ESCalate: collaboration, improvement and reflection

This is ESCalate’s 21st newsletter. The modest subject centre which was born from the energy and imagination of colleagues at the Universities of Nottingham, Oxford Brookes and Bristol and later the Universities of Stirling and Cumbria, has ‘come of age’ (in newsletter terms, at least). The irony, of course, is that this is also ESCalate’s last publication – a fact which reflects the fact that the parent body, the Higher Education Academy, has decided to support high quality teaching and learning in HE in different ways.

We now welcome Kathy Wright and Will Curtis who will coordinate HEA support for Education in the future.

But it is also appropriate at this time to review the journey which ESCalate has made, the principles which have informed it, the activities it has facilitated and the resources, expertise and relationships which it leaves behind. Crucially too, this newsletter affirms the role of organisations which generate the social capital of our community, and remain to enable progress in the future.

Roger Murphy, then Professor of Education at the University of Nottingham, was ESCalate’s first Director. Looking back over its first decade, Roger identified three essential qualities of the subject centre:

- It is essentially a collaborative endeavour involving all of us involved in the academic discipline of education within higher education;
- The work is essentially focused on improving the learning experiences of our students;
- It recognises that those of us working in universities have much to learn – we need to continue to develop as effective reflective practitioners. (Murphy, 2010)
ESCalate news is a termly publication.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor nor of the partner organisations. The editors reserve the right to edit, amend or abbreviate copy without notice.

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An electronic version of this newsletter is available on the ESCalate website.

This is the last edition of ESCalate news as the subject centre will be closing on December 31st 2011. After this date please contact the Higher Education Academy with any enquiries.

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/
The short articles collected in this final publication illustrate these principles in action.

The first group illustrates the activities which ESCalate has facilitated and the sectors in which it has worked, whilst a second group of articles provides a commentary from different parts of the UK. The third group of articles draws on some of the diverse organisations within the education and teacher education communities. When times are challenging, we really do need to build on strengths and form alliances for the greater good.

The final set of contributions comes from the ‘back-room team’ – from some of the people without whom ESCalate could not have succeeded. We have reflective articles from Danny Saunders, Chair of ESCalate’s Advisory Board and from Tim Bond, Head of the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, in which ESCalate has been based. Then an article from Kathy Wright, the HEA’s new joint Discipline Lead for Education. Entitled ‘A Hard Act to Follow’, it describes the new opportunities for funding which are now available on application to the Higher Education Academy. We urge colleagues to use these resources and to continue to collaborate in defending, strengthening and promoting the field. The newsletter concludes with our In Conversation… piece, Liz Hankinson in dialogue with Teresa Nurser, who with other office colleagues have provided the organisational infrastructure for ESCalate.

I would like to conclude by thanking all those who have contributed to the work of ESCalate over the last decade. That is an extremely large and diverse group of people – and includes Roger Murphy, Rosemary Deem and Tony Brown who served as Directors. The experience of ESCalate does illustrate the value of collaboration, improvement and reflection, and we look forward to seeing how these may be realised again in the future.

References
Murphy, R. (2010) ‘In the beginning ….’ ESCalate Newsletter 17, Summer 2010

Andrew Pollard
Director of ESCalate, University of Bristol and the IOE, London

Professor Andrew Pollard was appointed Director of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) in 2002 and led it for eight years. Andrew began his career as a primary school teacher and later moved, through teacher education, into research in higher education. He has held chairs in four universities and has studied teaching-learning processes and the impact of education policy on practice for much of the past thirty years. He is author of an established textbook on Reflective Teaching. Through TLRP, he has been involved with many of the most significant UK developments in educational research over the last decade. He has been ESCalate’s Director since January 2011.
This section features seven colleagues whose articles illustrate the range and diversity of ESCalate’s work. Teachers, learners, roles, means and contexts are all represented. So we hear from one of the UK’s General Teaching Councils, consider student voice, becoming a teacher educator, the use of technology, and the work of higher education in FE.

It has become a bit of a cliché when writing about the teaching profession to quote the McKinsey (2007) observation that ‘the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers’. From an Irish historical perspective, this reminds me of something that William Butler Yeats said in a more strident way when speaking on the topic of education in the Irish Seanad:

‘I am sure for a child to spend all day in a school with a stupid, ill-trained man under an ill-planned system is less good for that child than that the child should be running through the fields learning nothing’.

I am sure that in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom the wider public would be satisfied that the current arrangements for the selection of future teachers and the professional formation they receive ensures that ‘stupid and ill-trained men’ are no longer let loose on our schools. So hopefully, in this respect, Yeats can ‘requiescat in pace’ in the beautiful Sligo countryside. However, whether or not the current arrangements for teacher education will help us meet the challenge implicit in the McKinsey (2007) conclusion is another matter. This is where the role of the higher education community is, in my opinion, crucial.

Although I can’t speak for the teaching councils in the devolved jurisdictions of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, there is, in many ways, a common recognition among us all that our partners in the higher education sector have a crucial and, in many ways, a pre-eminent role to play in initial teacher education and in continuing professional development. This was most definitely the case with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).

With its publication of ‘Teaching: the Reflective Profession’ in 2007 the GTCNI sought to situate its

Gerry Devlin treats us to some wisdom from Yeats and affirms the importance of scholarship and evidence in teacher professionalism.
The most recent example of teacher education scholarship that comes to mind is the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). I submit that this programme sought in many ways to ‘reintellectualise’ the teaching profession and to give the profession and teacher educators a well earned narrative privilege on what should underpin policy development and, at a practical level, classroom-based pedagogy. In the latter case, there are many specific examples of research evidence that should shape practice however, TLRP’s ten evidence-informed principles for teaching and learning (see www.tlrp.org) stand out as a professional lodestar of continuing relevance in stark contrast to the often political quick fix solutions to what are deep seated educational problems.

In conclusion, the work of ESCalate has always signalled to teachers that their professionalism can only be enduring and complete if it is firmly grounded within a tradition of scholarship that research-based practice underpins. This is where ESCalate has in the past and the higher education community in the future must continue to make a major contribution.

References

Gerry Devlin
General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

Gerry Devlin is the Senior Education Officer with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI). His main area of responsibility is education policy. Gerry joined the GTCNI in 2004 after 26 years teaching. He began his teaching career in primary education in 1978 and, in 1983; he moved to post-primary education. His last teaching post was as vice-principal of St Colmcille’s High School, Crossgar, Co. Down.
ESCalate has always genuinely championed the Education student and over the years developed practices to really put its money where its mouth was! Initially the Student Grants were the most prestigious opportunity on offer and therefore very popular, giving students money to take ideas and work forward. With the support of their own institution’s tutor, this often enabled them to develop something innovative that could then be shared at least via the ESCalate website and then later, via the student conferences.

All this was quite novel in its day with students delighted to be able to win really quite substantial sums to develop work not otherwise financially supported by their own institutions or other bodies.

It all snowballed very positively; lots of other opportunities followed, the Conference bursaries so popular that this year that we awarded five rather than the usual three.

Alongside these developments, at home we reenergised and redeveloped the student pages on the ESCalate website. Like the student grants, bursaries and essays, these had started small scale - but with focus and energy over time developed to become the considerable information hub they are today with Facebook friend and fan facilities as well as more recently, Twitter. The pages provide links to various groups - most innovatively via the interactive tag cloud as well as information through more usual website means.

Over the last three years, we have held an annual Student day conference across various UK locations. It was this that perhaps most clearly has reflected true collaboration between staff and students as they stood together to share practice around their courses and research in the various parallel sessions on offer.
Not everything went perfectly of course. We never did manage to effectively attract the student voice to our ESCalate Advisory Boards. The problem was that students agreed to participate but then ceased to be students and got jobs before the next Board met!

Overall though it has been a success story. ESCalate has made a difference over its ten years history and leaves a legacy that others can take on. Having funds to offer real practical support helped of course – but what really mattered I would argue was offering students a voice through opportunities to be involved with colleagues. ESCalate helped them believe they had something to say that was worth hearing and that is something we can all ensure we continue.

ESCalate set out to improve academic induction in the subject discipline and this involves a significant number of newly appointed academics in the professional field of teacher education. In the UK these teacher educators are usually mid career and bring rich experience of teaching and leadership to their new post. Many of these colleagues feel ‘thrown in at the deep end’ but they gain great satisfaction from their contribution to the development of new teachers. Successful induction helps these teacher educators to manage more effectively the joys and pressures of higher education and to build new identities as academics.

Through networking, small scale funding of research, practical support for workshops, and editing of publications, ESCalate nurtured the ‘Becoming a Teacher Educator’ project. This collaborative research and development project brought together colleagues from different institutions to produce a series of published papers and the Becoming a Teacher Educator guidelines. A large number of colleagues from across the
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Technology and teacher education

During the past 5 years practitioner-focussed workshops and events have proved very successful in the dissemination of the innovative use of emergent technologies and pedagogies in education subjects. Increasingly the presenters and audiences for these events were drawn from wider subject and curriculum areas.

However, in teacher education, as in HE in general, we still have work to do as the wider literature suggests to, “foster an open and enquiring approach” (Beetham et al. 2009 p.71) where teachers “are empowered to develop localised or novel responses” (Atwell and Hughes 2010, p.65). Contributors to ESCalate events and case studies presented in the forthcoming online publication, Working with Diverse Groups of Learners in the Digital Age, offer salient lessons in working with learners in changing cultures and contexts; contexts which are likely to become more challenging over time. What emerges from the case studies is a sense of resilience and adaptability, the pursuit of new ways of being and doing, of risk and experimentation but also honest evaluation and horizon gazing. It is hoped that the case studies will be a useful starting point for colleagues eager to begin or extend the use of technology in their teaching. The range of tools, approaches and settings offer transferable examples and common themes such as overcoming apprehension and resistance, supporting transitions, pedagogic assumption shift and cross-fertilisation.

The case studies do also however offer a more cautionary tale – that despite the considerable pedagogic benefits of e-learning identified, the benefits for learning and learner guidance and support come with costly time implications. These costs are various - the effort of set-up, the need to convince colleagues, learners and institutions of the merit of e-strategies and e-solutions and the use of e...
on-task time for e-moderation. Yet what unites the case studies is a spirit of investigation and experimentation – a willingness to try new approaches in the face of such considerable barriers. The case studies themselves – and the work of the practitioners who have offered them to this project – are examples of how e-practices and digital learning need to place "pedagogy before technology" (Beetham, and Sharpe 2007) and of the need to foster tools and learning opportunities which are fit for purpose. This is the hallmark of any successful learning and teaching, blended or otherwise.

http://escalate.ac.uk/digitalage

References


Julie Hughes has worked in the School of Education at the University of Wolverhampton since 2002. Prior to this she worked in Teacher Education in FE. Julie’s work and research focuses upon the use of e-portfolios and blogging to support the transitions into and out of the university, the development of reflective collaborative learning cultures and the role of dialogic feedback to support the personal and professional development of learners. Julie was awarded an HEA National Teaching Fellowship in 2005 and she was seconded to ESCalate as an Academic Consultant for 2 days per week in May 2007.

Warren Kidd
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Warren is Senior Lecturer in Education at The Cass School of Education and Communities, University of East London (UEL) where he works in the Post-Compulsory Education and Training Team. He is a Teaching Fellow of the university and the Leader in Learning and Teaching (LiLT) for his school.
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Section 1

John Lea

considers the challenges of HE work within FE, and urges
continued attention on them.

HE in FE: Education for Teaching and allied professions

Scan the ESCalate or HEA websites, or a journal like The Journal of Further and Higher Education, and one quickly finds a growing number of articles and position papers aimed at issues relating to the HE/FE interface. This includes discussions of whether the two sectors could become more ‘seamless’ in their provision; whether HE and FE institutions might merge to form ‘dual’ institutions; how to make partnerships between HEIs and FECs work effectively; issues relating to the delivery and growth of foundation degrees; and students’ experiences of the transition between HE and FE.

In amongst these discussions three particular areas have emerged as front-running concerns. First, questions on how to promote research and scholarship amongst FE teachers, for example, whether it should mean the same thing in both settings, and what exactly is the role it plays in the teaching of HE, and developing a community of HE practitioners? These questions are thorny, not least because class
contact hours in a typical FE college are considerably higher than even the most teaching intense of the post-92 universities. Indeed this prompted one author to say that in FECs ‘scholarship is the word that dare not speak its name’ (Young 2002).

Second, what, if anything, is the essential difference between teaching in HE and FE? Sometimes this might relate to whether the theories of adult learning apply equally across both settings, and sometimes to the question of what exactly makes an HE taught session higher, and what is involved in ‘capturing HEness’.

Third, and related again, is the ITE/CPD question (and the key ESCalate question perhaps) of how to best to prepare HE in FE teachers for their roles. One simple solution is to argue that if a teacher is employed by an FEC then it is only right (and indeed a college Principal may insist on it) that they should engage with the newly revised LLUK professional standards framework (most likely undertaking a DTLLS qualification), and work towards QTLS.

However, if a teacher is exclusively undertaking HE in FE work then there is no requirement that they should even register with the Institute for Learning (the body which confers QTLS), and indeed, one might argue that, regardless, they should be given the opportunity to engage with the HEA housed UK PSF – after all, they are engaged in HE teaching.

A lot of interesting and important work has been undertaken by both ESCalate and the HEA in general, and we need to continue to keep this momentum going. A lot of work has also been undertaken by groups such as the Association of Colleges (AoC) with Nick Davy, and the Mixed Economy Group (MEG) with John Widdowson. In which case we should have powerful arenas in which to take forward that work on promoting scholarship and capturing HEness. At SEDA and UCET we have also recently been looking at how best to serve both the ITE and CPD needs of the growing number of teachers working at the HE/FE interface, and looking again at the relationship between the two professional standards frameworks. To this end I have recently invited colleagues from the UCET and SEDA communities to form a new spin-off group to consider issues relating to the HE/FE interface. If you are interested in joining this group, or just want to keep in touch, email me on john.lea@canterbury.ac.uk.

*References*


John Lea
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Andrew Morris reflects on the resilience and creativity of FE, and draws attention to the need to increase the use of evidence to inform policy and practice.

Teaching and learning in the Learning & Skills sector

The “yes but” sector, as Geoff Stanton, a leading FE commentator, once described FE. “Yes we do vocational education, but also more “A” levels than state schools; yes we do basic skills but also 10% of all HE qualifications”. The sheer diversity of learners is what makes the sector so vibrant and the teaching and learning challenges so interesting. But this very diversity can easily obscure the centrality of teaching and learning to its primary role.

Despite this the Learning & Skills sector has proved a remarkable arena for innovation. Flexible curricula, such as CPVE and Access to HE have been continuously developed and innovative methods for reaching out to learners in their communities have been pioneered.

This very diversity has resulted in differentiated pedagogies adapted for the many age bands: the sixth former; the mature returner, the unemployed youth, the “older but bolder” and now increasingly, the undergraduate and adult apprentice. But as many studies indicate the key to effective learning is the availability of well trained and effective teachers. For this heterogeneous sector this alone presents formidable
The task of developing appropriate pedagogies for this diversity has been taken forward by many bodies, including LSIS with its improvement programmes, IfL with its CPD responsibilities and NIACE for adult education. Others such as ESCalate, City & Guilds and CfBT undertake research on vocational pedagogy.

But what are we to make of a future of economic austerity? With so many organisations with their specialist expertise disappearing, the sector needs, more than ever, to make greater use of evidence from high quality research. Simply to apply the lessons of Assessment for Learning or small group collaboration or peer tutoring to the various context of post 16 education and training would mark a huge step forward. Fortunately the strength and extent of the evidence base is increasing steadily and becoming more coherent as individual studies are evaluated, synthesised and made accessible. The political landscape of education may be changing, but advances in the underlying basis for pedagogy cannot be reversed. We all share responsibility for making best use of this – both the research councils, ministries and universities that produce the evidence and the communities that stand to benefit from using it.

no one school or college has the resources or expertise to meet the needs and aspirations of all young (sic) people within it....Local collaborative and democratic learning partnerships ...should be established to promote continuity...'


Andrew Morris
Freelance Consultant

Andrew Morris is an education freelance consultant advising on the interaction of research, policy and practice. He advises a number of organisations and chairs the steering group of the Coalition for Evidence Based Education and the Educational Evidence Portal consortium. Until 2006, he was director of the National Educational Research Forum (NERF) in England, and was previously a research manager at LSDA, a senior manager at Islington Sixth Form Centre and City & Islington College and originally a science teacher.
Since devolution, the education systems of the UK have developed in particular ways, whilst facing common challenges. ESCalate has facilitated activities both within and between Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England, as the articles in this section illustrate.

Ross Deuchar reviews recent changes in teacher education in Scotland, and the role which ESCalate has played.

Collaboration, improvement and reflection: where would Scottish education be without ESCalate’s principles?

In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004) has brought about new expectations for teachers, schools and the wider education system. Teachers are being encouraged to acquire higher skills in pedagogical understanding and to be agents of curriculum innovation. In addition, the recent review of teacher education (Donaldson, 2010) highlights the need for a new model of ‘extended’ teacher professionalism characterised by a willingness to engage in research and to adopt distributed leadership roles.

To support these expectations, there is an increasing realisation that our teacher education institutions (TEIs) need to establish stronger partnerships with schools, local authorities and other public agencies. Now more than ever, teachers need to see the connections between theory and practice and to become equipped with the right skills to become agents of change. ESCalate’s first principle of collaboration has therefore taken on increased importance as Schools of Education strive...
to create school-university hubs that will enable these priorities to flourish.

The Donaldson review has also emphasised the need for Scottish universities to avoid an exclusive emphasis on teacher training which is purely vocational in nature. New concurrent degrees will soon emerge, combining in-depth academic study in areas beyond education with professional development. TEIs are also considering new opportunities to build masters-level credits into initial teacher education qualifications. Successful implementation of these new priorities will require a commitment among academics to seek opportunities for sustained improvement in the learning experiences of students – thus upholding ESCalate’s second principle.

In addition, the increasing expectation that teachers will conduct action research projects creates new demands on academic staff to work closely with schools in mentoring roles to facilitate research-informed transformative practice (Deuchar, 2011). And finally, the need for teachers to work in multi-agency teams implies a corresponding expectation for academics in education to work more closely with those in other disciplines such as health and social work in planning and implementing both undergraduate courses and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes. These expectations underline the need to take account of ESCalate’s third guiding principle of reflection on practice.

In the years to come, HE staff in Scotland will continue to walk the uncertain road associated with implementing educational change while supporting those in the field as they too strive to embrace it. In so doing, it is somewhat comforting to know that the values associated with ESCalate will offer some support. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how we could survive without them.

References

Ross Deuchar
University of the West of Scotland

Ross Deuchar is Professor of Research in Education at the University of the West of Scotland. His research interests span across sociology, criminology, education and youth studies. He is the Immediate Past-President of the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA).
ESCalate in Northern Ireland: promoting regional collaboration, building national connections, informing pedagogy and practice

ESCalate has served Northern Ireland well in many ways but particularly by facilitating and enabling what might be described as external and internal connectivity. This has been most evident through funding which has been provided for collegial symposia in Northern Ireland and for a number of collaborative projects which built and enhanced research collaborations both regionally and nationally. In addition, the protean professional resource base of the ESCalate website has informed course pedagogies and enhanced course content in Education.

ESCalate has facilitated greater professional cohesion in Northern Ireland through activities organised locally which have brought together the diverse strands which provide teacher education. One of the final events to be organised by ESCalate (jointly with the Teacher Education Advancement Network, TEAN) in Belfast brought together representatives of the five HEIs, the CASS (local authority curriculum support agency), RTU (Regional Training Unit), the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the GTCNI. Because of the current absence of a coordinating structure for teacher education in Northern Ireland, it was ESCalate that made possible this high-level communication across key stakeholder organisations and enabled the sharing of experience and practice which is so vital for vibrant provision in teacher education.

The funding provided for research activity has included a varied portfolio of projects which have included, for example, studies of aspects of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) such as partnerships between out-of-school educational agencies and ITE, using video for the identification and assessment of learning in ITE and an innovative...
Sue Davies considers the challenges facing teacher education and educational research in Wales.

A time of change in Wales: the need for professional collaboration

Higher Education in Wales is undergoing a period of profound change as the sector reconfigures; most Welsh universities are undergoing merger to become bigger, and it is hoped more sustainable, institutions. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is looking to ‘significantly fewer’ than the existing twelve institutions by 2013. Mergers which are now taking place, or which are being anticipated, are primarily based on geographical proximity in addition to academic complementarity and shared research interests. These changes are bringing with them the challenge and pain that can occur with reorganisation, but also a new collaborative environment that is offering opportunities for innovative projects, encouraging fresh approaches to teaching and providing a stimulus for reflection about practice. It is also making possible new groupings for research and scholarship which will have stronger capacity; and greater sustainability in the longer term.

These changes were anticipated by the Furlong Review of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in 2006. It recommended that ITT provision be re-configured into three regional centres which would bring together and jointly plan provision across each geographical area. Each of the centres- in South East Wales, South West Wales and North and Mid Wales- is now established and as a consequence there has been a rationalisation of programmes and specialisms between institutions, appointment of some joint staff, as well as some joint Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and research activity. The increased networking is improving teaching quality- as new joint arrangements are planned and implemented, best
practice is shared, and this has become a stimulus to reflection and further enhancement. This extends ESCalate’s provision in Wales over the past decade to promote the quality of learning and teaching in higher education.

Educational research capacity in Wales has been in decline for many years with only Cardiff University’s School of Social Sciences receiving HEFCW (quality related) funding to support education research. Without such resource, all other institutions struggle to remain research active. However, it is recognised that this engagement makes an essential contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, as ESCalate has consistently argued. For this reason, there has been a sustained effort amongst the small community of educational researchers to build capacity through collaboration. Following in the first steps taken by The Welsh Education Research Network (WERN) between 2007-9, a research alliance is being built which is developing collaborative projects and joint postgraduate research provision. It is hoped this will enable education research to continue to contribute to the development of excellent teaching and learning in Wales.

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Teacher education, UK comparisons and ESCalate

From the outset, ESCalate has been very aware of the four nations of the UK and the rich opportunities that intra-UK comparison provides. This has been especially the case in relation to teacher education and there have been many fruitful activities which have exploited the existence of this ‘natural laboratory’ for researching and developing our field.

It is generally agreed that the 1999 devolution settlements, slightly different for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, have led to increasing divergence of approach, certainly in contrasting these three nations with England. Indeed England has looked increasingly like the odd one out. If researchers have found plenty of interesting opportunities for comparative study, it has been striking how politicians and policymakers have a slightly different take on the potential for learning from each other. In the smaller nations there is always an awareness of what is happening in England and sometimes a strong inclination to create a distance – what in Wales was called establishing ‘clear red water’ between Wales and England. And in England there seems to be a studied ignorance of developments in the other three nations!

A four nations strand was established at a very early stage in ESCalate’s history, with seminars being held in each of the nations, led by Kevin Brehony and Rosemary Deem. The ITE strand within ESCalate which was to be led by Alison Jackson and colleagues at the University of Cumbria was also very conscious of the four nation...
Developments in teacher education policy seem to have been accelerating recently. Perhaps the best example of the striking divergences within the UK has been the recent comparison of the Donaldson Report on Teacher Education in Scotland and the English White Paper, The Importance of Teaching (see Hulme and Menter, 2011 forthcoming). Such a comparison demonstrates very vividly how widely differing conceptions of teaching and teacher education may exist even within contiguous nations within the ‘United’ Kingdom.

aspect and this has continued within the Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN) which emerged from these activities. Partly inspired by discussion within ESCalate, one particular collaborative initiative that created a resource designed to facilitate ‘home international’ study was the Teacher Education Group (TEG). TEG got support from ESCalate, BERA, UCET and the TLRP to establish a searchable database on teacher education research in the UK from 2000-2008 (now available on the BERA website at http://www.bera.ac.uk/teg-bibliography/).

Reference

Ian Menter
University of Glasgow

Ian Menter is Professor of Teacher Education in the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. He is co-chair of the Teacher Education Group and is currently one of the editors of the British Educational Research Journal.
ESCalate has been proud to have been able to facilitate networking, collaboration and innovation in the fields of education and teacher education. Many other organisations now support the development of our social capital.

Mary James considers networking and draws attention to the substance and quality of interaction, and to the contribution which BERA can play.

Carrying the baton for education: the role of the British Educational Research Association (BERA)

ESCalate (verb) – ‘to increase in extent or intensity’.

The closing of a body that has produced something good is often a source of sadness. However, if the good is sustained and built upon then there is little to regret. Having done much to build the social and intellectual capital to encourage and support improvement in education in higher education – to increase the extent and intensity of such work – then this is an appropriate moment for ESCalate to pass the baton to related associations and organisations, which are perhaps less vulnerable to the vagaries of funding mechanisms in these difficult economic times. We are, after all, part of a team committed to high quality education for all.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) is dependent on member subscriptions and journal royalties for funding. But these are healthy and growing, and, having gradually expanded its work over its 37-year history, BERA has ambitions to contribute as the hub of a network of individuals, groups and other associations interested in promoting educational research across the UK “for both the improvement of educational practice and for the public benefit”. The fact that at least two other contributors to this Newsletter - Jean Murray of ESCalate and SES and Ross Deuchar of SERA - are also closely associated with BERA, attests to the fact that such an ambition is realistic. The energy of organisations such as BESA, SRHE and FACE creates future opportunities.
As someone who has lead a research project investigating educational networks for teacher learning (James and McCormick, 2009) I have come to the view that the value of network links is not dependent on their strength. In other words the substance and quality of interaction is more important than the number of times it occurs. Thus BERA, or any other organisation for that matter, does not have to ‘take over’ to be effective. What it needs to do is to provide opportunities for networking, and the building of alliances, and the resources that will enable activity to be focused and productive.

Within BERA’s infrastructure there are two main ways for accomplishing this, and plans to do more. The first is its network of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of which there are now 30, including SIGs on teacher education and research and practitioner research. The second is BERA’s growing collection of resources for educational research garnered from, or linked to, the NCRM, TLRP, AERS, or BERA itself. Of particular interest to the ESCalate community will be the Teacher Education Group Bibliography, which was developed with funding from TLRP, ESCalate, BERA and UCET.

The interconnectedness of bodies and individuals with an interest in education in UK higher education is clear to see. The challenge is to maintain and grow the momentum that ESCalate worked so constructively to establish.

Reference

Mary James is Professor and Associate Director of Research at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education. She is also President of the British Educational Research Association. From 2002 to 2008 she was Deputy Director of the ESRC’s Teaching and Learning Research Programme and director of the TLRP ‘Learning How to Learn’ project. Mary was a member of the UK Assessment Reform Group from 1992 to 2010. She is a trustee of the British Curriculum Foundation and was founding editor of The Curriculum Journal. She is a member of the Coalition Government’s Expert Panel supporting the review of the National Curriculum.
The origins and growth of the British Education Studies Association (BESA)

Over the seven years since its conception, BESA has engaged some 300 different academics and students in scholarly discourse about education and Education Studies. Both BESA and its members have worked closely with ESCalate, with many members collaborating on ESCalate funded projects.

Education Studies as a higher education subject has its origins in teacher training and grew out of the ‘theory for teaching’ aspects of such courses (Ward, 2006). The 1960s and 70s saw the first efforts to create Educational Studies as the theoretical basis for Bachelor of Education (BEd) degrees (Tibble, 1971). The subsequent development of non-teacher-training Education Studies programmes enabled higher education to offer students critical analysis in an academic discipline in its own right.

From the 1960s, non-teacher-training Education Studies existed in a small number of institutions, notably the universities of Cardiff and York. However, the last twelve years has seen a dramatic increase in undergraduate Education Studies degree courses. 2002-3 saw 2771 students registered on undergraduate Education Studies courses, a 16.7% annual increase, as against 6,959 on undergraduate qualified teacher status (QTS) degrees, only a 0.5% increase. In 2004-5 some 50 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) were offering non-teacher training Education Studies degree courses and 25 of them had commenced since 2001. Initially, the subject was offered as part of a Combined or Joint Honours programme. However, more recently, Single Honours programmes in Education Studies have become increasingly popular.

BESA was formally launched at a conference in Chester in July 2005. It attracted some 60 delegates and a good deal of interest, with keynotes from Ian Stronach and Alison Wolf. Since then, the Association has grown in strength. The Annual conferences at Lincoln, Bath Spa, Liverpool Hope, Bangor and Manchester Metropolitan, have each attracted around a hundred delegates from an increasing range of universities. The conferences and colloquiums have provided a network for discussion between universities a platform for research papers. In 2008, the current BESA website was launched and, after some initial teething problems, a BESA journal *Educational Futures: The Journal of the British Education Studies Association* was established.

BESA’s main focus has always been the development of the curriculum and the teaching of...
Stephen Ward is Dean of the School of Education at Bath Spa University where he established one of the first Education Studies Honours Degree programmes. He has published edited texts on Education Studies and was a founder member of the British Education Studies Association.

Jane Bates is a Programme Leader for Education Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University and a former Secretary, Vice Chair and Chair of the British Education Studies Association (BESA). She has co-authored two text books for Education Studies students.

BESA’s main focus has always been the development of the curriculum and the teaching of Education Studies. Its stated aims are to:

- Assist those with responsibility for the well-being of Education Studies in their promotion and fostering of the subject;
- Speak for the subject within both UK Higher Education and the wider community;
- Establish and maintain communications through a professional network.

BESA’s development is an interesting example of what can be achieved without central funding or grants, but by the collective interest and efforts of a group that loves its theme! As ESCalate ‘disappears’, the harnessing of that same collective interest and spirit to the subject presence within the HEA may be vital for the continued health and survival of Education as a field of study and practice.

References


Enduring partnerships: the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE)

Having worked closely with ESCalate since it was established, the Forum for Access & Continuing Education will ensure that its legacy endures. One example of this is hosting electronic resources (presentations, reports and other publications) previously hosted on the ESCalate site. Another example is collaboration, the preferred way of working for both organisations, which FACE will continue to foster at both individual and organisational levels.

Running through all of ESCalate’s work was a focus on the learner and how professional practice could be enhanced to benefit the learner – this golden thread will continue to connect practitioners who were part of the ESCalate community, but also those who follow in the future.

The untimely demise of ESCalate has been noted by fellow mourners in the newsletter who recognise the significance of its contribution to the HE sector and beyond. In their eulogies, colleagues working in diverse settings across the sector have reported on the life history of the organisation and examined the consequences of its demise.

ESCalate’s legacy lies in the commitment which exists within the Education community to ensuring that collaboration within the field continues, and that the drive for continued improvement in teaching quality to benefit the learner is not only sustained but extended. Perhaps therefore, along with all the constructive and innovative work it has supported, ESCalate’s legacy will not be lost.

From our perspective, ESCalate has helped us understand the value of collaboration across the sector and in so doing it continues to feed our imagination for a better day!
A voice for excellence in educational studies: the Society for Educational Studies (SES)

The closure of ESCalate as the Higher Education Academy’s (HEA) Subject Centre for Education is certainly to be regretted. Many of us in education will miss the spirit of collaboration ESCalate fostered, the rich activities it facilitated over the years and the resources to inform educational practice and research it accumulated. However, as Andrew Pollard identifies in his editorial, it is essential for the field that, working with the HEA, we find alternative ways to support high quality teaching and learning in Higher Education. These efforts must involve bringing into the equation other educational organizations such as the Society for Educational Studies (www.soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk), founded in 1951.

Given the fast changing Higher Education context, the Society has much to offer the educational community in terms of activities, opportunities and resources. Although its remit is essentially focused on educational research rather than practice, the Society shares many of ESCalate’s core values in terms of supporting and developing excellence in Education. Since 1952, for example, the Society has sponsored the world-class publication – The British Journal of Educational Studies. And, as ESCalate was able to do, the Society provides a forum for debate and discussion on educational policy issues and acts as a public voice for Educational Studies. In particular, as the archive of the British Journal of...
Jon Davison has been Professor of Teacher Education in four universities in the UK, including the Institute of Education, University of London where he was also Dean. His research interests include sociolinguistics, the teaching and learning of English and Media, citizenship education and the professional formation of teachers. He is the Chair of the Society for Educational Studies.

Jean Murray is Research and Knowledge Leader in the Cass School of Education and Communities at the University of East London, where she also teaches on doctoral courses. Building on her background in schooling and teacher education, her research interests focus on exploring the national and institutional contexts for teacher education across the world, and the ways in which these impact on the academic and professional identities of teacher educators and their opportunities for professional learning in universities and colleges. She has recently been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship.

Educational Studies shows, the Society has a long record of responding to critical attacks on the quality and integrity of the field.

The Society also provides opportunities for education academics. It sponsors a range of conferences and seminars in the UK and around the world, holds its own annual conference on highly topical themes and provides a related seminar series each year in UK universities. As a charity, it welcomes applications from members of education institutions in the UK for up to twelve £10,000 small research grants annually, and also invites bids for its biennial National Research Award of £200,000. The Society also recognises distinction in the field of Educational Studies in its Annual Book Prizes for outstanding writing and in awarding Fellowships. In these ways, like ESCalate, the Society reaches out to its membership, providing opportunities for early career and established researchers alike and enabling academic learning. 2012 is the 60th anniversary of the BJES celebrated by Education Matters: 60 years of the British Journal of Educational Studies (Routledge). The archive of past issues of BJES on which the book is based provides a superb resource for educational researchers and is available at www.soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk.
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Section 3

Yvonne Hillier draws attention to the synergy which has existed between ESCalate’s and SRHE’s work on quality in higher education.

ESCalating teaching quality in higher education: the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE)

The Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) aims to advance understanding of higher education, especially through the insights, perspectives and knowledge offered by systematic research and scholarship. Its primary role is to improve the quality of higher education through facilitating debate and publication of research on issues of policy, on the governance, organisation, management and leadership of higher education institutions, on teaching and learning methods and the curriculum, and the student experience.

The Society has a wide set of aims and objectives. Amongst its many activities the Society funds and supports a number of special interest Networks for researchers and practitioners working in higher education from every discipline. These Networks are open to all and offer a range of topical seminars, workshops and other events throughout the year and through this work is in touch with all current research knowledge.

SRHE has developed a significant interest in research in teaching and learning in higher education over the years. This has been particularly stimulated by the Dearing Review of Higher Education (1997) and can be seen from the SRHE’s collective and individual responses to numerous government policies culminating in the recent White Paper which claims to put students at the heart of the system.

There has been, therefore, a synergy to be found between the work of Escalate and its support for high quality teaching and learning in HE and SRHE’s support for research into HE and in particular, into teaching and learning in HE.

Although there are numerous critiques of the ways in which teaching and learning has been conceptualised and theorised in HE, it is clear that there is much still to do to foster a critically reflective approach to the examination of what we do when we teach in higher education.

Yvonne Hillier draws attention to the synergy which has existed between ESCalate’s and SRHE’s work on quality in higher education.
It may seem undeniable that effective partnerships form the bedrock of effective teacher education, but do we really have a clear idea of how to achieve them? TEAN, the Teacher Education Advancement Network, has recently engaged in an ESCalate sponsored series of workshops entitled Teacher Education Futures across the UK. Recommendations for partnerships featured throughout the series as an essential way forward for teacher education.

Although Escalate will no longer be available as a vehicle for collaboration, improvement and reflection, readers can be sure that SRHE is keen to foster these important values and we look forward to discussing ideas and research analyses with our colleagues at and through our network events, online activities and conferences.

Yvonne Hillier writes about the partnership work of TEAN, one of ESCalate’s most productive offshoots.

Partnerships in teacher education: the Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN)

We hope that our ongoing commitment to research in this important facet of higher education practice can continue to bring together researchers, scholars and practitioners. We are keen to provide opportunities to critically examine the teaching and learning within higher education through research and dissemination.

Although Escalate will no longer be available as a vehicle for collaboration, improvement and reflection, readers can be sure that SRHE is keen to foster these important values and we look forward to discussing ideas and research analyses with our colleagues at and through our network events, online activities and conferences.

Yvonne Hillier is Professor of Education at the Education Research Centre, University of Brighton. She is Chair of the Society for Research in Higher Education and a founding member of the Learning and Skills Research Network. Her research interests are in the policy and practice of post-compulsory education, widening participation and vocational education and training.

Yvonne Hillier
University of Brighton

It may seem undeniable that effective partnerships form the bedrock of effective teacher education, but do we really have a clear idea of how to achieve them? TEAN, the Teacher Education Advancement Network, has recently engaged in an ESCalate sponsored series of workshops entitled Teacher Education Futures across the UK. Recommendations for partnerships featured throughout the series as an essential way forward for teacher education.

It was suggested by delegates at these events that ineffective partnerships come from various ‘failures’: failure to speak to one another; failure to listen to one another; failure to recognise or take any interest in what the ‘partner’ does; failure to understand the purpose of partnership. Yet more, it is not enough to think partnership is wonderful, as long as everyone understands that you are the major partner, and it is not enough to tweak what you already have; effective partnerships require commitment and everyone ‘on board’.

So what is partnership? Is it collaboration, collusion, co-operation, connections, the pursuit of common goals, agreement, working as a team? Certainly the workshops suggested it was all of these things and more and very much more complex than supposed at first glance.

How did the delegates suggest we create effective partnerships? Start from an agreement that effective teacher education cannot happen in isolation and that there is a real need to nurture partnerships.
Define clearly what you mean by partnership but be flexible enough to change your definition over time; adopt a partnership model which allows scope for local interpretation and variation. Itemise the questions you need to ask about partnership. Know that examples of successful partnership are excellent to gain ideas but not necessarily transferable to your situation. See partnership as a continuum; once you have set it going, constantly revisit it; drive it forward.

Partnership is not static; it should be a dynamic force. See where you fit individually in the ‘bigger picture’ and recognise what you bring to the table – and what you do not. Nurture joined up thinking. There was a general consensus that it may be possible to encourage and support partnership from ‘on high’ but it cannot be forced by decree. Most of all, a strong belief in partnerships as a way forward for the future of teacher education is the way to make them work.
The Teacher Education Research Network (TERN) started out as a one-year, ESRC funded project piloting a model for research capacity building in teacher education in the Northwest of England that was sustainable and collaborative (Murray et al, 2009; Jones et al, 2011). Specifically it sought to provide early and mid career researchers from seven regional universities with a training and development programme that recognised the importance of informal professional learning through engaging collaboratively in aspects of the research process. Working within a research group and with a senior colleague as mentor, the TERN research fellows developed research proposals with a shared focus on research about professional learning and/or teacher education. The one-to-many mentoring model also accommodated peer mentoring and was complemented by a programme of five face-to-face workshops and two colloquia funded by ESCalate. Thus, research fellows were provided with a structured programme of pedagogical input from expert voices and opportunities for collaborative work in cross-institutional research groups. In addition, virtual research environments hosted on the Teaching and Learning Research Programme’s website, encouraged communication between participants and provided...
Marion Jones is Professor of Teacher Education at Liverpool John Moores University, where she is involved in the teaching and supervision of doctoral students and provides support for staff engaging in teacher education research. Her research interests are related to teacher education with a particular focus on mentoring and issues arising from practitioner-related research.

**Note**
The TERN Management and Development Team is: Marion Jones and Grant Stanley, Liverpool John Moores University; Olwen McNamara, The University of Manchester; Jean Murray, The University of East London.

**References**


TERN has provided teacher educators with the structures and pedagogic input to facilitate professional learning and acquisition of new knowledge. Storage facilities for relevant resources.

Since its inception in 2008, TERN has continued to thrive thanks to participants’ sustained interests and institutional commitment. It has just completed its third year culminating in the TERN/ESRC Research Seminar Series on Workplace Learning (WLITE) led by the University of Manchester. The success of TERN is evident not only in the participants’ positive evaluation of the initiative (92% expressed an interest in continuing their involvement at the end of year 1), but also in the tangible outcomes it has generated in the form of conference papers and symposia presented at international conferences (e.g. BERA, ECER), submission of papers to peer-reviewed, academic journals and bids for external funding. For example, one research group was awarded an Esmée Fairbairn research grant to evaluate student and newly/recently qualified teachers’ understanding of the implementation of state guidance and policy on Creativity. Another funded project has been exploring student teachers’ evolving philosophy of teaching during their PGCE year.

These examples illustrate how TERN has provided teacher educators with the structures and pedagogic input to facilitate professional learning and acquisition of new knowledge. TERN has provided an infrastructure for the facilitation of dialogue and mutual understanding and has thus been instrumental in creating the professional learning environment within which symbiotic relationships between teaching, scholarship and research can flourish.
It is a pleasure, and a sadness, to be invited to contribute to ESCalate’s final newsletter. The Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) and its member institutions have worked in partnership together since ESCalate’s inception. I have been proud to serve on its Advisory Board and contribute to the excellent newsletters and other publications, and ESCalate’s support for UCET’s annual conference over the years has been much appreciated.

The closure of ESCalate as a subject centre cannot have come at a more difficult time, and we hope that colleagues at the HEA and elsewhere will continue to provide the support that our students need. Twelve months on from the publication of the government’s ‘Importance of Teaching’ White Paper, the likely direction of travel for teacher education is only now becoming clear. Things don’t look as bad as they did twelve months ago when ministers were openly talking about shifting teacher training away from ‘colleges’ and into schools, and as teaching being a craft that can be learnt simply by observing experienced practitioners. Instead, both Michael Gove and David Willetts have confirmed the central role that universities will continue to play in teacher education, and public funding will continue to be available for ITT through the payment of bursaries for ITT students. It is true that, if poorly handled, some aspects of the government’s reform agenda could prove disastrous. The ‘5-10 year vision’ in which schools take increasing responsibility from government for the organisation of teacher training and recruitment could threaten high quality provision and lead to a chaotic and inefficient teacher supply system. Other policies, however, are welcome. Teaching schools have the potential to strengthen partnerships between universities and schools on all aspects of teacher education, and could lead to more schools...
accepting their responsibility to work with partners in the training and ongoing professional development of the teaching workforce.

UCET has been active in helping to make the case for the continuance of teacher education (as opposed to only ‘training’) and the contribution that universities make. We have, when possible, done this by collaborating with government agencies in making sure that new policies best meet the long term needs of schools and the teaching profession. We have, in particular, supported the National College and the TDA in developing the Teaching Schools policy, and with TDA (and the National Association for School Based Teacher Training - NASBITT) on the delivery of the ITT priorities of systematic synthetic phonics, behaviour, SEN and maths. Improvements have been secured in both areas because of the collaborative approach we have adopted. Teaching schools will now be required to work in partnership with at least one HEI, and will have to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to both ITT and award bearing CPD. We hope, partly because of the influence that we have brought to bear, that Teaching Schools will result in a systemic improvement in teacher education by ensuring that increasing numbers of schools have an active engagement, with universities, in teacher education.

On the ITT priorities, we have been working with TDA and NASBITT to identify the expertise and good practice that exists within the sector to support further improvement and to build on the huge amount that has already been achieved. This ‘by the sector for the sector approach’ will lead to more improvement than any top-down and prescriptive approach imposed by government.

The turbulence of the last twelve months has caused us to reflect. We know from OFSTED reports, NQT survey results and feedback from head-teachers that ITT in this country is broadly fit for purpose, and that master’s programmes for teachers have a real and positive impact. But we should not be defensive or complacent. We know from the placement problems that many ITT providers have experienced that schools do need to be more engaged in teacher education. The new Teaching School partnerships could help to address that, even if it does mean that the academy has to look carefully at how it engages with schools. We know that, however good they are, only so much can be achieved through a one year PGCE. We must press for teachers to have structured early professional development that builds on and complements their initial training.

And we must make sure that we get the balance right between accepting our responsibility and accountability to national agencies while also honouring the obligation we have as universities to critical and academic rigor. Recent events have led us to reflect that the two are not incompatible and the right balance can be struck.

In facing these challenges we will not now be able to draw on the expertise and resources of ESCalate, but we believe that its legacy of commitment to ‘collaboration, improvement and reflection’ will endure.

James Noble-Rogers has been Executive Director of UCET since 2004. Before that he was Head of Governance at the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) for 5 years, prior to which he worked for central government in a number of education related roles. He has a Bachelors degree in Humanities from Hatfield Polytechnic, an MA in Philosophy from the University of Nottingham and a postgraduate diploma (with distinction) in voluntary sector management from City University. He was recently made an Honorary Fellow of the University of Wolverhampton.
Tim Bond and Jocelyn Wishart provide a perspective on what the existence of ESCalate has meant to the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol, which has been its base for so many years.

In this final Newsletter, we hear from some of the colleagues who current occupy crucial roles in making ESCalate possible - the Chair of our Advisory Board, the Head of Department at our Bristol University base, the new 0.6 Education lead at the HEA and two key office colleagues. Others went before, and we are grateful to them all.

ESCalate in Education at Bristol

Any successful department in a UK university is familiar with hosting a great variety of centres and networks to drive forward academic and professional agendas. Most of these will be specialised and thus only of great interest to particular groups of staff and students and of limited or indirect interest to others. This is very different from hosting a Higher Education Academy Subject Centre. The work and interests of a Subject Centre touch on all aspects of the host department’s work. Our experience in the Graduate School of Education (GSoE) of hosting ESCalate, the HEA Subject Centre for Education, has been profoundly transformative in a number of ways.

The quest to advance the teaching of Education touches on all aspects of the work of a Department of Education thereby putting the Subject Centre in a unique a position. It is a focus around which all members of staff can find a place and as a consequence has a pervasive influence on the values and ambitions of a whole department. The formal establishment of ESCalate in our department offered many opportunities to consider the reciprocal relationship between research-led innovation.
and the corresponding pedagogical opportunities and challenges. For example, colleagues were encouraged to bid for funding to evaluate developments in pedagogy and teaching practice. Indeed, in her article in the ESCalate newsletter of Summer 2010, Elisabeth Lazarus spoke of how winning such ‘seedcorn’ funding buoyed her confidence as a teacher education professional. Other opportunities enabled GSoE to contribute to HEA policy as key departmental colleagues were seconded to the HEA and/or represented Education as a subject on its Strategic Forums.

Under the leadership of Roger Murphy, Rosemary Deem, Tony Brown and Andrew Pollard, as Centre Directors, and supported by the members of ESCalate’s Advisory Board, there has been a sustained commitment to drawing in new voices and perspectives on Education and using the Centre’s resources as a ladder for the development of educators. For example, the ESCalate publication ‘Becoming a Teacher Educator’ and its focus on developing as a research informed teaching professional has been very popular with a succession of our PGCE directors. Other resources were taken up beyond the GSoE, ESCalate’s stand at the University of Bristol’s Annual Learning & Teaching Exhibition was always one colleagues made a bee-line for.

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions offered by hosting a national Subject Centre is the opportunity to be outward looking and to form new alliances and collaborations. At the present moment ESCalate is in the process of distributing the majority of its resources not only to the HEA but also to Education repositories such as EEP, DERA and the BEI and via networks such as those established by TEAN, BESA and BERA. The aim here is to ensure the long term accessibility of these valuable resources for educators.

ESCalate may be closing but its contribution will live on and be carried forward by educators whose lives it has inspired within the GSoE and all the other departments of education who have collaborated to advance the teaching of Education.

It (ESCalate) is a focus around which all members of staff can find a place and as a consequence has a pervasive influence on the values and ambitions of a whole department.

Professor Tim Bond is Head of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol and is a counsellor, educator and practitioner specialising in teaching research methodology and professional ethics (education, counselling, and research). He continues to offer a small counselling and supervisory practice.

He is internationally renowned for his contributions to counselling and research ethics and particularly his interest in dialogue between different cultural and moral positions.

He has extensive experience of leadership, management and policy making in higher education and professional associations.

Jocelyn Wishart
University of Bristol

Jocelyn joined the University of Bristol PGCE science team in 2003. She has gone on to help set up and direct a unique Masters programme - MSc Science & Education - that combines study in both the Faculty of Science and the Graduate School of Education. Currently she is working as Associate Director for ESCalate, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Education and directs its OSIER OER project.
I confess at the outset to being a fan of Becher’s work on academic tribes and territories. The sheer power of discipline and subject communities cannot be underestimated when it comes to influencing our understanding of teaching and learning practices. A method, activity or resource introduced to you by a colleague from your own discipline seems to have that much more appeal, credibility and impact. I also declare myself to be something of an old lag on this matter, having participated in the review of the CTI and TLTSN centres (chaired so well by Dr Madeleine Atkins back in 1997) and then joining the Subject Centre Network Steering Group for the UK.

The review emphasised the effectiveness of strategic staff development through discipline networks, and balanced recommendations with the simultaneous need for more generic learning and teaching support for the entire lecturing community. The review team visited universities and colleges to discuss the numerous success stories - as well as some of the obstacles - underpinning learning and teaching innovation and change. The Atkins report paved the way for the creation of the subject centres within the new Institute for Learning and Teaching. The UK funding councils had the unenviable task of deciding on the boundaries and locations for all the new teams - not easy when

“I would therefore like to thank all of the Advisory Board members past and present for their wisdom, creativity, and good humour.”
resources were tight with many subjects going into arranged marriages. There were strong arguments for mapping the centres onto the Research Assessment Exercise groups, whilst alternative viewpoints considered the need to ensure regional distribution across old and new sectors.

It was not surprising therefore that there were a few squabbles along the way when the centres were configured! I recall the anxiety about so many of the teams being based in the old universities following the announcement of successful bids, and the need to ensure that post 1992 institutions were integrated into the network as well as all the further education colleges involved in franchise delivery. In my opinion the subject of Education was right in the middle of this huge debate. It is an academic area which crosses the boundaries between higher education institutions, colleges and schools through all of the teacher training activity, including the emergence of the new teaching professions. It includes the broad church of lifelong learning, adult education, community development, widening access and increasing participation. And the theories, methods, practices and resources of a subject known as “education” extends effortlessly to lots of other discipline interests.

I therefore applauded the Education centre’s wonderful choice of ESCalate as its working title; it just seemed to cover so many bases. The ESCalate team was distributed around a range of institutions, and they quickly developed a huge range of projects in universities, colleges, teacher training departments, and lifelong learning networks. They helped colleagues to write up their learning and teaching experiences, so that information was shared by a community which then expanded further through this kind of dissemination.

The ESCalate Advisory Board for the subject centre involved many different representatives drawn from professional associations, practitioners and researchers. The ESCalate team led by example and established their credibility and expertise whilst also facilitating developments in a way that helped all their stakeholders to take ownership of learning and teaching innovation. This reputation was often achieved with modesty and ingenuity; and I have long been impressed by the way that ESCalate staff have publicised the work of others rather than taking credit themselves. I feel privileged to have seen the development of ESCalate and to have been a member of its Advisory Board. I would therefore like to thank all of the Advisory Board members past and present for their wisdom, creativity, and good humour.

The recession placed the HEA in an impossible position and unpopular decisions have had to be made given the scale of cuts. It is now clear that regional priorities and generic themes for educational development have to take precedence during these lean times, and the subject networks will develop now in different ways. It is vitally important to look to the future and back the new HEA strategy, giving a new generation of subject leaders every possible support from all their academic communities.

Danny Saunders
University of Glamorgan

Danny Saunders is Professor and Head of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Glamorgan. His background is in Psychology and Education, with a keen interest in the development of innovative teaching and learning methods, especially where applied to social inclusion and widening participation by non-traditional students within higher education. He is currently Chair of ESCalate’s Advisory Board.
Kathy Wright tells us about the Higher Education Academy’s future plans to support the Education sector.

A hard act to follow!

Since the establishment of ESCalate, it has become a vibrant key network for academics within the education community, an organisation through which to make contacts, to collaborate and to create new knowledge and understandings about teaching and learning in HE. I would like to use this opportunity to thank all ESCalate staff and colleagues for their hard work and to pay tribute to their achievements over the past decade. I owe personal thanks to the ESCalate community – I know that as someone setting up new ITE provision, developing a new partnership, inducting new members of academic staff, it was to ESCalate, the publications, the workshops, the conferences and the web site that I turned for useful help, advice and support.

It will indeed be a very hard act to follow but……

The HEA is focusing on activity which supports institutions in improving teaching and learning in higher education through targeted initiatives and promotion of the recently revised UK Professional Standards Framework. Overall in terms of financial support, the HEA is seeking to increase the proportion, from 50% to 75%, of its funding ploughed back into the HE communities it serves. This is to be used to support teaching, educational development projects and to stimulate innovation in learning and teaching which have the capacity for sector-wide impact. Given the straitened circumstances in which many HEIs find themselves, it is important that the HEA offers financial support to support and develop practice. I am listing below the main finance streams which may be of interest to our community in 2011-12.

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I would like to use this opportunity to thank all ESCalate staff and colleagues for their hard work and to pay tribute to their achievements over the past decade.

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Forthcoming HEA Funding Opportunities:

**Collaborative Grants:** In February 2012 the HEA call for collaborative bids opens. With up to £60k available per successful bid, this would be a chance to develop an innovative proposal with colleagues in another institution or in another department/school within your institution.

**Individual Grants:** Calls open on 3rd January 2012 for individual teaching grant applications (up to £7k per successful project bid). (Colleagues who have been awarded similar small scale grants, previously through ESCalate, can testify to the importance of the impact in terms of leverage, legitimation and outcome on the individuals concerned and the sector. For many, newly appointed staff, these grants are the starting point and way into larger scale research projects). A sum of money has been reserved for those who have never received a grant previously and another for those who are already Fellows of the Higher Education Academy who have never received a development grant.

**Workshop and Seminar Grants:** Smaller amounts of money (around £1000) can be sought through the open call for Discipline Seminars and Workshops. We need to offer a minimum of 10 events between now and July 2012 which address issues of interest and concern to our subject area and open these events to colleagues from other institutions.

**Travel Grants:** The HEA has a special travel fund which could support individual colleagues and groups of colleagues wishing to attend conferences, meetings or workshops within the UK which could have a direct impact on their practice as a teacher.

Details of all funding opportunities can be found at [www.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/)

I urge colleagues to take advantage of these funding streams whilst the tap is still on!

However pleasing it is to win a bid or be awarded a grant, we know that the pot is finite and there will always be disappointed bidders or colleagues who wished to attend workshops and conferences but can’t. The challenge for us is how to maintain the ESCalate legacy, the Education community, if future funding is reduced. How can the HEA offer support to and facilitate the development of all members within our community?

We have within Education, thousands of academics with vast knowledge and experience. If we can develop low cost and no cost ways of tapping into our community expertise and curiosity, wouldn’t we all be the beneficiaries? As a starting point, I am piloting an informal network called “Education Exchange” open to colleagues working in Education in HEIs or HE in FE. It is a space for collaborating, asking questions and sharing information, ideas and resources about teaching and learning – nothing onerous, just a quick ‘Have you seen this resource?’ ‘Do you know of any research on…?’ Clay Shirky (2010) called it the ‘cognitive surplus’ which we now have the potential to donate back into our own community. If you would like to join Education Exchange, please drop me an e-mail from your institutional e-mail, so that I can add you to the network.

I am sure we can develop other ideas and initiatives in the future and I look forward to working with you in the next few years.

kathy.wright@heacademy.ac.uk

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Kathy Wright
Higher Education Academy

Kathy Wright is 0.6 Discipline Lead, Education, a role she shares with Dr Will Curtis. Prior to taking up this position, she was Director of Secondary Teacher Education at the Cass School of Education, University of East London. Whilst at UEL she developed the Virtual School Project and embedded the use of Web 2.0 tools into teacher training programmes.
How/why did you first get involved with ESCalate?

Liz Hankinson: I was already working in the Graduate School of Education in the year 2000 having moved from the Faculty of Engineering in 1998. Bristol, Nottingham and Oxford Brookes had won the bid to host the LTSN subject centre for Education and had been provided with set up costs for the period January to June 2000. The School’s Director of Administration offered me the opportunity to be the Centre’s administrator. My previous broad range of experience working in a robotic research centre included financial management, project management, and organising national and international events.

Teresa Nurser: I had been supply teaching in Bristol for many years and wanted to formalise my working hours so I took a job working at the UoB helping to run their Further Professional Studies courses for teachers. I was seated in the ESCalate office and so when the role of projects co-ordinator came up I volunteered (or was I coerced, I can’t remember!). Later when ESCalate needed someone to coordinate the production of it’s publications, the experience I had gained, way back, working for eight years at an advertising agency seemed to come in very handy. I have now been at the University for nine years and have really enjoyed the people, the work and the challenges involved in my job.

What contribution do you feel you have made to ESCalate’s achievements?

LH: I have inducted, managed, and up-managed a number of staff and projects too many to mention. For the last five years I have held full responsibility for the budget and expenditure accounts. Managing the operational plan and reporting has been a team effort and these have been delivered on time and within budget. I have held a tight reign on the finances for the last six years – just ask the current or any of the previous Directors!

TN: As Liz says everything we have achieved has been very much a team success. I hope I have helped in this by developing a successful project management system for our grant funded projects with web and event outputs – we awarded nearly £600k over 11 years. The branding we developed for all our publications has been a joint effort between myself and our external designer Mel and we have produced more publications this year than ever before. I enjoy working in a team environment and hope that having a sense of humour and a sense of pride in my work has helped the Subject Centre to thrive.

What have been the highlights both professionally and personally?

LH: Highlights for me have been the opportunity to develop professionally which has led to promotion. I am one of only three Administration Managers in the School and leave ESCalate having held the role of Subject Centre Manager for the last three years. Personal highlights, and this is going to sound cheesy, but it is truly the people that I have worked with. The four Directors, academic leads, research and IT staff, the web developer and staff in the associated sites, and last but by no means least, the admin team. The admin team have undertaken a wide variety of duties which has required competency, flexibility, multi-tasking skills, and most importantly, a good sense of humour.
It has been a pleasure to work with members of the ESCalate Board who have served us extremely well, and finally, a big thank you to the ESCalate membership for their continued interest. It’s like a speech at the OSCARs!

**TN:** Professionally I have been given a great deal of independence to develop my role and with this has come added responsibility. Personally I have learnt, from working with the ESCalate team over the years, the importance of commitment and professionalism in your work – the more you put in the more you get out of it!

**What next for you?**

**LH:** ESCalate has been 50% of my role even though it has seemed like full time at some points and the Education Services Office which I manage administers three other programmes. The ‘Support Process Review’ which Bristol has just undertaken has meant that some of administration, particularly finance and research has been centralised. My role is to further develop administrative processes to support the research and enterprise activity within the School. Once again I have been offered the opportunity to develop both myself and the team around me. I am in my 20th year of working for the University of Bristol and I consider it to be an excellent employer. So it’s onwards and upwards and let the party begin!

**TN:** I have been promised a new office, a new job title and a new pen – what more could I want! I believe the School has plans to use my project management experience to work on the 2014 REF submission, also to support the increasing research activity happening here at the GSoE. I feel ready for a new challenge after nine years so this has all come along at a good time for me.

Future enquiries about support for activities to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in higher education in the fields of education and teacher education should be directed to:

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ESCalate has produced many publications in the last decade, many of which will remain available. Highlights from 2011 are:

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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New models of Teacher Education: collaborative paired placements</strong></td>
<td>This publication gives general practical ideas and discusses theoretical issues surrounding multiple placements in schools. Paul Wilson and Allison Bolster</td>
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<td><strong>Rethinking feedback in higher education: an assessment for learning perspective</strong></td>
<td>This discussion of feedback takes place in the context of growing arguments to change assessment in higher education so as to focus on learning rather than simply measurement. Kay Sambell</td>
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<td><strong>Teacher Education in transition: the changing landscape across the UK</strong></td>
<td>This is a collection of case studies from the four countries of the UK. Jean Murray, Gerry Devlin, John Parkinson, Joan Whitehead, Ian Menter and Jocelyn Wishart</td>
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<td><strong>Making mobile learning work: case studies of practice</strong></td>
<td>A range of case studies that show how using different 'mobile learning' devices can enhance the learning of pupils. John Traxler and Jocelyn Wishart (eds)</td>
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<td><strong>Ten Years of National Teaching Fellowships: four stories from education</strong></td>
<td>This is a collection of case studies written by NTF Education practitioners. Tony Brown (ed)</td>
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<td><strong>The Doctorate: international stories of the UK experience</strong></td>
<td>Ten stories written by international students about their experiences of working towards a doctorate in the UK. Sheila Trahar (ed)</td>
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<td><strong>Students as change agents, new ways of engaging with learning and teaching in Higher Education</strong></td>
<td>This publication is aimed at individuals who are thinking of instigating student-led research within their institution. Liz Dunne and Roos Zandstra, Tony Brown and Teresa Nurser (eds)</td>
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<td><strong>Becoming a Teacher Educator: guidelines for induction (2nd Edition)</strong></td>
<td>This publication is aimed at supporting new teacher educators and reflects the recent changes in HE and the field of education. Pete Boyd, Kim Harris and Jean Murray</td>
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[http://escalate.ac.uk/digitalage](http://escalate.ac.uk/digitalage)

**Working with diverse groups of learners in the digital age**
This online publication and its wider project draw upon several years of ESCalate activity focusing upon the development of learning and teaching in relation to the use of technology. Julie Hughes and Warren Kidd (eds)

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