore that there are other differences in the two settings that

influence the involvement of students. In my case the size of the groups differed considerably. Whereas my adult education class consisted of about ten students the group at university contained over thirty. At the university where I taught the cut-off point for seminars was twenty-five and it was only half way through the module that we eventually had the group split into two seminars. The effect of the division of the group was clearly very positive. More students contributed and students were more willing to admit that they had not understood some of the issues mentioned in the lecture. Yet nevertheless about a third of the students never contributed at all, another third contributed once or twice and only a third showed a more constant engagement with the module.

Age and maturity undoubtedly have an impact on students' willingness to take responsibility for their own learning, but on the one hand my adult education class was almost as young as the student group with half of them of a similar age to the university students, and on the other hand there were some mature students amongst the university students. Both groups also provided a colourful mix in terms of ability and cultural background. As the university where I taught was one of the more inclusive ones, the students were far from a homogeneous group. The ability to grasp the presented material clearly differed quite considerably amongst students. The needs of weaker students were not always met, because they only became evident after students had submitted their essays near the end of the course. Some students made up for the lack of individual support during the lectures and seminars by asking questions by e-mail and in person. But others simply hid their lack of understanding.

So in many ways the two groups of students were not entirely different. Although some of the adult education students lacked any formal education, there were also those who had university degrees. A few years ago I taught a GCSE German class in adult education where almost half the class possessed a PhD degree. Those students could have easily coped with more formal tuition, but they also seemed to enjoy the more playful and creative approach to teaching.

And it is the teaching strategy that is entirely different in these settings. The buzz word in adult education is learner-centred. On the one hand it has unfortunately led to increased paperwork, such as individual learning plans and learning styles questionnaires, but on the other hand it has encouraged more flexible teaching methods where

students can do activities at their own pace and at slightly different levels. The interaction of students is encouraged through games, group work, simulations and discussions. The increased interaction between students allows the teacher to support individual students and the lack of students' understanding becomes very quickly evident and can be addressed.

The teacher in adult education is for large part of the lesson not the centre of the group, but a facilitator who monitors progress and helps to sustain the momentum of learning. Only intermittently the teaching changes into more tutor-led activities such as a presentation of new material. The result of this is that both teacher as well students are more relaxed, humour emerges naturally rather than just having the odd joke of the lecturer at which students smile politely. Even though with experience the task of giving a lecture becomes easier and the lecture hall full of students becomes less daunting, the lecture still remains a more stressful situation than a seminar or anything more interactive where the focus of attention shifts to other people.

Yet it is not only the teacher who benefits from more interactive teaching. The average attention span is twenty minutes and it is clear that some students struggle to listen and process the information given in an hour long lecture. When asked to do some group work to break down the presentation time the results were often quite poor and students talked about private matters. It looks as if students were not used to a more active way of learning. Even in the seminars a lot of students listened passively without ever contributing.

Innovative teaching in Higher Education

Had I not taught in adult education for several years and experienced the joy and happiness of students and the creativity and energy in the classroom, I might not even have worried about what happened in my lectures and seminars. My own university education had been similar to what I provided for students and the evaluation forms at the end of the semester were surprisingly positive. They had learnt the basics of phenomenology; they wrote essays and exams that all passed. Maybe it was too ambitious of me to want to see them flourish not only in their philosophical skills but also as human beings who gain confidence and develop their potential as creative and critical beings that support each

other.

Yet there are two arguments which make me believe that my concerns are justified. One is the literature of higher education teaching, the other one is a more philosophical one about the philosophy of philosophy teaching. Let me briefly discuss the former.

When looking for inspiration for my lectures and seminars, I thought the book *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*[2] looked very promising. In many ways Cowan's book advocates a very similar teaching to what happens in adult education, namely theory interspersed with practical elements. The theoretical elements are meant to encourage a reflection and improve practical skills. Not surprisingly, none of the examples in the book comes from philosophy, but engineering and social work are frequently used. The book echoes and followed on from the work on the reflective practitioner by Schoen and Dreyfus.[3]

However the 'practice' of the philosopher is most of the time thinking rather than doing. In some areas such as ethics it would be possibly to integrate group work on case studies as the practical example, but in courses on individual philosophers this seems much more difficult. But even if one were to find some more practical engagement with material, it would be difficult to do so on a regular basis. There is nothing that naturally lends itself to breaking up the theoretical discussion, as the practical tasks in engineering or experiments in natural sciences. Gunn suggests the filling in of flow charts and mind maps as practical activities for philosophy, but this is with a course of logic in mind.[4] I suspect if one were to create practical exercises around case studies or worksheets around quotes from texts this might come across as very contrived and thus patronising to students.

The same is true for visual and kinaesthetic learning material. In

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[2] Cowan, J. *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in Action*. (Buckingham: Open University Press 1998)

[3] See Schön, D. *The Reflective Practioner* (Arena 1991) and Dreyfus, H. Et al *Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (1987).

[4] Gunn, A. 'Practical Suggestions for Teaching Students to Think for Themselves' *Discourse* 4/1 Autumn 2004, pp. 71-76.

a book on giving lectures[5] it is suggested that one should pass around objects during the lecture or give demonstrations; again the examples come from the natural science, the geologist who passes around some stones, the lecturer in medicine who uses a model of the heart to make his point. But what could the philosopher hand around? I have only ever seen books being passed around in philosophy lectures. Audio-visual material is equally difficult. Gilleat-Ray suggests using music, film, drama and art for the teaching of religious education.[6] Whereas some philosophy modules lend themselves naturally to the inclusion of such material, for example modules on philosophy and literature or philosophy and film, this is not easily integrated into other modules. Any material needs to promote the learning process rather than being included for the sake of variety. I have included pictures of philosophers and other related objects on PowerPoint presentations, but if one looks at the various PowerPoint slides and handouts from philosophers that are available on the Internet, the vast majority look entirely uninspiring, just crammed full of text.

So is there really anything that philosophy can adapt from more innovative ideas about higher education? In many ways it appears to be rather difficult to make philosophy into a more practically engaged session. The theoretical nature of the subject means there is always a risk that practical exercises and activities are seen as dumbing down and contrived. At the end of the semester I created an online quiz for the module which was organised around quotes and was meant to encourage students to read the primary texts again. As it was online students had the choice to take it or leave it (about half of the students had a go at it and there was some positive feedback), but I would be very reluctant to include such an activity into a lecture even though it might be in line with innovative teaching principles[7] and I quite happily use activities like that in adult education. The problem is that

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5 Exeley, K and Dennick, R. *Giving a Lecture. From Presenting to Teaching* (London: RoutledgeFalmer 2004), p.92.

6 Gilleat-Ray, S. 'Breaking Down the Classroom Walls: Innovative Teaching and Learning Methods in Religious Studies and Theology—some perspectives from the University of Wales *PRS—LTSN Journal* 2 /2 Winter 2003, pp.200 -210.

7 For example Brown, S. & Race, P. *Lecturing. A Practical Guide*. (London: Kogan Page 2002) p.123 suggest mini-assessments as one way of helping student to focus and keep attention.

philosophy cannot be reduced to simple facts and students cling to definitions already more than enough. What needs to be encouraged is a more creative and independent thinking. Yet the other reason for my reluctance is that students are not used to a playfulness in learning and maybe there is a need to change the atmosphere of learning first of all.

There have been some studies on humour in education.[8] The conclusions of these studies are all similar. Humour helps people to learn. It opens people up, makes them more receptive. In adult education students have put down humour as positive feedback on the evaluation form. I would not see myself as a naturally funny character or as having any talent for comedy, but using games and interactive material often leads to laughter which does not appear to be quite possible in lectures. It sometimes emerges naturally in very small seminar groups. Maybe it is the fact of the number of unknown people around us that stops students from letting down their defences. It amazes me that a lot of the students do not communicate at all with each other. Some people have friends in the class, but there are also those who do not seem to know anybody. Although universities make a great effort for people to get to know each other at the induction week, there are subsequently very few attempts to encourage students to interact.

Every adult education course starts with an icebreaker, however I have never attended a module at university where there was an activity to break the ice. Thus the atmosphere remains clearly somewhat 'icy' throughout the semester. Often students approach me after the lecture or seminar to ask a question; in return I usually ask them why they did not raise the same question in the lecture or seminar. The answers vary slightly, but mostly the reason is a lack of confidence, which is linked to a lack of trust into the group, the fear of being ridiculed or judged.

There is of course a lot to be taught in the available twelve weeks of a semester and one does not want to waste any time, but maybe one

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[8] See for example J.P. Powell and L.W.Andresen "Humour and teaching in higher education" *Studies in Higher Education* 10/1, 1985, pp.79-90; A.Ziv "Teaching and Learning with Humor. Experiment and Replication" *Journal of Experimental Education* 57/1, 1988, pp.5-15 or N.Kher et al "Using Humour in the College Classroom to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness in "Dread Courses"" College Student Journal 33, 1999.

has to invest a little into the group dynamic to change the atmosphere into a supportive and relaxed space where students respect each other. Group work and dialogue come to mind as activities to encourage this, but as Beckham writes 'students' expectations of learning/teaching may equally contribute to difficulties in group learning and confound attempts to change practices'[9]. This was certainly confirmed in my teaching where students stayed with their friends rather than used the opportunity to work together with students unknown to them.

What we can conclude from reading some of the recent literature on higher education teaching is that in theory there is a move towards what already happens in adult education. The words 'student-centred' and 'active learning' become increasingly important and there are attempts to include practical elements in lectures.

Creativity as a teaching objective

In a discussion about what philosophy actually is, a colleague once defined it as 'the study of an argument'. For me this is a reduction of philosophy to a branch of mathematics where numbers are replaced with statements. If this was philosophy, then clearly there would be little need for creativity. The main task of undergraduate philosophy teaching would then be to stuff students' heads with logical principles and ensure that they can apply them. The creativity needed for such a task is the transferral of these logical principles to new contexts, as only very few undergraduate students will have the ability to develop principles further.

For me as a continental philosopher the task of philosophy however lies in asking and exploring fundamental questions about the world and our lives. The aim of philosophical enquiry is not neutral and detached knowledge, but the hope to make sense of our lives and flourish as human beings. Ideally, philosophy should make us happier, better and more critical people. Philosophy is an adventure where we try to cut paths through a thicket of problems. Philosophy thus reflects our engagement with life in general and returns to our practices.

This is why Cowley is right in saying that philosophy can

[9] Beckham, R. 'A Preliminary Study of Group Learning/Teaching' *PRS -LTSN Journal* 2/2 Winter 2003, pp.79.

cultivate transferable skills, but he is wrong in merely focusing on problem-solving, analysis, justification of arguments, communication, and practical judgement.[10] Creativity is not mentioned and maybe there is even a skill of being happy that can be cultivated in philosophy. These skills appear to be central attributes to a philosopher. Wisdom is different from knowledge and skill, it combines them into a more holistic thinking related to our way of life.

Yet such a view of philosophy as intricately related to our lives also raises the questions about the ethical framework of teaching. Why do we teach philosophy in the first place? If philosophy is merely the study of an argument would it then not be sufficient to provide a mix of maths and literary criticism? For Socrates, teaching philosophy meant letting people see their own errors, talking to them to let them discover the truth for themselves rather than providing clear-cut words of wisdom. Yet Socrates was not interested in merely helping people develop techniques of enquiry, but he was first of all interested in the subjects he talked about.

Philosophical discussion is thus about more than just abstract technique—it is also an interest in problems that affect our lives. As a lecturer my aim is not only for students to sharpen their minds but also to reflect on issues that strike me as important. The objective of philosophy teaching is not that students agree with the lecturer, but that they explore the fundamental problems of human existence. With the rather passive and consumerist attitude of some students, this is not happening. They follow the path of the lecturer. The lecture handouts are quoted in students' essays not in order to tell me that I get it all terribly wrong, but they believe that this is what I want to hear.

The demand for more creativity in students is of course to a large extent motivated by my selfishness. I want to be surprised, learn something from my students, be challenged, explore ideas I never thought about. My favourite class in adult education often taught me new things, put their own stamp onto activities and the classroom was bubbling with energy and laughter. Needless to say we had many happy course reunions in years afterwards. However, this also links to my own experience as a student. One of the most inspiring lecturers I ever

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[10] Cowley, C. 'Cultivating Transferable Skills in Philosophy' *PRS-LTSN Journal*, 1/1 Summer 2001, pp.39-51.

had was an old professor with an international reputation in his field, but he always came into a room giving us the feeling that he wanted to learn something from us. He seemed to have total faith in his students' ability to create new lines of thought and provide inspiring contributions. Alas, even in those times this approach was not appreciated by all students. The lecturer's invitation to creative freedom only encourages some students to be more active in their learning, but it does not inspire and awaken the majority of them.

Encouraging creativity in philosophy

In small group discussions students often become more active and creative in their thinking, yet with rising numbers in higher education a lot of universities cannot afford small seminar groups. I cannot help wondering whether there is anything else one can do apart from trying to encourage a more active learning through group work and dialogue and just accepting that a number of students do not appear to respond to this and persevere in their passive consumerism. It is the experience of adult education and my belief that university students are really not very different from the learner in adult education that makes me think more must be possible to spark students' imagination.

On three occasions I ran workshops where I incorporated museums, one on the theme of otherness, one on the body and one on education. The participant groups were in the first case staff and postgraduates from a variety of disciplines and in the latter cases A-level students on university summer schools. The exhibits were photos, mirrors, Barbie dolls, quotes, activities with cameras and other embodied activities. They may seem banal, but the museum experience created a buzz in the room and subsequent discussions were very lively with lots of participants contributing. Even those who were quiet in the discussion had at least discussed ideas with their partner or group with whom they had explored the museum.

The workshops, unfortunately, were always one-offs. Thus, I cannot judge whether the relaxed and lively atmosphere would have continued into subsequent sessions. The workshop character also had the advantage that the rooms were particularly suitable for such activities and there was plenty of time to set things up and clear up afterwards. The logistics of undergraduate teaching, however, maybe

should not stop us from attempting to incorporate such elements into our teaching. It is my belief that any kind of philosophical questions can be provoked in a variety of ways.

Yet, there is part of me that thinks we need to take this even further. As Edwards et al say in a recent volume on *Developing Creativity in Higher Education*: 'So it's a really interesting circular dilemma there. Yes, we privilege students' capacity to be creative, but we don't let them show it to us in anything that counts.'[11] Do we need to include a more creative project into the assessment to set the expectation of creative and active involvement into a module? Would it not be possible to complement the conventional assessment such as essays and exams with a more engaged activity?

I think there are numerous possibilities of doing this. Creating a museum might be one of the more difficult options. What could be easier is for students to run workshops on the material taught in a module for school children or other community groups. This might have all sorts of advantages—not only would it foster all sorts of transferable skills, it would also avoid the problem of plagiarism, and lead to strengthening ties to the community. Unlike the museum it would be unlikely to create a need for financial resources. Other possibilities might be the creation of accessible material. At the University of East Anglia a politics lecturer uses editing of Wikepedia sites as part of the assessment. Or maybe little booklets for school children or interested members of the public could be a way of integrating more creative parts into the assessment. Such ways of assessing students would not provide easy marks for students, but quite the opposite. Simplification of very complicated material is only possible if you understand the original material in the first place. Students often write essays with the help of secondary literature without really understanding what they write.

By fostering creativity through the assessment one sets clear expectation of a more active student involvement and hopefully changes the atmosphere away from the consumerist attitude 'give me your lecture notes and I'll give you my essay'. The problem one might

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[11] Edwards, M. Et al 'Creativity curricula in higher education: academics' perspectives' in Jackson, N. et al (eds.) *Developing Creativity in Higher Education. An imaginative curriculum* (London & New York: Routledge 2006), p.66.

be worried about is the measurability of creativity, yet I do not regard this as an insurmountable obstacle. Maybe it requires peer assessment and video recording of assessed workshops to give groups marks or a more simplified mark scheme, but these are also problems that occur in relation to assessed presentations which are sometimes part of the assessment. To discuss the measurability of such assessment with students could provoke in students a critical understanding of the framework of their education. Surely, philosophy should be at the forefront to question society's absurd obsession with rankings, which reduces everything to economic commodities.

If the atmosphere in higher education classes could be changed into something more relaxed and creative similar to what happens in adult education, then interactive elements such as dialogue or group work could be used more effectively. However, it is not merely the creative side of philosophy teaching that needs to be developed—it needs to go hand in hand with activities that establish students' trust and confidence in each other, so that the atmosphere is supportive rather than competitive. In universities where the bulk of teaching is done in small seminar groups, all this often evolves naturally, but in universities with very large groups it is my belief that lecturers can do more to facilitate active learning. Alas, it requires a lot of careful planning of and reflection on teaching, which is time-consuming and not rewarded in our present academic climate.

e-Learning Innovations and Innovative Practice:

A Philosophical and Educational Critical Reflection on the JISC Good Practice Guide

Dr. Constantinos Athanasopoulos

e-Learning Officer
Subject Centre for PRS

A. Description of the theoretical background for this paper.

A.1. Intended audience

This paper addresses the issue of innovation in e-learning and, in particular, innovation in the form of adoption and use of mobile and wireless educational technologies in e-learning. As such, it

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is intended to inform and provide an impetus for engagement with the educational technologies described here to all academics interested in e-learning, as well as educational administrators and managers interested in the adoption of such educational technologies. More specifically it is directed to the academics teaching within the subject areas and disciplines supported by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies. As such, it adopts a more self-conscious theoretical (philosophical and educational) framework and engages critically with the relevant material.

A.2. The theoretical background of 'innovation' and 'innovative practice' in education and the reasoning behind this paper.

Undoubtedly, the primary theoretical foundation for the latest developments in educational technologies, and the driving force behind the adoption of the term 'innovative' to describe the new technologies that have been developed in the last 30 years or so, is the article by Marc Prensky, 'Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants' (Prensky 2001). Even though mobile and wireless communications are almost as old as standard (wired) telephony (the first wireless transmission going back into the last decades of the 19th century; see **http://www.umtsworld.com/umts/history.htm**), the use of these technologies in education did not bear fruits until the very last decades of the 20th century. Today, mobile and wireless communications are perhaps the most predominant technological forms of communication across the globe, with not only rapid developments in the spread of this form of communication (reaching more than 50% of users from the total population in the developed world), but also in terms of industrial growth in the adoption of new technologies, and the social and ecological ramifications of this (Plant, 2001).

Marc Prensky put forward the following idea: today's students are 'digital natives' (that is, they have grown up with digital technology, such as ICT, digital media entertainment and virtual games). On the other hand, today's teachers are 'digital immigrants' (that is, they grew up without any or with very few forms of digital technologies) and they moved into the digital world without the necessary preparation (cognitively and intellectually as well as emotionally). As such, today's teachers need training, not only for the adoption of the new technolo-

gies, but also to be able to communicate with their students via the new (digital) technologies.

Now, Prensky's article and views have attracted a lot of criticism in the last few years. These have focused primarily on the hasty generalisations that Prensky adopts: a technology user is not the same thing as a technology creator, and most technology creators who create technology with success for today's technology users are themselves digital immigrants. The critics have also stressed the social and emotional ramifications and dangers that the adoption of Prensky's ideas will mean for our educational systems (McKenzie 2007). However, the important thing is that Prensky's views provided the platform for a whole range of articles, podcasts and relevant literature in the educational world and gave an impetus for further research into the adoption of more new and 'innovative' technologies in education (Evans 2007).

Even though Prensky's ideas need to be examined one by one so that we can establish their individual merits and pitfalls, his initial stance that 'Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.' (Prensky 2001, p.1), is, I think, based on my own teaching practice, correct. I have attended a lot of lectures by colleagues where students had to be told to switch off their mobile phones or to stop sending SMS messages. In my own teaching practice, I had to resort to the same sort of measures many times, until I realised that, instead of embarrassing my students, I should support them in the adoption of the new technologies and facilitate their learning through them. With these thoughts in mind, I provide below a summary of some of the techniques and practices that are most innovative and relevant to PRS academic life, as outlined in the JISC case study collection (taken from JISC, 2005), as I think that the educational uses of this new technology can be beneficial in the teaching of the disciplines supported by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies. Of course, as in the use of all tools (from a hammer to a narrative) it would be useful to the teachers and learners who are going to be engaged with them to know to what purpose they are going to adopt these new technologies and to know also how to avoid the possible problems and dangers associated to their use. Thus, I will close my discussion with exactly these issues.

B. What are the issues related to 'innovative practices'?

B.1. What do we mean by 'innovation' and 'innovative practice'?

The JISC Guide states that it uses the term 'innovative practice' to mean the following:

> 'pedagogies based partially or wholly on the use of mobile devices, including those without built-in connectivity, and those that offer mobile access to resources on the web and on the institution's learning platform' (JISC, 2005, p.9).

Now, this definition raises some important questions:

a. In what sense does the adoption of these technologies by educators form what we call (in JISCean terms) 'innovative practice'?
b. Is it only these that constitute what we can call 'innovative practice'?
c. What is the relation of this term to 'innovation' and what are the ramifications of its adoption for the use of the term 'innovation'?

To answer these questions, obviously, we must go beyond a lexicological and etymological analysis of the relevant words. We must go to their relevant and significant uses, especially in cultural and educational theory. Everett Rogers coined the word 'innovation' in technology to mean more or less the introduction of a new form of technology by a small group of people who, disregarding cost-benefit analyses and potential risks, venture into the unknown and try something new for the first time (Rogers 2003, p.282). Rogers proceeds into a formal analysis of the types of people who engage in the process of assimilation of innovation in society, but as this is not directly within the focus of this report (and potentially may lead us to a critique of both Rogers' empirical findings and the theoretical background of his research) it will not be discussed here. So, taking into consideration Rogers' definition of 'innovation', the JISC Guide actually means that these sorts of pedagogies and educational technologies involve a particular risk and are something new for the educational process as it is today. Let us see a

selection of case studies, representative and relevant to PRS, which are put forward as examples of 'innovative practices' in the JISC Guide, so that we can evaluate the potential risks and dangers associated with them. In what follows I shall summarise the case studies focusing only on the aspects of them relevant to PRS (detailed analysis of the equipment and machinery involved and analytical usage statistics are not my primary concern here). For each of the case studies summarised I have provided three questions to provide the context and to focus discussion in each case:

- What was the innovation?
- What was the challenge?
- What are the benefits for the educational process?

B.2. Selection of case studies with interest to PRS academics

City College Southampton (JISC 2005, pp.18-19)

What was the innovation?
Tutors used their students' camera-equipped mobile phones to create an enhanced student knowledge of their locality, by composing a larger picture (for example a complex view of the campus for newly enrolled learners). The technological innovation was mainly the creation of *mediaBoard* (a web-based multimedia message board, which can receive SMS or MMS messages from mobile phones). Students were divided into groups, which were then allocated different zones of the campus, and were asked to take and share (via *mediaBoard*) pictures of the campus.

What was the challenge?
The innovators here had to meet the challenge of quickly integrating multi-ethnic ESOL students, with varied educational experience and achievement levels, into the academic and the local community.

What were the benefits for the educational process?
The project successfully brought isolated groups of learners into contact with the wider community and improved the self-esteem of the participants.

University of Strathclyde (JISC 2005, pp.28-29)

What was the innovation?
An electronic voting system (PRS, Personal Response System) was adopted to increase interactivity in lectures (students were equipped with infrared voting devices and receivers and answered group questions during lectures receiving immediate feedback).

What was the challenge?
During their first year lectures, students at the Department of Engineering had difficulties in understanding core concepts. Attendance, retention figures and student morale were low. There was also concern that rise in applications would limit the interaction between students and teaching staff.

What were the benefits for the educational process?
Student morale was boosted and there was increased motivation amongst students to attend and participate in group discussions during lectures. Retention figures increased, as did the learning and teaching standards in the department. Debate and reflection in group discussions increased the level of active learning and students felt motivated to focus on knowledge gained and participate in 'fun' assessment activities.

Dewsbury College, Thomas Danby College, Bishop Burton College (JISC 2005, pp.30-31)

What was the innovation?
Tailor-made resources for PDAs, for child care and ESOL students. Web pages were scaled down so that they could be uploaded to PDAs; multimedia and Macromedia Flash files were prepared for 'drill for skill' activities (quizzes and other drag and drop activities that enhance specific skills of students). There are differences in the pedagogical function of this sort of innovation in the three different institutions: Dewsbury College placed emphasis on the support of different learning preferences; Thomas Danby College placed an emphasis on interactivity and ease of use (stylus more convenient than mouse); and Bishop Burton College placed an emphasis on student preparation via record-

ing, storing and interpreting data in the field, enhancing practical and analytic skills and improving the image of the educational technology adopted (which was perceived as 'cool').

What was the challenge?
All three Colleges saw personalised learning as a priority. They also had to provide learning resources to students in outreach and work based environments.

What are the benefits for the educational process?
Students saw the innovation as 'cool' and useful for increasing practical and analytic skills in outdoor and workshop contexts. PDAs support dynamic group activities without the use of Internet by the use of beaming.

A key feature of the above three examples is the innovative nature of the devices used (the mobile phones, PDAs and the PRS). Another key feature is the collaborative outlook of the pedagogy involved. Spontaneity, interactivity, portability, accessibility and context awareness, 'just-in-time' information, enhanced self-evaluation and personalised ownership of learning are also some other features of the above practices.

B.3. Analysis and discussion

It is evident from the above summary of the selected three case studies that mobile and wireless teaching and learning (or 'innovative practice' in JISC terms) are not only new in terms of the technologies adopted, but that they try to put forward a new view of teaching and learning. This view promotes a collaborative attitude to learning and gives increased importance to personalised learning. This of course seems to go in parallel with innovative approaches in education: from a behaviourist and cognitive developmental attitude to educational pedagogy we have currently moved to a more social constructivist and humanistic collaborative outlook. So, the above approach outlined by the selected case studies from the JISC Guide is in agreement with both Kolb's 'experiential learning' model (that is, a model that engages the student in the following aspects of learning: a) concrete experience or 'do', b) reflective observation or 'observe', c) abstract conceptualisa-

tion or 'think' and d) active experimentation or 'plan') and Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' (that is, teaching as supporting students in meeting their non-physiological needs: to self-actualize themselves, to feel esteem, to feel that they belong, and to feel safe) (Kolb 1984; Maslow 1970).

However, in other, humanistic and collaborative, educational pedagogies (which the JISC Guide seems to favour), the situation is different. Carl Roger's critical attitude towards education and especially his austere critique of the not carefully thought out and planned incorporation of ICT in schools and universities (Rogers, 1951), is potentially damaging for the JISC approach towards innovative technologies (which in the Guide seems almost 'messianic': 'I believe that mobile and wireless technologies have the potential to transform all aspects of the institution's functions, from learning to teaching to the business and administrative processes.', Foreword by John Stone, Chair of the JISC Learning and Teaching Committee, JISC 2005, p.5).

Having said this, I should also state that some supporters of Roger's humanistic educational theory have a more positive attitude towards ICT enhanced teaching and learning.

Miller has claimed that web-based teaching and learning can be accommodated within the theoretical framework of Carl Rogers' ideas only if it is based on nine principles:

a. the course provides an emphasis on the learners' interests, personal ability, and prior knowledge of the instructional topic;
b. the facilitative instructor connects students' knowledge and interests with content principles of the course;
c. the facilitative instructor selects an environment that supports collaborative learning and learner control;
d. the facilitative instructor allows students to develop individually achievable objectives based on their interests and abilities within the context of the course, which could be done in the form of a written contract with the facilitative instructor;
e. the facilitative instructor allows students to develop forms of self-evaluation to demonstrate significant learning based on the individual students' learning objectives;
f. learners work with the facilitative instructor to organise

areas of interest to cover so the instructor can meet the needs of the students' learning objectives and maximize the learning potential;

g. the facilitative instructor identifies, selects, and presents to the learners resources to enhance their learning experience;
h. the learners conduct self-evaluation based on their individual learning objectives outlined in their learning contracts; and
i. outcomes of the course should show significant learning.

Miller uses these principles as criteria against which any web-based teaching and learning can be judged as humanistically oriented or not (Miller 2001).

It is evident from the above criteria, that 'innovative practice', as outlined in the JISC Guide, is compatible with Carl Rogers' approach to educational technology only when the students themselves have favourable attitudes to mobile and wireless ICT and its incorporation in the educational process. So, if we accept Marc Prensky's views about our students being 'digital natives' then we have to accept also JISC's view about the 'messianic' role of 'innovative practice'. But taking into consideration the ferocious critique that Prensky's views have received, I think we should be more careful in the adoption of JISC's attitude. It could also potentially be the target of critique emanating from another humanistic perspective on education: Purkey's 'invitational school' approach to education. Here, educational institutions should operate a bottom-up approach to decision making, in which all decisions (including about the incorporation of innovative practices) are the result of full deliberation with, and respect for, students and learners (Purkey and Novak, 1996). In the 'Institutional Perspective' section of the JISC Guide (JISC, 2005, pp.37-41), there is no mention of the specifics of the decision making mechanisms that led the particular institutions to their adoption of the particular 'innovative practices'. The attitude in the case studies of this section is far from the humanistic collaborative attitude endorsed by Purkey's and Rogers' approaches: for example, the first case study discussed the adoption of PC tablets for the 'policing' of students' attendance at lectures and tutorials in EHWLC; the approach that Purkey and Rogers would endorse here would be to study carefully the reasons for such a poor attendance record and deal

with it pro-actively rather than retro-actively, providing a cure rather than suppression of the students' behaviour (the JISC study case describes the student behaviour here in p.38).

B.4. Significance of our discussion for PRS teaching and learning.

From the above discussion it is evident that a significant amount of care is needed in the adoption of the 'innovative practice' recommendations offered by JISC.

Does this mean that PRS academics should reject the Guide?

I believe that this is not an appropriate attitude towards the potentially positive aspects of the Guide in one's personal learning and teaching practice.

The JISC Guide offers many new ideas, some based on sound pedagogical theory and practice, and unless they are tried out in real learning and teaching scenarios their positive value for the educational process may never be revealed. So, what is advisable for PRS academics is to think about the relevant context within which they teach and try to see if an innovative practice that is suggested in the Guide is suitable for their teaching and learning environment.

Some ideas (such as for example 'policing' students' behaviour) seem dangerous and potentially destructive of the educational process if adopted.

Some others, however, may bring real solutions to real problems that PRS academics have to face in their daily lives as academic teachers: low attendance and retention rates due to difficult concepts and texts that are almost incomprehensible for the younger generation; lack of interest in group discussions and low self-esteem of marginalised ethnic, racial and cultural groups; lack of structure and focus on the arguments and the real issues surrounding the texts in student discussions; alienation and low-achievement rates of students enrolled in non-engaging and 'boring' courses; lack of motivation to read the texts carefully, and poor critical engagement with the course resources. Mobile technologies and other 'innovative practices' here provide novel solutions to old problems and challenges. The increased interactivity, personalised and collaborative learning opportunities, and 'just-in-time' feedback processes that they offer, quickly identify potential problems in learning and increase the retention rates and the motivation

of students. Another major problem that we have to face as educators in PRS disciplines is conveniently solved through the adoption of these technologies: many of our students face particular difficulties with the location of the lectures and course discussions: they have to study and work at the same time; they have to be away from campuses for specific time periods (prisoners, armed forces personnel, health or pregnancy related circumstances); this means that they cannot participate fully in class lectures and tutorial discussions. Having available learning resources tailored to mobile and wireless (or even Internet based) technologies are crucial in retaining and 'winning over' these students in the educational process. In my teaching practice at the University of Glasgow, Department of Philosophy, I once (a few years ago) had to respond negatively to a request by an American exchange student who wanted to have the course material (or previous versions of it) in advance on a CD. I remember discussing the issue with colleagues and the Head of the Department, trying to find what to do and how to respond. It was decided that we could not accommodate the request of the student. I think that more and more requests such as these will put academics in a difficult position. And the really difficult position here is to have to respond negatively to a student who wants to engage more with what he or she learns.

It also worthwhile stressing here the fact that recent research into the application of ICT in the teaching of PRS disciplines is quite favourable to innovative approaches to educational technologies that allow for a more interactive and collaborative engagement of academics and students with the teaching and learning process (Carusi, 2003).

In a relevant study about the adoption of Personalised Response Systems for the teaching of logic at the University of Glasgow (with electronic handsets which communicated via infrared to suitably calibrated receivers in lecture theatres connected to a computer and a large projection screen), it was found that incorporation of such innovative practices in the teaching of difficult and daunting (according to student perceptions) courses for Faculty of Arts students can successfully engage students and increase retention rates and assessment scores (both in formative and summative terms) (Stuart and Brown, 2004). However, one of the findings indicated that the students engaged more with the innovation because it allowed for their anonymity: they felt more secure to test their abilities in comprehension and see how they

did in comparison to the rest of the class, because they were left unnamed, due to the handsets being randomly given to them at the start of the class; a factor that the 'institutional perspective' as discussed in the JISC Guide above would never have guessed. According to this research students are highlighted as an important factor in the success of an innovation.

So, and even more importantly for PRS academics, it is advisable that all changes in the learning contract (including the adoption of innovative tools or 'innovative practices' in JISCean terms) are fully discussed, consulted and deliberated with the students and have the students' concerns and needs as the most important criteria. What new and 'innovative' technologies can offer for our teaching and learning process thus, will be maximised through the new air of collaboration and institutionalised collaborative deliberation mechanisms that they (should) bring to the teaching and learning process.

If you would like to share any examples of your practice in relation to technology, or get in touch to find out more, please contact me at:**costas@prs.heacademy.ac.uk / cathanas@hol.gr**

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Specialisation, Postgraduate Research and Philosophical Eclecticism

Ian James Kidd

Department of Philosophy, Durham University

Introduction

The changing perceptions of academic philosophy by aspiring postgraduates, especially those who intend to pursue future academic careers, should be an essential consideration of university departments and the wider academic community. The perceptions of academic philosophy by current and potential postgraduate students will influence their professional aspirations and their academic ambitions. Many graduates with great philosophical potential may be discouraged from pursuing postgraduate studies if they

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consider that the prospects for research funding or eventual employment are too slight. This will not only affect the financial health of academic departments, where the recruitment and retention of postgraduate students is an important source of funding (the rather unattractive 'cash cow' principle). There are also negative possible long-term consequences for the vitality of academic philosophy.

There is a danger that graduates with the potential to make significant contributions to academic philosophy are absconding in favour of careers elsewhere. Of course there is no demand that students with such potential pursue academic careers, and doctoral funding is notoriously scarce to come by.[1] In an ideal world there would be sufficient funding monies for all those students who wished to undertake doctoral studies; but in today's academic marketplace the competition for funding and tenure is fierce. It is, to use Thomas Hobbes' famous phrase, 'a war of all men against all men'.[2] The stereotypical image of philosophising as an activity confined largely to armchairs and comfortable studies has been abandoned in favour of a fraught and competitive professional arena. Philosophy has gone corporate. Or as one academic philosopher once remarked to me, 'it's war out there.'

These concerns over the increasingly competitive and corporate nature of professional philosophy are not new.[3] Academic philosophers discuss and critique their profession as much as butchers, bakers and candlestick makers, and certainly many of the concerns being raised are common to a range of subjects. However there is perhaps a need to consider the perceptions of postgraduate students of academic philosophy. Although postgraduates are not yet active members of the academic philosophy community, they will come to fill its ranks as time goes on, carrying their early perceptions and impressions with

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[1] As an anecdotal illustration: a postgraduate friend of mine has a ritual of buying a lottery ticket every time he sends off a funding application, on the grounds that he has 'a greater probability with the one rather than the other'.

[2] Hobbes, Thomas, *On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.12.

[3] See for instance Schopenhauer, Arthur, 'On philosophy at the universities' in his *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.133-198. Schopenhauer discusses 'the disadvantage[s] which philosophy as a profession imposes on philosophy as the free investigation of truth' (ibid., p.139).

them. Therefore it is important for the academic philosophy community to consider and respond to the perceptions of postgraduate students, both to correct misperceptions and to respond to justified concerns. A constructive dialogue between current professional philosophers and their successors is therefore of essential concern to maintaining the long term integrity of academic philosophy.

This article is, accordingly, an examination of my own personal perceptions of academic philosophy, both from my own experience and following discussions with fellow postgraduate students in philosophy and other disciplines. It is not intended as a comprehensive critical study, nor as a 'sociology of academic communities', as has been offered by Pierre Bordieu.[4] My aim is simply to outline and critically examine some of the recurrent criticisms made by postgraduate students of academic philosophy, with particular reference to specialisation and career 'trajectories', before concluding with some suggestions for counteracting these criticisms.

Specialisation, trajectories and conservatism

Postgraduate students are constantly reminded that their academic and professional progression is dependent upon their specialisation. A doctoral project, for instance, is a specialised study of a particular problem or issue in an area of philosophy which interests the student. A budding academic philosopher must demonstrate increasing specialisation within a particular area of philosophy as he or she progresses through undergraduate and postgraduate education.

Although there are convincing intellectual and pragmatic arguments for the importance of specialisation, there are also important criticisms to be made of it. Friedrich Nietzsche described the sad figure of the scholar 'sitting in front of his inkwell … his head bowed low over the paper', portraying this rather miserable figure as a man trapped in the ironic and ultimately ineffectual pursuit of seeking knowledge by exposing himself, physically and intellectually, to only a small portion of the world. This is a critique of the pretensions of the

[4] Bordieu, Pierre, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Roger Collier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

specialist for 'his zeal, his seriousness' and his 'overestimation of the nook in which he sits'. The bright light of these minds are being increasingly concentrated upon a single spot, like a searchlight, which threatens both to obscure its object and blind its spectators with its intensity. As Nietzsche complained, in 'having a speciality one pays by also being the victim of this speciality', one becomes 'possessed by it and obsessed with it'.[5]

In particular, specialisation can function to constrain the intellectual interests, disciplinary freedom and professional manoeuvrability of postgraduate philosophers, and encourage an inadvertent conservatism in the academic profession. These are broad claims and would certainly benefit from an extended discussion, and so in this article I would simply like to introduce and outline these criticisms.

Pierre Bordieu argued that the organisation and stability of an academic community is most effectively ensured by the establishment of a process of 'academic initiation' consisting in 'an enforced prolongation' to implicit 'procedures of co-optation'.[6] During one's postgraduate philosophical education and early academic career an 'ideal career path' is implicitly established, from doctoral study through to professorship. Advancement depends upon the cumulative acquisition of academic and professional merit, in the form of publications, research awards, university appointments and so forth.[7] Although this process is an effective method of training postgraduates and initiating them into professional academia, it may be criticised as encouraging a degree of conservatism; yet before moving onto this criticism it is first necessary to briefly remark upon the merits of this educational format of gradual specialisation and academic initiation.

The process of academic training encourages postgraduate students to identify a particular philosophical problem or issue and produce a focused examination of it. The students' energies will be increasingly concentrated on this defined area of inquiry, enabling him or her to produce a doctoral thesis which will serve as a demonstration

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[5] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), §366.

[6] Bordieu, ibid., p. 105.

[7] See further Matthew D. Eddy, 'Academic Capital, Postgraduate Research and British Universities', *Discourse*, Vol 6, No.1, Autumn 2006, pp.211-223.

of their academic rigour and as a basis for future researches. Of course this is an effective format of research training; the student can work on the philosophical issues which interest them with the support of a supervisor who is expert in that area. And there is no greater intellectual pleasure than to follow one's interests wherever they might lead and to discover, almost by chance, new ideas and interests which otherwise one might never have realised.

Moreover, participation in the research environment of an academic department or a wider academic community will prepare the postgraduate for further research and teaching. Specialisation also ensures that a postgraduate, or a new academic, is able to make sophisticated original contributions to their area of expertise. A successful doctoral postgraduate will therefore begin his academic career with the requisite experience and expertise to begin an effective academic career.

My criticism is not of specialisation *per se*, since the attraction and intellectual and practical benefits of academic study consists in part in specialised researches. Instead, my objection is to an overemphasis on specialisation to the exclusion of an awareness and familiarity with other areas of philosophy and indeed of other disciplines. Now, there are of course problems with this advocacy of eclecticism, which I will address in section six. However before addressing those concerns, the disadvantages of 'over-specialisation', as one might call it, will be discussed in greater detail. In particular I would like to make three criticisms.

Three criticisms of specialisation

The three criticisms I would like to make of 'over-specialisation' focus upon its negative implications for academic philosophy, and in particular upon the problems generated by the proliferation of, and lack of communication between, specialised philosophical disciplines.

Firstly, professional philosophers are increasingly working within localised research communities which have motivated the bifurcation of philosophical disciplines into a growing number of sub-disciplines. Although this on the one hand reflects the natural growth of specialised research communities, it also tends on the other to create

autonomous research communities, detracting from the unity and coherence of the overall academic philosophical community.

The second problem, following from the first, is that specialisation encourages the fortification of disciplinary boundaries through the development of specialised terminologies and methodologies.[8] The consequence is that philosophers cannot easily participate in the discourse of other disciplines, because even general philosophical terms such as 'agency' or 'realism' may have radically different meanings.[9] A considerable amount of effort must be expended simply in familiarising oneself with the terms of another discipline, before one can even begin to participate in it. Of course one cannot and should not wander between disciplines at will, but academics should be able to communicate with colleagues from other disciplines who are engaged with the same problems as they—political liberty, for instance, or human rationality.

Thirdly, specialisation discourages eclecticism, or the capacity (and perhaps willingness) of philosophers to consult and engage with other areas of philosophy and indeed other academic disciplines. On these terms, interdisciplinarity may be characterised as a tolerant and open attitude towards one's own intellectual activities and those of others, as much as a set of methodological or epistemological commitments. There is much to be gained from an eclectic research methodology, including the importation of novel ideas and inspirations and the identification of fruitful interdisciplinary research areas.

Jonathan Lowe has recently criticised the compartmentalisation of philosophy into discrete specialisms.[10] His criticisms of specialisation emanate from his defence of the unity of truth thesis, that reality is one and hence that truth is indivisible. Although the various special sciences may aspire to provide accurate accounts of certain portions of reality, they cannot aspire to the fundamental task of unifying these

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[8] The proliferation of specialised philosophical disciplines and the increasing difficulty of a researcher exploring and benefiting from them all might also contribute to an 'embarrassment of riches' problem.

[9] One might compare this to the problem of incommensurability in the philosophy of science. For a useful introduction and discussion to the problem, see Sankey, Howard, 'Incommensurability, Translation and Understanding', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 41/165, 1991, pp.414-426.

[10] Lowe, E.J interviewed by David J. Mossley. *Discourse* Vol 5, No. 1, Autumn 2005, pp.17-28.

otherwise disparate accounts. This unification can only be attempted by philosophy—or more specifically to metaphysics.[11] Yet the proliferation of independent philosophical specialisations undermines this project since communication and collaboration between the specialisms becomes increasing problematic. As Lowe argues, considering the 'universal purview' of philosophy, 'this increasing compartmentalisation is very dangerous … if philosophy itself becomes segmented, that's a danger to its survival'.[12]

The danger is that if philosophers are confined, to use explicitly negative language, into a narrow disciplinary speciality—a cage of their own expertise—then the boons of eclecticism may never be realised. Of course there are no explicit interdictions preventing a philosopher from breaking out of his or her specialisations, and indeed most academic philosophers enjoy research interests in a variety of areas, related or not as they might be. My points are simply these. Firstly, the contemporary emphasis upon specialisation may produce a generation of academic philosophers who are unable to profit from the benefits of researches outside of their own specialities. This concern may perhaps be allayed by the current trend towards interdisciplinary research, but that is an issue for consideration elsewhere.[13] Secondly, on this critical reading, specialisation is a major factor in the increasing compartmentalisation of philosophy into a number of autonomous research communities, between which the communication and exchanges of ideas and inspiration is becoming increasingly difficult.

So there is an 'essential tension', to use Thomas Kuhn's phrase, between the advantages and disadvantages of specialisation within philosophy. On the one hand, specialisation allows postgraduate students to pursue their personal research interests to a more advanced level of inquiry and affords them the opportunity of participating in and

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[11] For Lowe's arguments for the fundamentality of metaphysics and the unity of truth, see his *The Possibility of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter one; and his *A Survey of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), chapter one.

[12] Lowe, ibid., pp.26-7.

[13] For an introduction to the educational and epistemological issues in interdisciplinarity, see Lisa R. Lattuca, *Creating Interdisciplinarity: Interdisciplinary Research and Training Among College and University Faculty* (Nashville, TN.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2001).

contributing to a research community of likeminded scholars. It also increases the scope and depth of philosophical research by developing expertise and understanding over a wider range of issues and problems. On the other hand, specialisation can tend to confine postgraduate students into narrow areas of research, increasingly circumscribing their energies into a specific area of discourse.

The consequent lack of exposure to other philosophical areas makes their consultation difficult, and contributes to the isolation of disciplines from one another. It is possible that the academic philosophy of the future will consist in a broad range of autonomous specialisms with minimal interaction and exchange. In the next section, I would like to propose a possible counter-strategy to the proliferation and isolation of specialisms by making an appeal for a revival of eclecticism.

An appeal for eclecticism

The criticisms of specialisation made in the last section concentrate upon its tendency to narrow the intellectual range of researchers to narrow specialisms. There is no explicit enforcement of disciplinary boundaries, which are fluid and mutable in any case, and of course there is significant interdisciplinary exchange. Jean-François Lyotard argued that the dissolution of classical disciplinary boundaries is a consequence of postmodernist thinking, that 'disciplines disappear, overlappings occur at the borders between sciences, and from these new territories are born' and resulting in 'an immanent and, as it were 'flat' network of areas of inquiry, the respective frontiers of which are in constant flux'[14]

Yet there is still the problem that the proliferation of divergent philosophical specialisms needs counteracting; otherwise philosophers may all disappear into ultra-specialised niches and fail to benefit from the researches of other researchers. Hence I would like to make a plea for eclecticism, defending the merit and importance of exploring and consulting a range of ideas and theories from a range of philosophical

[14] Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1986), p.39.

disciplines, as well as from the wider arts, humanities and sciences.

A contemporary example of such eclecticism is medical humanities, or 'cultural studies in medicine and health care', which includes within its disciplinary scope historical, philosophical and sociological studies, sexuality and gender studies, literature and literary theory, and so forth—or, to offer a pun, a mixed medical bag.[15] An editorial in the *Journal of Medical Humanities* remarked that:

> [Medical humanities] has been variously described as multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, pandisciplinary, and even aggressively antidisciplinary … [B]y refusing to separate topics and methodologies that are fundamentally complementary, the epistemological hallmarks of cultural studies are diversity and flexibility. [16]

An important aspect of the diversity of disciplinary perspectives represented in medical humanities is the multi-perspectival approach to research problems and issues. For instance 'medical ethics' could be examined with reference to philosophical biomedical ethics, or examinations of medical educational curricula, or the debates over animal experimentation, or through a critical reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or a historical assessment of Nazi experimentation upon human subjects, or upon representations of issues such as abortion or euthanasia in popular literature and media. As Martyn Evans and David Greaves have argued, the emergence of medical humanities will necessitate:

> the gradual emergence of a new viewpoint, in which philosophy and ethics, alongside a whole range of other disciplines, will jointly become reconfigured and so better equipped to address the challenges of contemporary medicine and health care. [17]

A single problem or issue can be approached in very many ways and this is what an eclectic methodology offers. An important consequence of this, in my opinion, will be the gradual abandonment of disciplinary

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[15] See further Edgar, Andrew and Pattison, Stephen, 'Need humanities be so useless? Justifying the place and role of humanities as a critical resource for performance and practice', *Medical Humanities* 32/2, 2006, 92-98.

[16] Wear, Delese, Editorial, *Journal of Medical Humanities* 18/1, 1997, p.2.

[17] Greaves, David and Evans, Martyn, 'Medical Humanities', *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 18/1, 1997, p.2.

distinctions in favour of a focus upon research problems. For example one would no longer describe oneself as working within 'philosophy of science' but instead as researching 'the influence of public perceptions of scientific authority', which would include not only the history and philosophy of science but also literature, political theory and cultural studies. Following from this contemporary example of eclecticism, it will now be useful to draw some lessons from the history of eclecticism.

Eclecticism and the history of philosophy

Some philosophers may object to the argument that philosophy should return to a sort of eclecticism, on the grounds that 'philosophy' is such a flaccid and amorphous term that it is inherently eclectic anyway. Hegel once remarked that:

> Philosophy threatens to become quite indefinite in extent…Has not everything been called Philosophy and philosophising? [One must consider] the close connection … in which Philosophy stands with its allied subjects, religion, art, the other sciences, and likewise with political history. [18]

The broad scope of philosophy of course ensures considerable overlap or contact with other disciplines; political philosophy and political theory, for instance, or philosophy of mind and psychology and psychiatry. The apportioning of intellectual territory and the attempted enforcement of disciplinary boundaries is another issue which eclecticism can combat. Yet the concern should not be over which discipline should deal with which problems, since any singular problem will invoke a range of alternative issues which could sustain alternatively philosophical, historical or sociological analyses—this being the case in 'science studies'. This is simply the point that ethicists can learn a lot from the history of medicine, or that metaphysicians might usefully draw upon ideas from contemporary quantum physics. Environmental philosophy may fruitfully intermingle with aesthetics and cultural

[18] Hegel, G.W.F., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth Sanderson Haldane (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p.7.

history, and so forth. This attitude is simply the insistence that apparently discrete areas of philosophy can find interesting and illuminating materials from one another, and that an eclectic exchange between the areas of philosophy—and, indeed, between other artistic and scientific disciplines—is to the advantage of all.

The earliest philosophers were eclectics, being at once philosophers, ethicists, political theorists, poets and natural scientists.[19] Aristotle might be the example par excellence of an eclectic yet systematic philosopher, his surviving books covering subjects ranging from *Physics* and *Poetics* to *Metaphysics* and *Prophesying by Dreams*.[20] Yet this eclecticism was married to a remarkable polymathy. Aristotle did not merely chance upon a subject and explore it according to whim or caprice; his investigations were systematic and unitary. An advantage of this is that when one has a mastery of diverse subjects and disciplines, one is afforded the luxury of speculation, or of the identification and development of interrelations between subjects, with synthesis as the eventual aim. This systematicity of inquiry protects eclecticism from dissolving into mere 'wanderings, vagaries, and digressions', as Schopenhauer put it.[21]

Aristotle, like Plato before him, advocated a conception of philosophy as a 'unified science' and so interpreted the philosopher as 'one who is capable of synthesising knowledge'. Julie Thompson Klein has pointed out that although Plato was the first to describe philosophy as a 'unified science … Aristotle moved more in the direction of specificity by delineating clearer divisions of inquiry', although both maintained that 'it is the philosopher who has the ability to collect all forms of knowledge, to organise them and to know "all" in a general, encyclopaedic sense'.[22]

This argument that philosophical eclecticism can contribute to an eventual unification of human intellectual inquiries, recalling Lowe's

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[19] Of course the figures of the 'philosopher' and 'natural scientist' did not exist at this time; but for present purposes these distinctions can be overlooked.

[20] And of course Aristotle's works laid the foundations for the division of philosophical and scientific disciplines which persisted for centuries after his death.

[21] Schopenhauer, Arthur, Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.49.

[22] Klein, Julie Thompson, Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory & Practice (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), pp.19-20.

earlier remarks, might seem unfashionable in today's post-modern age. Whether or not one subscribes to this 'grand narrative' however, eclecticism has other advantages which are worth remarking upon. The nineteenth century French philosopher Victor Cousin, a noted proponent of eclecticism, advocated 'an enlightened eclecticism which, judging with equity, and even with benevolence, all schools, borrows from them what they possess of the true and neglects what in them is false'.[23]

Eclecticism on this rendering has three positive implications: a non-authoritarian perception of philosophical schools and traditions; an acknowledgement of the significance of the history of philosophy; and an appreciation of the necessity of a liberal pluralistic attitude towards philosophical investigation. As Donald R. Kelly puts it, eclecticism enabled 'the liberation of scholars from dependency on one sectarian view' and 'bound them in a sense to tradition, since one of its premises was the belief that truth was the product not of individual but of collective effort'.[24]

Applied to contemporary academic philosophy, the reinvestiture of eclecticism could simultaneously displace the dominance of specialisation and interfere with the process of conservatism by encouraging the free exchange of ideas and inspiration from one discipline to another; scholars would be discouraged from immersing themselves ever deeper into narrow areas of specialised research and instead move out to explore other areas of inquiry. Moreover, eclecticism, particularly in its emphasis upon the historicity of philosophical activity, also encourages a sense of intellectual humility; since the contributions of any one philosophical individual, school or tradition is identified as contingent upon particular historical and cultural circumstances and accordingly interpreted as materials for future synthetic activities.[25] Consider the rhetorical question posed by the Renaissance sceptic Francisco Sánches:

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[23] Cousin, Victor, 1872, *Lectures on the True, the Good and the Beautiful*, trans. O.W. Wright (New York: D. Appleton), p.9.

[24] Kelley, Donald R, 2001, 'Eclecticism and the History of Ideas', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62/4, p.583.

[25] On this point see David E. Cooper, 2005, 'Humility', *The Philosophers' Magazine*, 31, pp.54-56.

> But, after all those great men, what fresh contribution can *you* possibly make? Was Truth waiting for *you* to come upon the scene?'[26]

Eclecticism, selectivity and 'cognitive overload'

Yet there are methodological problems with eclecticism. For instance, 'eclecticism' is often perceived to have negative implications, seeming to imply a degree of arbitrariness or randomness in the selection of materials, or the attempt to synthesise disparate materials into a single coherent system. An eclectic might appear to be one who had bid farewell to selectivity and instead embraced a jamboree of otherwise dissolute inspirations. On these terms eclecticism seems less like an attractive philosophical methodology and more another symptom of our post-modern age. Consider Ulrich Johannes Schneider's plausible argument that until recently:

> eclecticism was held to be little more than a non-systematic form of thinking or constructing, and still today that is the generally accepted meaning of the term. Moreover, eclecticism has lost its traditional bad reputation and seems increasingly attractive to late twentieth-century thought in search of non-dogmatic and non-systematic forms of philosophizing. [27]

However the word 'eclectic', and its derivatives, in fact imply quite the opposite: the word, of seventeenth century origin, is derived from the Greek *eklektikós*, meaning 'selective' (from *eklekt*, 'chosen, select'). An eclectic is not a random sampler from the buffet of intellectual history, but rather a discerning and discriminating intellectual gastronomist. On this point, consider David E. Cooper's observation that, 'No [one] has time to savour the riches of all philosophical traditions', and that therefore in philosophy as in gastronomy, the sensible response to an overstocked larder is surely to choose the best items'.[28]

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[26] Sánches, Fransisco, 1988, *That Nothing is Known*, ed. and trans. Elaine Limbrick and Douglas F.S. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.169.

[27] Schneider, Ulrich Johannes, 1998, 'Eclecticism Rediscovered', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59.1, pp.173.

[28] David E. Cooper, 2003, *World Philosophies: An Historical Introduction* 2nd ed. (Oxford, Blackwell), pp.1-2.

However the sort of selectivity that eclecticism seems to require is problematic, since the ability to make intelligent assessments and selections of the ideas of historically, geographically and culturally diverse philosophical traditions requires not only a significant degree of philosophical acumen but also a considerable knowledge of the history of philosophy, not to mention of any other disciplines which one might wish to consult, such as psychology or anthropology. The days of the philosophical polymath are surely over. As the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus advised, '[m]en who are lovers of wisdom must be inquirers into many things indeed', before cautioning that '[m]uch learning [polymathy] does not teach insight'.[29]

Although many academics might enjoy diverse research interests—including, say, ethics and the philosophies of mind and science—it is increasingly difficult to remain abreast of the developments in a single discipline, let alone multiple disciplines. As Randall Collins has remarked, it is ironic that the enormous proliferation of scholarly literature has expanded and deepened our knowledge whilst at the same time creating the problem of 'cognitive overload', wherein the mass of information available far outweighs our ability to process it. As Collins goes on to remark,

> Disciplinary specialisation and subspecialisation are predictable in an academic profession that since 1960 has grown worldwide to a size dwarfing anything before …. [W]hen several hundred thousand publications appear every year in the humanities and social sciences, and another million in the natural sciences, it may well feel as if we are drowning in a sea of texts [30]

This problem of simply remaining 'up to date' is exacerbated by the proliferation of increasingly specialised journals and areas of sub-disciplinary research. The traditional domains of philosophy, such as ethics or metaphysics, are now bifurcating into a gaggle of sub-domains. Subtle but significant variations begin to emerge in terminology and methodology, in the definition and prioritising of

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[29] McKirahan, Richard D., *Philosophy Before Socrates* (Cambridge: Hackett, 1994), fragments 10.33 and 9.2.

[30] Collins, Randall, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998), p.xvii.

problems and theoretical commitments. One can only play the game when the rules have been decided upon. And of course these problems of divergence are inherent in any discipline, even those which enjoy relative consensus and stability.

Conclusion

These developments in academia are related to wider trends in secondary level education, to the emergence of 'managerialism' and the increasing demands imposed by a financially competitive 'academic marketplace'. The situation is different within other national academic communities—in the United States, for instance, where university level education is much broader. Even a cursory study of the educational, political and economic factors influencing academia would be an enormous undertaking; but one for which there is surely an urgent need.[31]

The purpose of this paper is not to offer any substantive remarks upon these wider concerns, but simply to argue that these wider developments are having negative implications for academic philosophy which are manifesting in postgraduate studies (and of course in other aspects of academic philosophical life). There are important lessons to be learned from the history of philosophical practice which suggest that over-specialisation can tend to encourage stagnation; that there is an important place for freedom of academic inquiry; that disciplinary boundaries should provide structure without imposing constriction; and that, above all, that consideration of the opinions of current postgraduates, who after all represent the 'next generation' of scholars, is of vital importance in ensuring the health, morale and vitality of academic philosophy in the coming decades.

[31] My thanks to Prof Jonathan Lowe, Svenja Matusall, Emily Simon-Thomas and Amanda Taylor for comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper.

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Discourse
Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
Department of Theology and Religious Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
United Kingdom
Tel: +44(0)113 343 6745
david@prs.heacademy.ac.uk

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