

## PEELO: SUPPORT FOR PHD STUDENTS: THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS ON THE PEDAGOGY OF LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

### Support for PhD students: The impact of institutional dynamics on the pedagogy of learning development

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#### Abstract

This paper explores one practitioner's learning development work with PhD students in a changing university context in which managerialism and financial stringency have combined. It questions how learning development practitioners can maintain their professional goals while negotiating issues arising from managerialism, financial stringency, task-oriented budgeting and inter-professional co-operation. While learning development workers have traditionally espoused a broad, collegial view of student learning and practice which looks beyond remediation, a cash-starved sector may look for simpler, task-oriented definitions in which work is discretely allocated to different professional groups rather than dealing with dynamic, complex and overlapping processes. Hence, two teaching strategies are explored: the use of pre-course learning development tutorials as a means to tackle timeliness and efficacy of courses, and learning development contributions to supervision development courses.

#### Key words

Learning development; PhDs; teaching; learning; supervision; managerialism.

#### Introduction

In this paper, I explore some of the issues surrounding my practice as an education and learning developer in English universities in a changing educational and political context. From 2001 onwards, I provided tutorial and teaching support to PhD students while, during the same period, providing development courses and workshops for supervisors. These dual activities coincided with a period of increasing managerialism in universities, coupled with financial stringency and task-oriented attempts at streamlining budgets in an age of austerity. This combination highlighted complex institutional-level questions about the management of teaching and learning in higher education; and PhDs, in particular, reflect tensions running through universities concerning the control of research agendas. This paper questions how learning developers can work constructively with supervisors in ways that preserve learning development's professional integrity, address student needs, and institutional and stakeholder requirements, while recognising the impact of institutional dynamics in shaping pedagogic design.

While this paper draws on my experience of teaching in English universities, similar issues are shared around the world; and there have been global attempts to manage the riskiness

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of PhDs, ensure comparability and value-for-stakeholder money (reflected in the Bologna agreement and, for example, the wealth of literature about the PhD in Australia). To make sense of such multifaceted issues, I discuss how the nature of supervision both aligns with much of the work carried out by learning support workers yet also differs greatly; and I will examine the place of some of the teaching practices which were developed (by myself and with colleagues) in attempts to address perceived student and supervisor needs within these contextual constraints. To achieve this analysis, I will first outline some key changes affecting the management of universities and the PhD, providing a context for subsequent discussion of learning development as an activity in UK universities.

### **Key changes in the PhD and in university management**

The PhD has changed substantially in the last two decades. Traditionally, it provided a route into academic careers in UK universities, but in recent years many students with no interest in academic careers have engaged in the range of PhDs on offer (see, for example, Leonard *et al.* (2004) describe how their doctoral students are often advancing in well-established careers outside academe) and so have provided universities with an additional income stream. As is the case in many countries, UK students can enrol for the traditional full-time PhD funded by research councils; for part-time, self-funded PhDs; on doctoral programmes studied at a distance (like Leonard *et al.*'s students), some with residential weeks and some without; PhDs in the workplace; and PhDs in professional practice. Most PhDs remain a means of making a contribution to the subject area, but the level of expected contribution varies according to the style of the degree; plus, timely completion is now seen as a sign of institutional success, so the notion that a completed PhD represents an individual scholar's lifetime masterpiece is seen as old-fashioned. The Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) 2005 report analyses completion rates and some of the surrounding problems. Most PhD training now aims to produce autonomous researchers who for example, can plan and complete an original piece of research within the time and within the resources available.

During the same period, the cult of managerialism, which has been predominant throughout the twentieth century, found its apogee in what Deem *et al.* (2007) have typified as 'Blairite, technocratic Managerialism' (p.11) in the public sector. In this form of managerialism, the rule of markets is replaced by performance measures: 'A series of more sophisticated and integrated performance measurement regimes have been progressively introduced with the aim of realizing the benefits of customer-driven competition between service providers...' (p. 11). While universities are not, strictly speaking, wholly a part of the public sector, what Deem *et al.* have summarised as 'control technologies' are impacting on universities. Outside pressures are exerted not just indirectly through the political and ideological context but directly via bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency, national funding councils such as HEFCE, and research funding councils; and they are imitated within universities by managers constructing a range of policies intended to shape the behaviours and interactions of academic staff – including the core function of teaching. These ideological, auditing pressures coincide with an increase in staff workloads (mainly due to expansion of student numbers) and reductions in funding from the 1980s onwards.

The resulting trend towards the bureaucratization of teaching and learning is expressed through local systems of policy-making within institutions which are often justified as

pedagogically sound. Bloxham, Boyd and Orr (2011), for example, have recently highlighted the tensions between accountability-led assessment policies – ‘criterion-referencing’ – and the reality of how assessors exercise professional judgement. A lack of empirical evidence for the pedagogical benefits of criterion-based marking has not proved sufficient reason to stop the ‘pressure for accountability’ leading to many universities adopting this as a ‘best practice’ approach to assessment (Bloxham *et al.*, 2011:655-6). Even if accountability strategies do improve student performance, they are nonetheless a signal that academe is not autonomous but, in a customer-focused age, policies may be used to lay down the uniformity of the product academics are asked to deliver to customer-students through their teaching. Trowler (2008) has illustrated the limitations of policy-making for managers attempting to bring about change if their implementation strategies do not allow for the complex and ‘dynamic multiple cultural configuration’ (p.121) of universities (most particularly, the varied cultural contexts arising out of field of study) and the varied ‘games’ being played – e.g. research, impact, funding, recruitment, widening assessment. Trowler describes attempts to simplify this complexity:

*‘Individuals and committees in universities usually cope with this diversity in game-playing by concentrating on only one game at any one time, in effect by wearing blinkers. This can lead to decisions which, while sensible in relation to one game, make no sense at all in relation to another’*

(Trowler, 2008:21).

The PhD sits amid some diverse and cross-cutting pressures (or ‘games’ as Trowler has called them): on departments, faculties and colleges to recruit fee-paying students; to meet the standards and demands of external stakeholders (governments and funding bodies); to provide students with what feels like an enjoyable and worthwhile experience; and to contribute creatively to the development of an academic field through encouraging future researchers and extending the boundaries of knowledge. The diversity inherent in the PhD is amplified by complexity and variety in departmental and disciplinary cultures and their histories, giving rise to behaviours and expectations which shape and underpin graduate education. Such diversity makes the management of the PhD vulnerable to Trowler’s ‘blinkered decisions’ which attempt to manage one part of the PhD independently from the rest of its parts (e.g. addressing completion, or supervisor development, or team supervision) and so develop regulatory policies which may not always match the reality of the doctoral process.

A major benefit of managerialism is as a force that might enable universities to function effectively in an age of austerity (as Deem *et al.* (2007) argue, producing a more robust governance for the twenty-first century, (p. 28). One limitation lies in the potential to deskill academic endeavour through the development of complex auditing systems (what Smeenk *et al.*, 2009), have typified as a preoccupation ‘with surveillance and regulation’ (p. 591), and managerial contradictions enforced through myriad policies which may undermine their own aims in the way Trowler has described decision-making. Yet Smeenk *et al.*’s cross-European analysis concluded that, according to their methodology, there is no such discernible ‘managerialism contradiction’ (i.e. the notion that private sector practices can be counterproductive) in organizational commitment and job performance amongst university employees. However, individual academics (especially research-active

supervisors) tend to draw their academic identity from cross-institutional, trans-national conferences and disciplinary blocs, through which international reputations, publications and PhD student applications are gained. Deem (2010) describes how academics call on 'academic power' through their disciplinary relational and gatekeeping roles and 'scientific power' through their subject knowledge and their subject contributions; and both these key functions are exercised *across* institutions, however much they might enhance their own university by so doing. Relationships with their home institution, its management strategies and values surrounding performance must be understood as mediated through disciplinary and sub-disciplinary identification.

Stevens (2004) has well described how the last four decades in UK HE have been typified by pull and push between governments in terms of power, control and funding. Harley *et al.* (2004) compared UK and German higher education and concluded that 'power' exercised by measuring research output and linking this to funding has allowed universities to have much more: '... control over academic work than has hitherto been the case, at all levels of the academic hierarchy' (p.336). Not surprising, then, that the PhD was late in coming under the sort of auditing and processing measures to which people have become accustomed at other levels of education. Perhaps at odds with governance by regulatory policy, PhD education remains risky and close to the creative endeavour of research, where new disciplinary knowledge is constructed or discovered. Park (2005) has included the role of students as a part of the process of innovation, describing PhD students as the 'stewards of a discipline' (p.191). Further, apart from some highly popular doctoral programmes, the PhD lies outside the factory processing of large numbers of students and fee-paying graduate programmes have been seen as one route to maintaining academic independence (Stevens, 2004:21), with courses at both masters' and doctoral levels appealing to international students. Hence, doctoral research's relative individualism and supervisors' cross-institutional identification with subject matter makes it a potential nexus where resistance to local managerialism can linger.

Students, nonetheless, can be seen to have benefited as supervision has come under increasing scrutiny as stakeholders (most notably, research councils and governments) expect to get what they see as value for money, so monitoring the outcomes of PhD education has become commonplace however flawed the criteria for judging might be argued to be (see Park, 2007 on drivers for change, pp.13-24; Whitelock *et al.*, 2008, for the view that supervision should support student risk-taking as a route to academic rigour). Pressure on universities to improve timely completion rates has resulted in markedly improved graduation statistics (see Peelo, 2011:19-20), reinforcing the impression that universities need to be monitored closely if they are to produce the desired outcomes. As a result, successful supervision is now often assumed to result in degree completion within four years and non-completion is taken to represent poor supervision (see HEFCE Report, 2005, for full details of completion rates). More recent concerns, drawn from outside universities, about the level of PhD graduates' skills for workplaces beyond academe have been added to those of the mid-1980s concerning successful and timely completion. However, by 2008 the wider political context of a post-financial crash coupled, in 2012, with increased tuition fees has brought the need for austerity measures into academe.

It makes sense, then, during this period of growing pressure on supervisors and PhD education that educational developers should be able to support the development of supervisory practice, while learning developers should be in a position to contribute to PhD students' academic experience and successful completion. Yet, we can see that a changing context heightens the competing pressures and tensions that militate against such a collegial, interdependent approach: competition for reduced institutional resources; the competitiveness surrounding control of disciplinary research agendas and innovation; and monitoring of student progression coupled with notions of customer-student satisfaction. In what follows, I explore some of the issues surrounding my practice as an educational and learning developer in this educational and political context in English universities, by (a) discussing how the nature of learning development work can align itself with supervision and PhD students; and (b) by examining pragmatic teaching practices which were developed (by myself and with colleagues) to try to address student and supervisor needs in this complex educational context.

### **Learning support and the PhD**

Learning support is still seen as a relative newcomer in universities, even though related language and learning activities have had a presence in Higher and Further Education for some decades now and practices reflect the variety of students and institutional histories within UK HE. Hilsdon (2011) has described the nature of learning development work as embodied in the UK Learning Development in Higher Education Network (LDHEN, a movement of practitioners established in 2003) and how, in spite of local varieties in institutional positioning and staff titles, there are core activities which he summarises as:

'... a complex set of multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary academic roles and functions, involving teaching, tutoring, research, and the design and production of learning materials, as well as involvement in staff development, policy-making and other consultative activities'

(Hilsdon 2011:14).

A key unifier in the LDHEN is a resistance to the notion of 'remedial' work, in favour of what Hilsdon has described as 'powerful and transformative visions of learning' (p. 13), with a focus on students' perceptions of their academic environments. Hence, while learning development can be a highly pragmatic enterprise (contributing to university retention rates and student success), there is a discomfort with the notion of *remedial* skills' teaching even though many might acknowledge the place of skills' development in their work. Indeed, it makes sense that learning developers contribute to teaching development if one recognises Hilsdon's point that, rather than seeing students as lacking in skills, 'learning development identifies aspects of learning environments which are inadequate or alienating' (p.17). This aligns with what Peelo (2002) described as learning to decode tacit codes and hidden curriculums (pp.166-7) in which institutional norms and expectations can, for some students, be opaque.

The LDHEN does not represent a unitary learning development history or, indeed, all academic support work on campuses (this is illustrated by the example of the recent growth in what is now called 'information skills' training which arises substantially from the digital revolution impacting on libraries and librarians). It does, however, provide a broad frame

which allows analysis of learning development activity that most closely allies with my aims when providing developmental support for supervisors and PhD students. So, if a limited, remedial approach is taken, it would be easy to argue that PhD students (expected to be the best qualified of students) should not need the help of learning development staff. However, if we take Hilsdon's wider conceptualisation of learning development which implies working creatively in a mentoring role alongside students, helping them to deconstruct their academic environment and its challenges, then the question of its potential for supporting PhD students and supervisors in a changed political context can begin to make more sense.

Supervision, like Hilsdon's description of learning development, is a complex set of activities, in which supervisors draw legitimacy for their role from mastery of disciplinary content and positioning within the subject area. Many reject the title of 'teacher', even though they may well acknowledge the complex educational activities subsumed under the heading of 'supervisor'. Bartlett and Mercer (2001) have listed ten roles included in supervision ranging across academic, administrative and relational, concluding that given '... the broad parameters of the relationship then, it's not surprising that the field is littered with grim tales of disappointing supervision experiences' (P.4). Hockey (1996) presents a notion of tutorship which is informal, comradely and professional. Wisker *et al.* (2003) offer a 'dialogues' framework describing student-supervisor interactions which, in style, presage Whitelock *et al.*'s (2008) notion of creativity in supervision. Pole and Sprokkereef (1997) argue how, in their study of supervisors in physics, mathematics and engineering, a complex range of activities is required at different points in the students' progress.

The notion of a mentoring, tutorial relationship which reflects students' progression echoes the LDHEN ideals of learning development as described above. However, while learning development work may echo supervisory teaching, nonetheless one must recognise that the supervisory relationship is mediated through subject matter. Supervision can only be fully understood by recognising it as a highly contextualised activity as well as developmental in nature - taking place within a specific and public arena, that of a disciplinary discourse. It is this public arena that gives rise to what, as we have already seen, Deem characterised as to individual's 'scientific' and 'academic' power. Because of this, it can be hard for many supervisors to understand what place learning development support can have in successful completion of PhDs where supervision depends so much on intimate engagement with the advancement of a specific field of study. One differentiation, then, between learning development and supervision would be to characterise the former as concerned with students' intellectual development within academe, while supervisory relationships focus on students' intellectual development within academe mediated through subject and research topic within a disciplinary field.

However, the example of Aherne and Manathunga's (2004) work has illustrated the difficulties that arise if making a simple personal-academic/subject matter divide: they have argued for the importance of supervisors working with the social, affective and cognitive aspects of 'clutch-starting stalled research students'. They summarise how blockages can relate to, for example: anxiety, self-sabotage, low self-esteem, differences with supervisors and framing of the PhD task. All of these they see as the domain of the supervisor, including the responsibility to help students restart their unfinished PhDs. Wingate (2006) has

commented on differences between universities, arguing that there is a tendency for research-intensive universities (with 'traditional' student intakes) to view learning support as providing for occasional student deficits in approaches to scholarship and less likely to see why embedding skills' development across all curricula and degrees might be desirable (p.467). Nor, by extension, might they then see how supervisors might engage in Aherne and Manathunga's holistic approach to stalled students.

Currently, should supervisors wish to engage with learning developers to address the needs of 'stalled' students, it is the nature of managerialism when coupled with austerity to introduce high levels of competition for resources between colleagues within institutions, as well as between institutions across the sector. As a new profession, learning development may not always be easily understood in the places where decisions are made, making them (like the PhD) vulnerable to Trowler's 'blinkered decisions' arising from only partially-defined problems. There is a distinction to be made between management groups, and the consultants they call on for advice, with limited knowledge or experience of learning development (many university management groups, it should be noted, have a clear pragmatic sense of the value of learning development) and individual supervisors who are adjusting to working alongside a new profession within the competitive arena of HE. Deem (2010) has commented on the work of a library colleague who noted that, '...academics may not always recognise the skills and expertise of others and treat them as equals' (p.41). How, then, can learning development provide PhD students with pragmatic support that is complementary to (not in competition with) and interdependent with supervision without abandoning a wider learning development vision of education and learning within a co-operative framework?

### **Politics of curriculum design: examples of teaching practices**

In this section, two modes of learning development teaching for PhD students are discussed within this political and structural context: (a) the learning development style tutorials attached to writing courses for PhD students; and (b) the place of learning development practitioners in courses for supervisors. These are not presented as models of what learning development *should* be offered, rather they are discussed in the light of how they were intended to achieve particular aims within the structures described above – from the perspective of a learning development practitioner trying to negotiate pedagogic and professional boundaries constructively.

#### *Learning development style tutorials used before writing courses*

Study and writing courses tend to be held in a central place at a time of convenience for learning development tutors and convenors and are traditionally seen as a streamlined and economic approach to delivering content. However, undergraduate and postgraduate 'skills' courses share the same problems of timeliness (reaching the students who need them at a time when course content makes sense in the light of individual development and work progression) which is closely linked to the randomness surrounding which students attend (those with most enthusiasm for courses are not always those most in need of support).

One route I worked on with colleagues to address these issues was a series of writing retreats for PhD students. A range of academic boot camps and writing retreats (both real and virtual) can be unearthed when Googling some combination of those words. Such

courses enable students and staff to tackle writing in a regular and disciplined way, with tutors on hand to address sticking points as they arise (rather than stopping or abandoning the task). The social constraints of working with strangers exert peer pressure to conform to timetables far more than tutors can do. At first, courses were open to students at any stage in their PhD but we learnt that people prefer to work with those at a similar stage, echoing what Murray (2008) has found with staff participants in writing retreats. Also, like Murray, brief group discussions were timetabled for the beginning and end of every writing session.

Yet if, as Wingate argues, general study skills' teaching is ineffective when taught separately from learning subject material at undergraduate level, then how much more difficult it is to decide how skills can be separated out in the PhD and taught separately? Over time, I had begun to move away from teaching an accepted curriculum (e.g. managing your supervisor, time-management, writing proposals etc.) to seeking ways that integrated learning development knowledge with supervisor engagement and specific students' needs. Hence, for extended writing courses such as retreats, the 'content' question can be approached by asking student participants to work closely with supervisors about what they might most usefully do in their time on a course. Plus, I began to start courses with individual learning development style tutorials between students and a course tutor.

Traditionally, learning development tutorials allow students the opportunity to think out loud and to define exactly where they are with a piece of writing. Talking aloud in a structured and focused way is an old-fashioned (but often effective) way of challenging writing blocks, and depends for success on an intelligent listener to reintroduce students to enthusiasm for their subject matter. The learning development tutorial has echoes of what Coyle (2009) has described as 'ignition' in coaches, requiring rapid location of problems and personalised strategies for each student (see Chapter 9. on teaching). Likewise, Turner (2011) has described the efficacy of individual learning development tutorials, starting with a diagnostic approach to pinpointing students' specific barriers to progress and the practice of linking this understanding to practical outcomes (see, particularly, her case study of Tom, a PhD student, pp. 94-5). While, as Aherne and Manathuanga have argued, helping students' motivation is substantially a part of a supervisor's role, the novelty of explaining one's work to an informed outsider has its place in supporting students. I want supervisors to know and approve of students attending my courses and, preferably, to have had the chance to advise students on what they see as a good focus for their progress.

Tutorials can provide a marker: they prepare students for the reality of writing; they can be used to define the PhD, its progress, problems and its contribution to research; and they provide a realistic scheme of work. In terms of negotiating boundaries, they allow learning development expertise (by, for example, exercising 'ignition' and clarity through 'diagnosis', responsiveness to writing problems) to work alongside supervisors and, ideally, extended writing courses should be co-presented with colleagues from related groups of departments.

#### *Supervisor development courses*

If learning development workers are involved with PhD students' work, then it makes sense that they close the loop by contributing to courses for supervisors; and it completes the interdependency cycle without students' PHD-specific experiences becoming publicly



known. The latter is important because, as Turner's description of the specificity of the diagnostic approach involved in learning development tutorials indicated, they are not 'generalised support' (although they should be supportive) but are highly focused and specific teaching sessions. Hilsdon has argued that learning development is essentially a mediating activity '...between the experience of the students, the goals of academics and the wider ambitions of our HE institutions...' (p.24). Student perceptions and experiences along with learning development strategies are elements about which supervisors can learn from learning development practitioners. Likewise, interdependently, meeting supervisors and learning from their experience and perspectives can only enhance learning development practice with students.

I originally engaged in designing and providing sessions for supervisors for pragmatic reasons: I had hoped that the more opportunities for development available to supervisors, the fewer students would require additional support. This echoes Murray and Glass' (2011) view that educational development and learning development are often blurred, as both engage in teaching development courses to embed skills at the level of curriculum delivery to students (p. 29). Ideally, supervisor courses need to fit with existing teaching development provision in an institution, its accreditation and any management strategy for enhancing staff performance. As with all such provision, it cannot be too time-consuming (given the pressures on staff) but does need to ensure student perspectives are represented within what is essentially a management and staff framework for interpreting the PhD experience. It is, of necessity, a 'general' view as opposed to one that is mediated through subject matter and frequently focuses on problem solving (although, as time went past, I attempted to move away from presenting students via melodramatic, problem-laden case studies).

Institutionally-provided teaching development courses can be perceived by academic staff to represent a central, management viewpoint (whatever the truth) and provide a focus for resentment if associated with managerialist encroachment on the independence of research. One strategy, then, is to address the PhD as a series of tasks and stages which, while responding to the immediate political pressures, inevitably sets up a variety of other problems. A task-oriented response to managing risks is typified by setting up the PhD as an unproblematised series of 'progression tasks' - through reviews, panels and the expectation of 'normal stages' - and a matter of obedience to rules and procedures. Such a risk-averse approach can leave both supervisors and students feeling marooned in a hostile environment, as illustrated by Andy, the supervisor central to Cribb and Gewirtz's (2006) case study, who argues that progression monitoring (an element in the bureaucratization of supervision) means that various 'threats hang over the student's head all the time' (p.226). While it is important that supervisors are aware of the procedures required by their institution, this needs to sit alongside attending to the educational processes at work in the PhD. There is room for both, of course, and given the availability of rules and regulations on the internet it is not necessary to spend precious and limited teaching development time on what can be managed elsewhere, such as in personal portfolios and within supervision teams.

## **Discussion**

It was not my intention in this paper to evaluate the teaching practices described here, but to examine how institutional context can impact on learning development pedagogic design and the underlying interprofessional relations by examining my own practice in English universities. Institutional variations shape the nature of teaching, particularly for learning development and what is required of learning development workers. Trowler's description of management groups finding solutions for partially-defined problems leads to both rational and irrational decisions. So, for example, where competition between colleagues is pronounced, attempting a ring-fenced division of labour can seem reasonable course of action, even though managing potential interdependencies between the student-centredness of learning development and the subject-specificity of supervision potentially might provide more fruitful and more pragmatic solutions for PhD completion and progression in a world of dwindling resources.

However, the temptation is to provide a clear, distinct and separate list for learning developers, such as: study skills (which is often seen as remedial work), language and writing problems (defining these, then, as technical and separate from knowledge-construction), or behavioural-affective issues (focusing on, for example, procrastination, managing supervisors or managing emotions associated with PhDs). While all these activities have their benefits, nonetheless they have all drawbacks and require careful consideration: not least, what seem to be 'common sense' solutions can turn out to be false economies (see Luxon and Peelo, 2009), for a discussion of the pros and cons associated with a range of ways of providing English for Academic Purposes; and Wingate, 2006, for the argument against 'study skills' and 'bolt-on' courses). A broader model of learning development allows for the interdependencies of processes rather than separation of tasks; co-operative processes that cut across institutions and fill in gaps, smooth disjunctions and manage discontinuities. However, the current context encourages fragmentation rather than management of interdependent processes: Hilsdon, for example, has commented on the increasing separation of educational development and learning development as reflecting the commodification of higher education, as part of a growth in a managerialist model of 'services' for customer-students who are treated as consumers of education (p.17).

One might expect that institutions that have actively addressed issues of access and student retention already appreciate the pragmatic uses of learning development but, perhaps as a generational issue, individuals may not be aware of its uses arising from a broader definition of learning development activities beyond 'emergency room' and remedial approaches. The worst situation one might imagine for a learning development practitioner would be to provide support for supervisors or their students in an institution with a weak central overview of teaching and learning processes and, therefore, unaware of how such work fits into overall provision, leading to the kinds of partial definition of problems (and hence solutions) described by Trowler. Teaching, student learning and research are the core activities in a university, and if their *interplay* is not actively reflected in top management structures, a task-oriented, simplistic costs-and-income accountancy model may well decide that teaching and learning (in particular) are what is paid for in academic departments alone. If, further, learning development is perceived solely as remedial provision for disappointing, unprepared students, then its relevance to highly qualified, PhD students

may seem even less clear to managers or, indeed, the supervisors whose work is being supported.

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