
**Signposts for Staff
Development (I):
Link Tutors**

Acknowledgements

Preparation of this Signposts guide was undertaken during the latter half of 1994 by Bruce Gillham of Formword consultancy: he produced a very substantial first draft study guide which included a comprehensive review of the literature to inform a number of different approaches to understanding the link tutor roles. Steve Butters, QSC Research Fellow also produced additional material on staff development strategies and resources.

However, guided by comments from the Project Steering Group (see Appendix 4) concerning the shape and form of this study guide (particularly in relation to the other guides in the series) it proved necessary for me to prune the original draft down to a much shorter and concise document - with significant sections of the original forming some of the Appendices.

I am indebted to Bruce Gillham for producing such a comprehensive first draft from which this publication has been derived.

Brenda Little, Project Manager

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Signposts for Staff Development (1): Link Tutors

Introduction

This study guide in context

This study guide is one of three forming part of the outcomes of an Employment Department funded project to investigate the area of developing guidance for supporting learners in the workplace, with particular emphasis on the use of the link tutor in the context of the acquisition of subject-related knowledge and skills.

The three study guides in the series are:

- Signposts for Staff Development (1): Link Tutors
- Signposts for Staff Development (2): Workplace Mentors
- Signposts for Staff Development (3): Student Peer Support

These have been written independently for use with separate audiences but in each case it will be helpful to read the *Signposts* in conjunction with our *Guidelines for Good Practice in Supporting Students in the Workplace*.

Who the Study Guide is for

Signposts for Staff Development (1): Link Tutors is intended to provide experienced curriculum and staff developers in higher education with a resource pack so that they can support academic staff concerned with managing placements and work-based learning to fulfil their role more effectively. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to provide staff developers with factual information and guidance, whilst, at the same time, posing questions and providing suggestions for activities which will generate a constructive response from link tutors and enhance their performance in this role. Consequently this booklet contains a set of photocopiable resources (The Link Tutor Task Checklist, Appendix 1; Activity Resource Sheets, Appendix 2) and a substantial bibliography (Appendix 3) which might help to address some of the issues involved.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the principal aim must be to enhance the quality of student experience of work-based learning. Students on placements, working primarily outside their universities and colleges, do so because they need to add to their store of subject knowledge and specialist skills, as well as practise and enhance what they know and can already do. In addition, they must gain a whole range of transferable personal skills which are themselves highly valued by employers. There is no doubt that all the participants in placement activity recognise its exceptional value in enhancing interpersonal, technical and applicatory skills (Davies, 1990). The link tutor has a key role to play in all this, ensuring that the outcomes of work-based learning are of maximal benefit to the student and, where appropriate, to the profession for which they are being prepared.

Link tutors need to be:

- clear about the nature of the role in practical terms
- demonstrably competent in this role
- well motivated and convinced of the value of their work
- self critical and forward thinking, in the vein of Schon's reflective practitioner, always anticipating new developments and productive change (Schon, 1986) and
- open to new insights from a variety of sources.

It is hoped that this guide and its associated materials will make a contribution to the clarification and refinement of this critically important role.

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Section One - The terminology of work-based learning

I.1 Introduction

The context of work-based learning within higher education

There have been substantial and necessary changes in the character of higher education as the United Kingdom has been obliged to face up to the economic challenges of the late 20th century.

The Task Group set up by the (then) United Kingdom University Staff Development Unit (UKUSDU, 1994) identified the following as particularly dramatic changes occurring in higher education in the 1990s:

- increases in size and diversity of student intakes
- the drive to reduce unit costs
- changes in funding mechanisms
- modularity
- franchising
- the public scrutiny of the quality of teaching
- the higher education charters
- the increasing demands of professional bodies and employers.

The above, taken alongside substantial movements in competency- and capability-based education; the launch of General National Vocational Qualifications and their role in consolidating work experience and work-related education in schools; the influential developments associated with the recent rash of work-based learning projects across the country, suggest that many of these changes are likely to bring academic and workplace into closer partnership.

Already, the impact of all these changes on higher education has been substantial and wide ranging, and this booklet addresses only one small part of a broad canvas. However, although link tutoring is only one small cog in the system, it is likely to make a disproportionately large contribution to the growth of high quality educational provision.

So, we are principally interested in the changing nature of the higher education tutor's role, and specifically that part of the role which has been developing at the interface between higher education and the workplace.

Work-based learning

The separation of academic and theoretical study from the real world of vocation and employment had its origins in the elitist education of Victorian England. The pattern persisted into the first half of the 20th century, before post-Imperial realities began to affect Britain's position in the world.

Now the dividing line is more blurred, and there is general recognition that the old style higher education is not sufficient to serve the needs of the community and the economy. Vocational studies and learning in the workplace have at last been granted a respectability with the academic world which was formerly only accepted in the case of the ancient professions of the law and medicine and, more grudgingly, in the case of the teaching profession.

Work-based learning is built upon highly specific knowledge and skills related to particular occupations and organisations, together with a range of general transferable skills which enable individuals to succeed in practical and vocational contexts. Such learning is principally acquired within the workplace, and is therefore likely - in the longer term - to shift the locus of training away from specifically educational institutions into commercial, industrial and professional settings.

The placement experience

The placement experience is now an acknowledged part of a large number of courses in the university and college sector.

In broad terms, a placement can be defined as:

The placement experience is an arrangement by which students are enabled to practise and play a part as novices in the operation of an enterprise beyond the confines of their own institution - or beyond the confines of their own part in that institution - to which they can both make a valuable contribution and, at the same time, be helped to acquire new knowledge and skills in a reasonably protected way.

As a result of this experience, students can gain knowledge of practicalities and develop and refine a range of professional skills which can be assessed as part of their movement towards professional competence.

The link tutor

Tutors have always occupied many roles - as lecturers, guides, assessors, counsellors and advisers to their students; and also as researchers, consultants, writers, examiners, and managers, to serve the interests of outside groups and agencies, or the needs of their institutions, or simply to gratify their own ambitions within the professional community.

As higher education has become more complex and the range of managerial roles undertaken more extensive, there has had to be a higher degree of specialisation. The portfolio of roles associated with Tutor 'A' may be very different from that for Tutor 'B'. And yet, in the contractual sense, they may seem to be occupying very similar positions. Hence, some are designated *admissions tutors*, or *course leaders*, or *area coordinators*.

In the cases we have mentioned, these are likely to be specific appointments within departments, and because of this, the role is seen as significant and important.

A role in the shadows

However, there is an extensive shadowy area in which new roles emerge and are taken on as the need arises. Initially, the roles may be ill defined and lack any special status, and yet be highly significant in terms of the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the higher education institution.

Recent authoritative recommendations clearly lay the responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching at the door of properly resourced staff development units. The case is made that staff have a right to attend suitable courses to improve their performance and update and refine their approaches (UKUSDU, 1994; p3). Within this context, an important task for all staff development units is to identify these new, or ill-defined, or shadowy responsibilities and help tutors to cope with them.

The role of the link tutor is a case in point. There is little unanimity, even about the name used to describe what is involved - supervisor, coordinator, university assessor, and mentor are all being used interchangeably. It is a role which an increasing number of tutors are expected to take on, and - as with all activities related to teaching and learning - quality is a key consideration.

But what is link tutoring? What exactly is involved? One writer on work-based learning signals the crucial importance of "*the support available to the student*" and the learning contract as an essential part of this. And yet, whilst mention is made of the role of the "*work-based supervisor*" and the role of the "*higher education tutor*" in providing a satisfactory placement experience, no enticing elaboration follows (Dobbins, 1993). It is almost as if the problem is not fully recognised, and the academic tutors are qualified by tradition.

The truth is that the emergence over the years of advanced courses which involve professional or work-based placements have generally brought unfamiliar responsibilities in their wake. On balance, dealing with the responsibilities has generally been fairly relaxed, uncontrolled and idiosyncratic.

The need for coherence

Several changes have brought about a need for greater coherence:

- *First*, the increasing amount and variety of placement experience undertaken by students in further and higher education;
- *Second*, an expansion in the numbers of partners operating outside the academic world who have become involved. These partners frequently subscribe to very different values and assumptions. Consequently, negotiation and compromise have become increasingly necessary;
- *Third*, the need to justify the experience as an integrated part of the education process, and to delineate more precisely the gains to be made by students in terms of personal and professional competence;
- *Fourth*, a growing emphasis on quality assurance and the creation of mechanisms which will ensure satisfactory and comparable experiences for students and the other stakeholders involved;
- *Fifth*, the growing complexity of the practical arrangements and management of placement experiences within the administrative frameworks of the organisations concerned.

The link tutor is the key reference point within the accrediting institution, in ensuring the quality of the interface between the educational establishment and the work-based placement. A suitable definition of the role might be as follows:

The link tutor is a representative of an educational institution linking that institution with a workplace organisation which is actively involved in delivering significant elements of the educational programme provided for students. The link tutor fulfils a variety of roles in relation to students and workplace personnel, including an overall responsibility for the management of the placement experience itself.

This definition assumes a coherence which is frequently not present: this lack of specificity reflects the fact that currently, there is still a paucity of advice and support available to link tutors. What exists is scattered, diverse and of variable quality. The competence of tutors is assumed because the role has evolved gradually, and is frequently not recognised as significantly new or different, despite the growing importance and rigour attached to it.

The work-based mentor

A work-based mentor operates within the placement organisation, and is not normally a member of the university staff.

There are considerable variations in the way the role might be defined, but a realistic definition might be:

The work-based mentor is a specified member of staff within the host organisation who has been specially delegated to support a student during their placement experience, and ensure that the requirements of the company, the educational institutions and the student are fulfilled in a productive way.

In working with the work-based mentor, the function of the link tutor is to ensure a match between the philosophy and practice of mentoring in the workplace, and the aims of the placement and the values of the higher education institution (HEI).

The placement student

The placement student is the principal accredited beneficiary of placement activity - although it should be noted that, increasingly, work-based mentors and link tutors may also wish to be accredited for their part in this work. Indeed, within the context of national vocational qualifications, mentors and link tutors may eventually require accreditation in order to undertake the work.

In simple terms:

A placement student is any student who undertakes, as part of their formal education, an experience working within an external host organisation, or on occasions, within a different part of the university, in order to gain more or less clearly specified personal and professional outcomes which will enhance and enrich their educational programme.

However, it would be counterproductive to think of the student as the passive recipient of a placement package. The student must engineer much of their own experience in the workplace and ensure that they do, in fact, acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. The student must be a *pro-active participant* in the placement and take considerable responsibility for their own learning (Wadsworth et al, 1994).

Increasingly, as workload pressures on the link tutor and work-based mentor mount, the student will be expected to take on a greater proportion of the placement management activity, although clear quality guidelines will be essential for this to operate effectively. The potential gains from this shift in terms of interpersonal skills and a wide range of transferable skills appropriate to professional and vocational activity are considerable. In addition, the more egalitarian ethos engendered is likely to ensure more regular discussion, more effective feedback, and the progressive enhancement of the placement in an atmosphere of common purpose and cooperative team work.

Moving into closer partnership

It is not possible to isolate the role of the link tutor from the roles of the other participants.

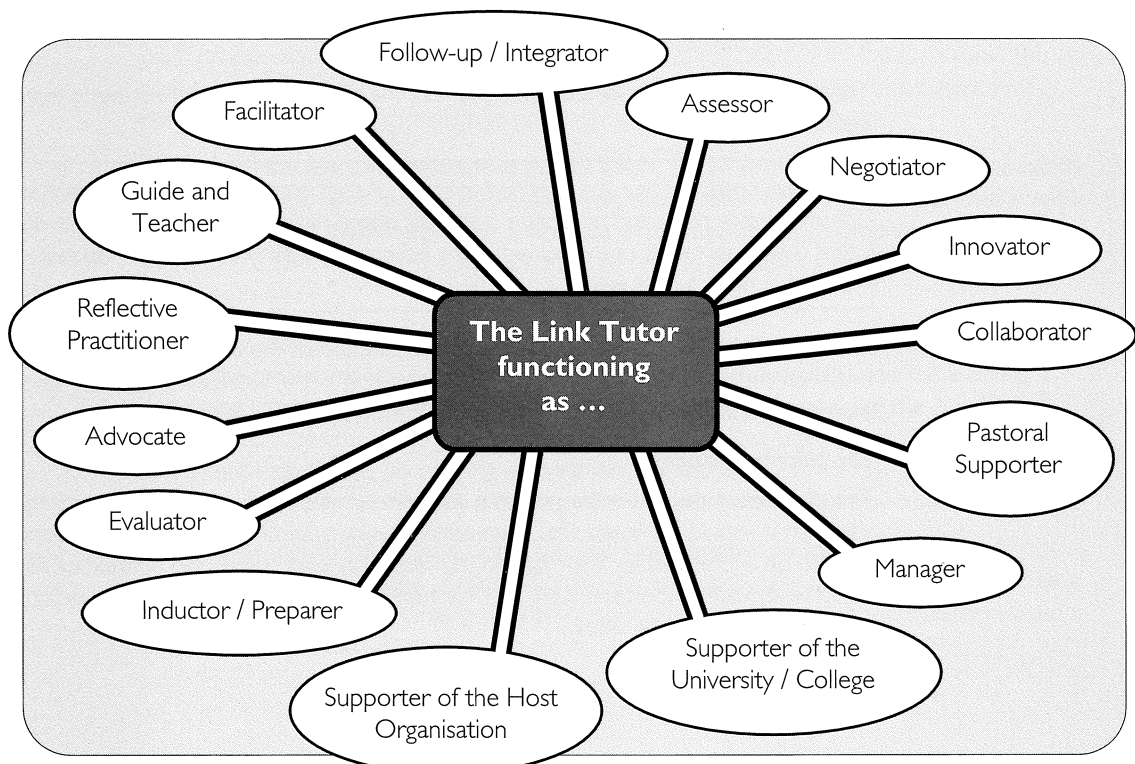
A trinity of roles is involved, and a set of relationships must connect them.

For the link tutor, this will involve a range of tasks and roles embedded in diplomacy, values and standards, and partnership.

1.2 Defining the task of the link tutor

Our *Guidelines for Good Practice in Supporting Students in the Workplace* define link tutoring as the contribution an academic tutor makes to work-based learning experiences - but this definition is deceptively simple and uncluttered by the reality of endless variation and complexity.

A review of the literature about student placements, focusing on the expectations or claims which were being made about the role of link tutors, led to the identification of fifteen distinct



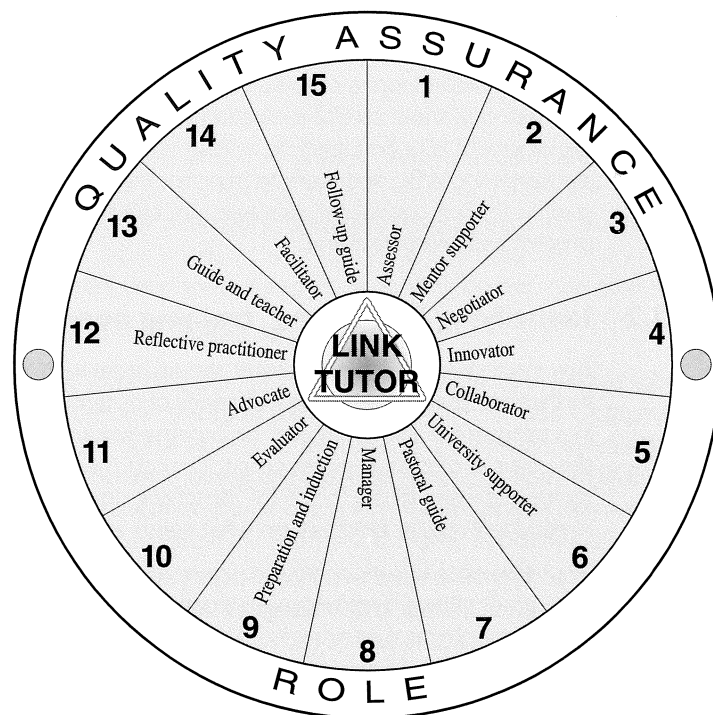
Role clusters for the link tutor

role clusters: thirteen of these clusters related principally to the student experience itself; one cluster related to the host organisation, and one to the higher education institution.

A further exploration of where these fifteen role clusters might lead, in terms of anticipated link tutor behaviour, resulted in the specification of a series of tasks for each role cluster (Appendix 1). Because programmes of study and vocational areas vary considerably in size, shape and orientation, it is likely that the specific feature of vocational areas and the characteristics of particular placement models will prove highly influential in deciding what competent link tutoring might consist of.

The Link Tutor Task Checklist in Appendix 1 is not intended to represent a comprehensive map of generic link tutor competences: rather it is presented as a starting point for discussion and debate within HEIs about the tasks involved in the link tutor role relevant to particular programmes of study involving work-based learning.

In addition to these fifteen distinct roles, one other role over-arches the rest - in practical terms it is the link tutor who holds the reins of the quality assurance process for learning in the workplace. For the link tutor, it is the delivery of a quality experience which tops the agenda. Any link tutor preparation must consider this over-arching role very carefully.



Moving link tutoring towards a quality orientation

Whilst the formal specification of the elements and mechanisms of the quality assurance process will probably be decided elsewhere, it is the link tutor who has effective control of quality delivered within the roles we have specified.

Section Two - Staff Development Strategies and Resources

2.1 A strategy for link tutor staff development

Our *Guidelines* adopt a managerial perspective. They assume that academic and industrial staff with responsibilities for securing students' work-based learning (WBL) opportunities will want to lead, persuade and support others involved in the enterprise. Some staff will argue against this approach, either on principle (they see no need for managers in academic programmes) or on pragmatic grounds (they believe their WBL operations to be too dispersed to permit a planned approach). Staff training in support of WBL provision will, however, make most sense in a managerial framework. We are addressing this *Signposts* study guide in the first instance to "staff developers" who will have authority, or claim an initiative, in setting in motion staff development activities. They may share their leadership with others, and the activities themselves may call for group decision-making; nevertheless, at the programme design stage, if no further, we believe there will be a need for strategy and tactics.

Many established forms of WBL for undergraduate students have simply reproduced themselves without careful evaluation or clear accountability for outcomes. If staff development is to be based on assessment of what is needed to attain specified quality standards for WBL, and work to improve the quality of learning by reference to such standards, then considered strategies are called for, and initiatives have to be taken to present and promote these.

2.2 Identifying link tutors' training needs

Any strategy for staff development should begin with an appreciation of the training and further professional development needs of potential participants. Tutors working together in a programme team may well be constructing an agenda for both curriculum change and their own professional development through their week-by-week involvement in quality review activities: thus a forum for identifying developmental needs could be in business already and regular feedback on what needs attention could emerge from such a forum.

In addition, there are two formal points at which quality review concerns might be highlighted. These are: meetings of WBL partners and stakeholders to review the programme at the end of each academic year; and re-accreditation processes. At such key moments there may well be proposals to change the allocation of roles and tasks among the programme team which could lead to a re-building of the specific role configurations of particular tutors.

Staff developers would need to find ways to establish with programme teams their understanding of the range of tasks undertaken by link tutors (possibly through a brainstorming session; using the Link Tutor Task Checklist in Appendix 1; or using some of the Resource Activity Sheets contained in Appendix 2) and to check the profile of knowledge and skills of each tutor against the tasks he/she will face in future. In teams where a detailed competence-against-task approach is not feasible (perhaps because staff appraisal systems have not been developed at this level of detail), or not desirable, group discussion may achieve similar outcomes in a less systematic framework.

2.3 The main options for staff development activity

It is important that any Training Needs Analysis should not be constrained by a pre-determined menu of activities which the staff developer is prepared to put on. If we seek the same kind of participative learning for link tutors as for students we should be offering extensive mentoring in a context of negotiated professional development learning objectives, and an open-ended search for original ways to meet these in the work setting. All the same, there are staff development options which are likely to remain in the developer's repertoire for some time yet, and it is worthwhile to review these with participants (existing and prospective link tutors) at an early stage in the design of a training programme.

Activities which have been found useful by tutor groups associated with or known to our project include the following. We have added short notes on their most fruitful applications, and the resources needed.

(a) *Introductory/Initial Teacher Training for HE Lecturers*

An increasing number of universities and colleges now require new lecturers to undertake initial training. Where there is scope to negotiate content the trainer should offer optional seminars or workshops on link tutor skills. Self-managed study using a selection of the Activity Resource Sheets in Appendix 2 of this guide might be one way to deliver such an option.

(b) *Programme Team Development "Away Days" and other informal team meetings*

Undergraduate degree/diploma programmes with a strong WBL component can gain a great deal from devoting a whole day of their tutors' time to participative group development work. Such activities are often led by the programme leader, off-campus. Scaled-down versions of the same activity can be tried in shorter more informal meetings, although these are vulnerable to distraction. When staff developers get involved in these activities, there may be an available strategy for co-opting the unstructured group into a course. This might resemble the negotiated programme below (see[e]), but the staff developer will only have a facilitating or guiding role to the extent that he/she receives an invitation (from the group) to help.

(c) *Mentors for tutors*

Lecturers should practise what they preach. Where students are offered substantial support for their off-campus learning through work with a mentor, their link tutor stands to gain much by seeking a professional development mentor for him- or her-self. This might be an experienced lecturer colleague, a professional in practice outside academia, or a staff development expert, depending on the main goals sought.

(d) *Competence-Based Staff Development*

The movement towards accreditation under the Investors In People scheme implies increasing confidence in the applicability of competence-based Occupational Standards to what tutors do. Some aspects of link tutoring are already covered by units of NVQs/SVQs within the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) and Personnel Lead Body (PLB) standards now in operation. Other aspects may well be specified by the new Lead Body expected for Further and Higher Education. Link tutors have much to gain from a close inspection of current ways of assessing competence in the areas of work for which they are responsible, and from testing these out through peer appraisal or similar experiment. Where this is seen as a way forward, the expertise of the staff developer will be crucial in explaining principles and methods, identifying aspects of current work for description (e.g. in a diary/logbook of critical incidents) and assessment (e.g. by a paired peer). The competence-based approach is not bound to the provision of NVQ/SVQ awards for tutors and some will find working on systematic description, observation and appraisal, with a view to securing performance standards, sufficient without seeking an award.

However if link tutors are to be formally acknowledged as 'competent', then the question of the level of tutor competence arises. In terms of the NVQ national framework Level 4, competence (roughly first degree level) has been defined as

"Competence in the performance of complex, technical, specialised and professional work activities including those associated with design, planning and problem-solving, normally carrying a significant degree of personal accountability. In many areas competence in supervision or management will be a requirement at this level."

(NIACE 1989)

For most link tutors, it would be necessary to think beyond this in terms of formal accreditation at Advanced Diploma, Masters and Doctoral levels - at Level 5 within the emerging National Qualification Framework, involving intellectual activities of evaluation, analysis and synthesis at a high level. This is a large question which could only be fully illuminated within the framework of the higher education accreditation process ... which, for link tutors involved in placement activities, still lies in the future.

(e) Staff Developer-led Courses

Lecturers tend to expect training to consist of taking a course. This activity can degenerate into a displacement of energies, in which tutors seek comfort in a well-understood ritual. Staff developers are often tempted to run courses in order to justify their budgets. Moreover, if an HEI faces issues about the quality of support to workplace learners, its managers may ask the staff developer to analyse training needs so as to generate a programme aimed at enabling (or persuading) staff to meet new quality standards. Although such problem-focused training strategies are widely accepted in large companies, there are sometimes vigorous debates in HEIs about the value of manager-led staff development programmes (even when informed by a Training Needs Analysis) because academic staff will want to ask whose interests will be served by changes effected through such programmes. Despite these dangers, the formal course, led by one or two “trainers”, can be helpful in providing a context for professional development, at least when the participants are not “pressed men and women”. To introduce a measure of co-operative control over such courses, such courses could be constructed around a negotiated curriculum in which all participants have a say in agreeing the learning objectives and methods: the first two or three meetings (in cases where the whole sequence may be ten or more meetings) could be devoted to pre-structured activities, perhaps drawn from the Activity Sheets (Appendix 2), and the planning of the remainder of the course could constitute a major group activity taking up the whole of Meeting Two or Three.

(f) Joint Programmes with Employer Partners

In a minority of WBL schemes (notably those for social work, nursing and teacher education) there are formal partnerships and consortia which provide a natural base for joint mentor and tutor training events. Dialogue between the employer side and the academic side often generates new insights into mentor and tutor roles, and sometimes creates an agenda for changing current practice. We recommend that any substantial joint staff training should be carefully prepared through planning meetings and consultations. These should involve managers, staff developers and some representative tutors and mentors.

2.4 Evaluation and Review of Link Tutor Training and Development

Any staff development programme for link tutors should be treated in the same way as any other training programme, in that it should be subject to processes of monitoring, evaluation and review, to assure its quality, and inform future planning and development.

In essence, the process involves

- monitoring* - checking what is actually happening against what was planned;
- evaluation* - involving the collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of information about the training and development programme as part of the process of making judgements about the value and quality of the programme;
- review* - whereby as part of a quality assurance system all the evidence collected as part of the evaluation is reconsidered to ascertain whether the programme's aims have been met efficiently, effectively and equitably, and future actions (for ensuring that improvements in provision are continued and sustained) are planned.

It is vital that evaluation results are discussed, and an opportunity provided for other people's perceptions and judgements to be brought forward. The review might operate at different levels e.g. participants in, and providers of the training and development programme reflect together on the programme's success in meeting its objectives; at another level, a wider review taking into account other interested parties' views can be undertaken.

Whilst a review culminating in an action plan for future activities is important, care should be taken to avoid investing too many resources in the evaluation and review process, which might be used to better effect in the link tutor training and development programme itself.

Appendix I

The Link Tutor Task Checklist

Role 1 Providing support for the host organisation

Tasks

- 1.1 Briefing for work-based placement personnel.
- 1.2 Providing appropriate written guidance materials.
- 1.3 Engaging in clarificatory and developmental discussions face to face with mentors.
- 1.4 Supporting mentors in a variety of ways.
- 1.5 Liaising with company personnel at appropriate points pre-, during, and post-placement.
- 1.6 Operating as a reference point, information provider, adviser, and problem solver for providers.
- 1.7 Developing and consolidating a partnership ethos.
- 1.8 Encouraging and facilitating networking activity amongst providers.
- 1.9 Setting up and supporting joint activities.
- 1.10 Empathising with and understanding the provider's standpoint.
- 1.11 Negotiating productive change to improve the placement for students, and accommodating the legitimate commercial and industrial values espoused by the provider.

Role 2 Acting as an assessor

Tasks

- 2.1 Undertaking formative assessment activities in the interests of the student and the workplace.
- 2.2 Designing and implementing formal assessment procedures.
- 2.3 Briefing students and work-based mentors about the assessment process and related documentation.
- 2.4 Creating and refining assessment documentation and process models as appropriate, in line with current educational developments.
- 2.5 Collecting and collating placement assessment data.
- 2.6 Encouraging student independence and refining student approaches to self assessment and placement management.
- 2.7 Moderating assessments in terms of validity, reliability and comparability between placements.

Role 3 Working as a negotiator

Tasks

- 3.1 Negotiating the general character of the placement with the placement providers to achieve mutual agreement, satisfaction, and payoffs.
- 3.2 Negotiating the necessary learning, and the experiences through which it will be achieved, with the student and the work-based mentor.
- 3.3 Negotiating and agreeing a learning contract, or a less elaborate set of agreements about placement objectives, with the students.
- 3.4 Negotiating amendments and developments within and beyond the learning contract/initial agreement.

- 3.5 Negotiating and liaising with the work-based mentor during the placement to avert difficulties or solve in-placement problems.
- 3.6 Negotiating with the work-based mentor developments and changes to be made in future placement work, in the light of experience.

Role 4 Operating as an innovator

Tasks

- 4.1 Reviewing the placement model and process on a regular basis to identify necessary refinements and re-orientations.
- 4.2 Identifying and responding to needs evident in the wider community of education and training.
- 4.3 Responding quickly and positively when change is required so as to maintain the match between available resources and the placement process model in order to ensure that the placement remains effective within the bounds of continuing effectiveness.
- 4.4 Identifying and evaluating alternative modes of operation, procedures and documentation and adopting and customising such approaches when appropriate.
- 4.5 Undertaking research activity in relation to placements and disseminating the findings to other link tutors.

Role 5 Working as an effective collaborator

Tasks

- 5.1 Adopting a cooperative stance with the other placement participants.
- 5.2 Demonstrating a willingness to work collaboratively, consulting, sharing and agreeing a set of common purposes.
- 5.3 Working collaboratively in all the key areas of placement operation, including assessment.
- 5.4 Becoming involved as co-workers in the work context and in collaborative project work.

Role 6 Providing support for the university

Tasks

- 6.1 Undertaking research and/or publications work relating to placements.
- 6.2 Explaining and justifying to placement personnel the university's contribution to the student's academic, professional and vocational development.
- 6.3 Supporting developments within the university which seem likely to enhance the quality of placement activity.
- 6.4 Acting as an ambassador/salesperson for the university in terms of its values and products.

Role 7 Serving the student as pastoral guide

Tasks

- 7.1 Providing an approachable and responsive source of support, personal advice and guidance.
- 7.2 Establishing a trusting professional relationship with students in order to help them to avoid or deal with problems experienced on placement.
- 7.3 Acting as a personal counsellor under normal circumstances and referring the student to the special services available when they are not.

- 7.4 Being sensitive to the fact that the style of pastoral care offered must reflect the nature of placements and match the wishes and perceptions of students.
- 7.5 Distinguishing clearly between the pastoral role and the assessment role in the interests of frank discussion and interchange.
- 7.6 Identifying and creating mechanisms and procedures for the effective provision of pastoral care.
- 7.7 Developing a comprehensive awareness of sources of support which the student may access when required.

Role 8 Acting as the manager

Tasks

- 8.1 Assisting with the identification, evaluation and initiation of suitable placements for students.
- 8.2 Analysing the complexity of the placement experience in order to anticipate likely problems, identify resources and priorities, and set up appropriate systems to fulfil the link tutor's role.
- 8.3 Investigating alternative management approaches where these are likely to enhance the quality of placements.
- 8.4 Ensuring the placements bring appreciable benefits to all parties such that placement providers are likely to wish to continue their involvement.
- 8.5 Monitoring placement progress to ensure effectiveness and efficiency within the resource levels provided.
- 8.6 Identifying minimal quality assurance expectations of placement activity and setting up individual procedures which ensure that these are delivered.
- 8.7 Providing regular support for and interaction with students undertaking placements and the work-based mentors working with them.
- 8.8 Creating and distributing support documentation to those involved in placements in order to help them organise, record and benefit from their experience.
- 8.9 Delegating responsibility for placement management to students and mentors in a responsible and professional way in order to reduce the level of student dependency.
- 8.10 Engaging in frequent consultancy discussions with students and their mentors about further support required and ways in which current support might need to be modified.
- 8.11 Using visits to the workplace as an important element in the placement management process, and structuring them to achieve a range of management purposes above and beyond those of student support and assessment.

Role 9 Helping students to prepare for placement

Tasks

- 9.1 Preparing the ground for the student by the effective briefing of other tutors and work-based mentors.
- 9.2 Providing information about all aspects of the placement and the host company.
- 9.3 Producing necessary protocols and documentation to help establish the parameters for placement planning and management.
- 9.4 Clarifying issues relating to learning outcomes, resources, and support.
- 9.5 Negotiating placement objectives and learning outcomes.
- 9.6 Facilitating discussion between students and other participants.

- 9.7 Undertaking activities which help students to rehearse for the placement experience and practise the necessary personal skills.
- 9.8 Encouraging and arranging pre-placement contacts with providers.
- 9.9 Setting up and running a specific pre-placement programme or creating placement study materials when appropriate.
- 9.10 Establishing clear agreements regarding the obligations and entitlements associated with placement work.
- 9.11 Employing students who have previously undertaken the placement experience to feed back their experiences face-to-face or in writing to the next cohort.
- 9.12 Encouraging students to audit their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to the placement and to undertake systematic remediation if required.
- 9.13 Allowing students an influential voice in the way the placement will be managed and developed.
- 9.14 Enhancing the efficiency and economy with which the placement experience is handled in order to maintain effectiveness.

Role 10 Acting as an evaluator

Tasks

- 10.1 Undertaking evaluation activities as part of the quality assurance process.
- 10.2 Ensuring that significant elements of the students' placement experience are systematically evaluated.
- 10.3 Designing, contributing to or implementing a significant part of the placement evaluation strategy.
- 10.4 Undertaking research on selected aspects of placement activity as part of a broader academic role and reflective professional practice.
- 10.5 Undertaking evaluation activity designed to lead to the refinement and improvement of the placement experience and more radical innovation.

Role 11 Intervening as advocate

Tasks

- 11.1 Representing the interests of students in their relation to other participants in the placement.
- 11.2 Operating as a balanced intermediary in dealing with interpersonal and organisational problems which occur.
- 11.3 Seeking to set up procedures and encourage relationships which will prevent confrontation and unproductive disagreement.
- 11.4 Establishing a trusting relationship with students which permits the student to confide in and expect the tutor to represent their interests and concerns fairly.
- 11.5 Seeking to arbitrate and resolve intractable problems when they occur.
- 11.6 Offering similar services to the workplace mentor if the need arises.

Role 12 Acting as the reflective practitioner

Tasks

- 12.1 Displaying evidence of reflective thinking about work-based learning and providing a model of 'reflection in action' for the student.
- 12.2 Engaging in open-minded critical debate about the nature and value of work-based learning and its special contribution to professional competence.
- 12.3 Demonstrating and exploring the complexity of the professional decision making and emphasising the use of critical judgement rather than the application of simple routines.
- 12.4 Ensuring that students are provided with challenging opportunities and opportunities to challenge during the placement.
- 12.5 Devising and facilitating situations which encourage enquiry and reflection - for example, through group work and exploratory, open-ended discussion and diagnostic feedback.
- 12.6 Emphasising the importance of theory as an interpretive resource for understanding experience.
- 12.7 Encouraging students to engage in systematic, disciplined and critical reflection about placement activity and to assess their own level of success and personal development.
- 12.8 Drawing the work-based mentor into the development of reflective practice.
- 12.9 Providing tentative guidelines and documentation which will facilitate the development of reflective practice.
- 12.10 Allowing the student sufficient freedom and room for manoeuvre to permit real decision making and independence of action.
- 12.11 Facilitating and encouraging professional dialogue between all the partners involved in placement activity.

Role 13 Operating as a guide and teacher

Tasks

- 13.1 Recognising the limited nature of this role in practical terms during the placement itself because of the special context of the work.
- 13.2 Assisting and supporting the work-based mentor in their teaching and guidance work.
- 13.3 Offering technical guidance and study suggestions on an informal basis.
- 13.4 Providing teaching of a reflective sort to students prior to and following on from the placement.
- 13.5 Helping to provide a structured and supported learning experience whilst allowing a reasonable level of professional independence.

Role 14 Acting as a facilitator

Tasks

- 14.1 Reinforcing the importance of placement work for personal and professional development.
- 14.2 Operating effective procedures in a flexible and considerate way, pruning and changing them in the light of critical consideration and discussion by participants.
- 14.3 Empathising with and supporting other partners in placement work, offering them reassurance, respecting their convenience, and helping them to control their workload.
- 14.4 Clarifying the placement process when required, and smoothing its practical implementation in the interests of effective experiential learning.

- 14.5 Encouraging students to adopt an active and collaborative stance, allowing them to capitalise on the placement experience, rather than passively accepting the status quo.
- 14.6 Making things happen, helping them to happen, and being supportive when they do happen.

Role 15 Ensuring effective follow-up

Tasks

- 15.1 Encouraging students to reflect critically on their own placement experience and the experiences of other students.
- 15.2 Setting up mechanisms and procedures by which effective follow-up can be assured.
- 15.3 Concentrating students' attention on self analysis, the auditing of strengths and weaknesses, and future development planning.
- 15.4 Arranging situations and events in which placement experience can be communicated and disseminated.
- 15.5 Combining effective follow-up for one cohort of placement students with effective preparation for the next.
- 15.6 Encouraging other tutors - whether involved with placements or not - to engage in debate about placement and make more extensive use of placement experience in their teaching in the academic areas of the course.

Appendix 2

Activity Resource Sheets

This appendix consists of a resource of activities related directly to the issues raised within the guide, for use by syndicate groups working together on the activity specified, or by individual tutors embarking on a programme of self-managed study (where some of these activities might reinforce their reading and reflection).

It is essential that the materials generate real action which leads somewhere, and are not simply exercises. These resources are designed so that they are suitable for extension, refinement, improvement and supplementation by users. It is intended that they should be used in a very flexible way to suit your specific purposes.

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THREE PARTNERS IN THE QUALITY PLACEMENT

a collaborative activity for students, work-based mentors and link tutors, designed to stimulate discussion



These questions are based on an authoritative view of main 'aspects of quality teaching and learning' (UKUSDU, 1994).

What methods are most effective in helping students on placements to learn?

What learning opportunities are or might be offered to students on placement?

How can we best assess what students are learning and have learned on placement?

How can the way in which the placement is designed into the course be improved?

How should placements be managed? What is involved, and where should the responsibility lie?

What forms will the review of placements take?

How will the success of placements be evaluated?



OPEN DISCUSSION CAMEOS FOR LINK TUTORS

The need for specific updating: continuing medical education



“Practitioners are expected to attend a fixed number of courses or workshops annually. They are free to choose which courses to attend. But over a period of five years, they are expected to attend a set number of courses in three broad areas of health promotion, disease management, and service management. Departments and health centres receive an annual allowance if their staff fulfil these attendance requirements. A similar procedure might be considered by universities which wish to encourage attendance at workshops and courses.”

(UKUSDU, 1994, p15)

Would such an arrangement be useful for the development of the link tutor role? Does it have particular strengths or weaknesses? What are the opportunities offered by this procedure, and what threats could it pose?

What students might do on an industrial placement

“... the student must keep a record book, which is ... a technical record of things learned, including observation and criticism of working practices. The record book is submitted to the industrial tutor for checking and correction at monthly intervals, and is examined by the university tutor during job site visits ... In addition, students are required to assemble a folder of technical literature ... and to write a dissertation ... on a subject picked by mutual agreement (between student, university and employer).”

(Culshaw, 1987)

Is the link tutor simply managing this? Is this enough? What is missing?

Personal adequacy and experience renewal: nursing education and teacher educators

There is some nervousness amongst nurse educators about developing stronger links with health care units. This is probably because practice skills become rusty so quickly and, being professionals, they feel the need to enhance their own practice in order to take on the task in an intellectually honest way. Perhaps there is something to be learned from teacher education, where ROSE—the renewal of school experience—has become an established part of lecturer experience. There were some who sought to bypass ‘real’ teaching in the gaining of this experience, and the phrase “recent and relevant” was added as an extra petal. This beneficial development has, to some extent, been overtaken by the rapid shift of responsibility for professional teacher education, from higher education to the schools.

(Cave 1994)

Do link tutors need renewal? How could they get it?

Who is in 'control'?

From a member of a 'Department of the Built Environment'
and a work-based learning project coordinator

In the hands of others

"... how can we (the educational institution) claim to provide a complete educational experience when the supply and further, the quality, of some 25% of that experience is outside the control of the institution and in the hands of others?"

(Murdoch, 1992)

Control of Learning Opportunities

"In work-based learning, the employer and, to a lesser extent, the student, control what may be learned. The employer can provide learning opportunities, whereas the facility to do so by the student will be limited. The employer, after all, sets the overall plan and the strategy for the organisation and has the facility to place the student in learning situations within the organisation.

The student, on the other hand, whilst normally having learning opportunities limited to the particular department or section within which he or she works, may, through a knowledge of the organisation, or through support from someone who has that knowledge, be able to identify and pursue opportunities additional or peripheral to normal day-to-day activities.

The higher education institution has no control over what is learned in the workplace, but does however have the final say in what is assessed and accredited. The tutor may additionally be able to help the student to identify appropriate learning outcomes which may be accredited in the context of the workplace."

(Dobbins, 1993)

What is the link tutor's responsibility when it comes to 'controlling' what happens?

Work-based complexity versus theoretical simplicity

From an authoritative consideration of the nature of professionalism

Here are the sorts of situations which may face students undertaking a professional, work-based placement:

"There are familiar situations where the practitioner can solve the problem by routine application of facts, rules, and procedures derived from the body of professional knowledge. In city planning, for example, there are rules of thumb by which a planner can calculate, under a given zoning by law, the number of parking spaces required for each living unit in an apartment building. In medicine, there are routine diagnostic work-ups of patients and routine prescriptions for familiar, uncomplicated complaints.

There are also unfamiliar situations where the problem is not initially clear, and there is no obvious fit between the characteristics of the situation and the available body of theories and techniques. It is common, in these types of situations, to speak of 'thinking like a doctor'—or lawyer or manager—to refer to the kinds of inquiry by which competent practitioners bring available knowledge to bear on practice situations where its application is problematic."

(Schon, 1986)

Does the link tutor have a responsibility to help students cope with such natural complexity posed by 'unfamiliar situations' in the workplace?

The problem of variable placement quality: BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy

A clinical supervisor—the work-based mentor—in talking about a second year ‘three-week’ student placement in the unit where she worked, described the student experience and what the student had written about his previous three placements in the following terms:

“I wish every student had the chance of a placement like this, because I’ve learned such a lot, particularly because it is the first time I’ve felt I was part of a multi-disciplinary team. I’ve never been to meetings before, and allowed to take part in discussions about the patient we were all caring for. Feeling part of the team and making a genuine contribution has not been a feature of my earlier placements. In fact, in one, we didn’t even share the same locker rooms or staff room as the professional physiotherapists. I’ve now begun to understand how the work of the professional physiotherapist fits in with the rest. For example, I was invited to a quality assurance meeting, and was delighted to get my own copy of the minutes. I felt I belonged, almost like a member of the staff ...”

Clearly not all placements are equal. What is the link tutor’s responsibility in ensuring some kind of comparability?

Suitable training for industrial link tutors? Portsmouth Partnership Scheme

The university provides tutor training for new staff through the Academic Development Centre. The ADC also runs training and development for particular skills, such as IT, facilitation, new assessment and teaching methods, etc. The ADC has a good supply of suitable reference texts. Departmental and faculty training is provided through training days, away-days and support for conference attendance.

Specific training for industrial link tutors has been developed by the Partnership Office. The main focus of this training relates to learning contracts and the accreditation of work-based learning. The specific link tutoring function, contrasting value systems, etc. are the subjects of induction workshops and individual discussions. The most effective briefings for staff are provided in head-to-head discussions with staff from the Partnership Office, and in discussion with Partnership students. More training would be welcomed if there were more time.”

(University of Portsmouth, 1993)

How useful would link tutors find the specific training outcomes outlined in the second paragraph?

Achieving quality support for students in the workplace Portsmouth Partnership Scheme

- (i) *Voluntarism has limited value in curriculum development as the enthusiasm of the individual often gives way and the lack of recognition turns the enthusiast into a disillusioned and undermined individual.*
- (ii) *The best support is self-support, so most effort should go into assertiveness training, briefings on industrial practice and culture, and the art of arranging and managing work-based meetings with tight schedules and agendas.*
- (iii) *Industrial visits by tutors are very expensive, so need to be organised effectively and with significant agendas.*
- (iv) *Whether work-based support or support within the University of the work-based student, improving and changing tutoring styles must include focus on:*
 - a) *improved listening skills to hear what industry knows and what it values in its partnerships with the University;*
 - b) *the multi-faceted nature of learning outcomes from work-based learning including: commercial products; the application of theoretical knowledge; understanding of the professional standards of quality and integrity; team-working skills; the importance of problem solving and decision making.*
- (v) *A double-edged development drive is to get tutors to supervise students who work or have placements in the University itself. Other activities that focus on improving quality support include:*
 - a) *realistic expenses for industrial visits, including real time allowances. (Partnership tutors are paid overtime for all of their link-tutor roles);*
 - b) *openness about student evaluations of link-tutors;*
 - c) *workshops involving tutors, mentors, students;*
 - d) *discussion of learning styles;*
 - e) *any activity that shifts the academic from the 'I know best' perspective;*
 - f) *group tutorials that reveal the similarities if not the sameness of the issues involved;*
 - g) *involvement of tutors who have been recruited from industry.*

(University of Portsmouth, 1993)

How can link tutors build on this quality support specification for their own purposes? Is it a starting point for designing a quality support system for industrial courses?

Some key influences on the enhancement of work-based learning: Portsmouth Partnership Scheme

- *Tutors increasingly recognise the learning potential in the workplace. The structured and pre-planned emphasis to thinking about work-based learning outcomes has revealed the syllabus inherent in the company. This awareness has been matched by acknowledgement that people read at work, have seminars (committees, debriefing and planning meetings) and assessment (staff appraisal and promotions boards).*
- *Encouragement to maintain an academic approach. Industrialists are not trying to influence a move to vocational education that would undermine research, diverse ways of thinking and conceptualisation. Industrialists want their work-based employee/students to become: more adventurous and creative; better at communication; self confident; reflective; learned and habitually enquiring; and broad in their knowledge base.*

Improvements in work-based and work-placement education can be achieved by focusing on the full range of experiences available at work. Hence student learning outcomes should include understanding of work culture, the sociology of the factory and office, etc. as well as emphasis on vocational and professional outcomes.

(University of Portsmouth, 1993)

This suggests three questions for link tutors to explore:

What is the learning potential of the workplace, and do link tutors readily acknowledge it?

How do we maintain the essential discipline of an 'academic approach' in the workplace?

How can we utilise the 'full range of experiences available' to the benefit of all the partners?



DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE LINK TUTOR

As the link person, attention should be paid to:



As the tutor, attention should be paid to:

As the manager, attention should be paid to:



EXCHANGING INSIGHTS AND SWAPPING MODELS

A procedure for refining the role of link tutors



First, each participant in a small group completes an acetate about current provision, and makes a five-minute presentation.

Second, discussion of each case yields an extensive response in terms of plus and minus points, and possible improvements.

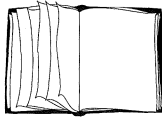


The next page provides a proforma which you may decide to use as an acetate.

Area of Work _____ Student Year Group involved _____
Duration/Frequency of Placement _____
How our link tutor scheme currently operates:
The main responsibilities include the following:
Plus points:
Minus points:
Possible developments/improvements:



APPLYING CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING TO THE LINK TUTORING FUNCTION



First, read through the specification of quality teaching which follows (UKUSDU, 1994).

Criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching within the institution

1 Preparation for teaching

- clarity of aims and objectives for each course component
- preparation of content/quality of notes, handouts etc
- preparation of materials and equipment, and of acetates, slides, videos etc
- estimation of student learning effort needed.

2 Quality of actual teaching activity, particularly for active learning

- evidence of lecturing effectiveness and excellence
- evidence of small group teaching effectiveness and excellence
- evidence of practical teaching effectiveness and excellence
- evidence of fieldwork effectiveness and excellence
- evidence of postgraduate supervision effectiveness and excellence.

3 Volume and range of teaching

- amount of time spent on teaching
- experience of a wide range of teaching eg with a variety of students; sizes of groups; content of intrinsic difficulty; service teaching; interdisciplinary teaching.

4 Innovation in teaching

- innovations in curriculum/course design
- innovations in methodologies eg distance learning materials
- collaboration in teaching—team teaching, etc
- innovations of national/international repute in the teaching of the specific subject area
- short course developments
- modular programme developments.

5 General communications with students

- guidance and counselling
- motivating students
- quality of marking and feedback on students' work
- interpersonal relationships
- availability outside class times.

6 Assessment/examination procedures

- evidence of range of methods of assessment used
- innovation in assessment techniques
- congruence of assessment and learning objectives.

7 Evaluation of own teaching

- systematic and regular reflection on all the above practices
- regular use of peer/student evaluation (see Partington *et al*, 1993)

- continuing reflection on teaching in relationship to (a) the overall teaching aims and objectives of the department, and (b) other topics in the course and the curriculum as a whole.

8 Management of teaching

- course leadership
- chair of programme committees eg for curriculum development, modularisation, assessment, etc
- responsibilities for learning support
- staff/student consultative committee duties
- 'Enterprise in HE' tutorships.

9 Teaching scholarship and research

- evidence of scholarship
- effect of scholarship on teaching
- influence of research on teaching, eg in project work.

10 Teaching and the world of work

- benefits from employer contact
- involvement of employers in teaching
- placement of students.

11 Invitations to teach elsewhere

- national/international conferences, lectures, seminars
- regular teaching visits to other university departments.

12 Membership of professional groups

- subject-based
- interest-specific, eg assessment groups; curriculum development groups.

13 Professional service to other universities and organisations

- as external examiner
- as adviser/consultant
- as quality auditor/quality assessor.

14 Publications on teaching

- critical reflection on teaching approaches
- scholarly work and textbooks
- compilations of teaching materials
- publications of one's own pedagogic research and development
- editorial work
- refereeing for journals etc.

15 Teaching grants and contracts secured

- grants for teaching development work
- contracts to provide teaching programmes for other organisations.

Now, assess your own link tutoring or proposed link tutoring arrangements in terms of these quality criteria.



1 What preparation does my link tutoring require?

2 How can I ensure that quality learning happens on the placement?

2a How can I ensure that active learning happens on the placement?

3 What volume and range of link tutoring do I contribute?

4 What innovations am I currently considering?

5 What kind of general communication is necessary with placement students?

6 What sort of assessment and examination is appropriate?

7 How will I go about evaluating my own role as a link tutor?

8 How will I help in managing the student's placement?

9 How might I contribute to scholarship and teaching about the link tutoring role?

10 How will my link tutoring activities benefit the world of work?

11 Are there opportunities for me to:

share my experience directly?

belong to groups interested in link tutoring?

provide services to others based on my experience in this role?

publish the results of my work?

obtain resources to develop my link tutoring further?



DOES MY LINK TUTORING WORK LEAD TO ADDED VALUE?

This document is adapted from a suggestion originally submitted to UKUSDU, and then supplemented by discussion. Here it is applied directly to link tutoring (UKUSDU, 1994)

Does my link tutoring:

add value to the students involved?

add value to their teaching and learning programme?

add value to the academic discipline?

add value to the department?

add value to the professional area?

add value to the assessment and accreditation process?

add value to me as a person, an academic, a tutor and a professional?

add value to the academic institution?

add value to the host organisation?



THE PURPOSES SERVED BY PLACEMENT AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR LINK TUTORS

Although individual prescriptions about purpose are usually subject specific, a *general* specification can provide starting points for *all* link tutors in thinking about their role and priorities for action. Understandably, the precise purposes to be served by a placement will significantly affect the activities undertaken by students, work-based mentors and link tutors.

Here is a group of objectives set for a placement during a course in public administration.



First, consider each item in turn in terms of your own placement experience, and modify, reject or supplement items in the list as you wish, adding any further objectives which you consider necessary for the placements your students undertake:

Placement objectives	Reactions and comments
1 obtain the benefits to be derived from the symbiosis of theory and practice by relating the knowledge and insights acquired during the course to the practical aspects of administration	
2 gain general work experience (including experience of the role conflicts, stresses and strains which the work process entails)	
3 perform a job of work which is of practical value and benefit to the employing authority	
4 gain insights into their own abilities, aptitudes, attitudes and employment potential	
5 enter into professional relationships with practitioners in the field of public administration	
6 develop professional attitudes (in this context, the term 'professional' embraces the concepts and ethos of public service in addition to the specialised interests and skills required in the public sector)	
7 gain knowledge and experience of the work done by, and the special problems and characteristics of, a specific type of public organisation	

continued ...

Placement objectives	Reactions and comments
8 gain experience of administration within specific functional areas (e.g. personnel, finance, planning, housing, supplies etc.)	
9 relate and apply the knowledge gained during the placement period to the subjects studied during the final year of the course	
10 make more informed choices between the functional and service areas available to them after graduation	

(Jones, 1987)

Additional placement objectives to fit your own pattern:

--

Now take each of the placement objectives in turn, including those you have added, and consider what their achievement will require from you as link tutor.

What will these objectives mean in terms of what you have to do?

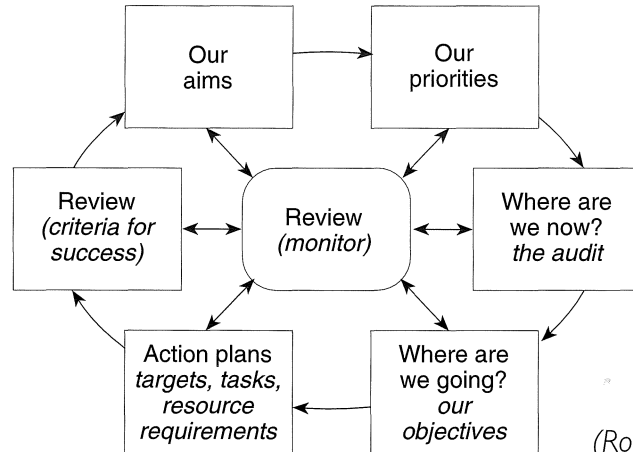
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above. The box occupies most of the page's vertical space.



USING A DEVELOPMENTAL PLANNING APPROACH

The object of this activity is to focus on reflection, development and realistic planning. It is a 'real' task, not an exercise.

1 A basic developmental planning model:



(Rogers [ed.], 1994)

2 A review of the advantages of a developmental planning approach:



The Advantage	Outcomes from the developmental planning approach	Tick if this is useful for you and your placement team
Accountability	You can ensure accountability and be confident of the appraisal process	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarity	You can think through the issues without losing sight of the main purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	You can share ideas and plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Control	You can feel and be in control, and so reduce stress	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperation	You can build a team to work amicably together	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexibility	You can adapt the plan to any level or situation, and react readily to changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus	You can focus your aims and always know where you are going	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integration	You can integrate planning into the school and oversee the development of the school as a whole	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation	You can organise your actions, work through the logical sequence of events, and plan for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Priority	You can identify your priorities and concentrate on the important things for your school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting	You can devise an effective framework for reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed	You can respond quickly and rationally to current demands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff development	You can help staff to gain new skills and knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 3 Devise a development plan for link tutoring using the following proforma—either individually or in groups:



<i>Developing the Link Tutor Role</i>	
<i>Department/Course</i> _____	<i>Date</i> _____
<i>Our aims</i>	<i>Where are we now?</i>
<i>Our priorities</i>	<i>Where are we going?</i>
<i>Action plans</i>	
<i>Target One</i> <i>Date</i> <i>Tasks</i> <i>Resources</i> <i>Success Criteria</i>	<i>Target Two</i> <i>Date</i> <i>Tasks</i> <i>Resources</i> <i>Success Criteria</i>



- 4 Finally, display and discuss the outcomes.

DESIGNING A PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR A LINK TUTOR



<i>Category</i>	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Desirable</i>	<i>Staff development implications?</i>
<i>Necessary previous experience</i>			
<i>Necessary qualifications</i>			
<i>Necessary subject knowledge</i>			
<i>Necessary skills</i>			



ANTICIPATING CHAOS: a realistic approach to link tutor preparation

Chaos Theory has escaped from the world of mathematics, physics and the natural world, and is exerting some pressure on management practice (Stacey, 1991; Handy, 1989).

The link tutor stands in a turbulent position, at the interface between two organisations. In addition, the link tutor must manage individual interfaces for each placement student. The scope for organisational turbulence is considerable.

This is an activity for a multi-disciplinary group of link tutors.

It is best played by a group of three or four.

- *One individual from the group is selected as the presenting link tutor. This tutor outlines the placement scheme that he/she is associated with in some detail, covering all its phases—pre-placement, during placement and post-placement activity—and any other significant aspects.*
- *Every other tutor then anticipates chaos with a 'what if' question. The presenting tutor will be expected to respond and express some views about dealing with the situation and avoiding it.*
- *Each tutor takes a turn in presenting their scheme and dealing with the unexpected problems.*

The advantage of this game is twofold:

- it encourages an exchange of information about a variety of placements
- and
- it leads to shared problem-solving within the group.



APPLYING DICK GLOVER'S VIRTUOUS CYCLE TO LINK TUTORING

"If a department considers its learners' needs, then it will consider the role of the teaching staff in that light. Almost implicitly, a genuine consideration of learner needs will create a cycle of course review, course redesign, and assessment of learning effectiveness from both departmental and student perspectives.

A necessary stage in this process is to establish 'Learning Objectives', and to debate the skill and facility with which the teachers help learners to achieve these. This is a virtuous cycle."

(Glover, 1994)

Try answering these questions, which have been adapted from Glover's model for teaching quality assessment.

How can the link tutor identify the 'learning objectives' of the placement?



Are the means of assessment applied by the link tutor appropriate when examined in the light of student learning objectives?

Does the link tutor ensure that the needs of learners are met through a variety of teaching/learning strategies?

Does the link tutor adapt to fit varying starting points, prior knowledge and skills?

How does the link tutor systematically review the placement process?

How does the link tutor deal with 'less successful' learning?

How does the link tutor go about developing and improving his/her own skills in ways which enhance placement learning?

Does the link tutor help to create ways of encouraging students towards 'self-help' systems of learning—like peer support groups?



A PROCEDURE FOR GENERATING LINK TUTOR COMPETENCE STATEMENTS

Necessary knowledge

The competent tutor knows:



Necessary skills

The competent tutor is able to:

Necessary attitudes

The competent tutor believes/demonstrates:



A PROCEDURE FOR THE ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF EXISTING LINK TUTOR PRACTICE

in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency and economy



A placement is *effective* when:

A placement is *efficient* if:

A placement is *economic* where:



A SPECIFICATION FOR PARTNERSHIP: RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

of partners in the placement triangle



A work based mentor

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is obliged to provide: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is entitled to expect: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>
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A placement student

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is obliged to provide: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is entitled to expect: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>
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A link tutor

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is obliged to provide: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is entitled to expect: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>
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A DESIGN ACTIVITY FOR PROVIDING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PLACEMENT WORK



Quality Standards

Defining the elements to be monitored and quality controlled, and establishing the standards to be reached

How do you do this?

Investing in People

Providing effective training and preparation for all participants

How do you do this?

Quality Charters

Reaching agreements about the entitlements and obligations of the stakeholders and making commitments based on them

How do you do this?

Total Quality

Establishing a quality culture in which all those involved are committed to delivering quality services

How do you do this?



BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE PLACEMENT: A PERSONAL THREE POINT CHECKLIST FOR LINK TUTORS



Main jobs *before* the placement

Main jobs *during* the placement

Main jobs *after* the placement



MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT ESSENTIAL, HIGHLY DESIRABLE, AND LONGER TERM AMBITIONS

Essential documents to support the placement:

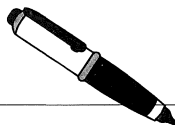


Highly desirable documents:

Longer term, it would also be advisable to have documents which:



DRAWING UP A PROFILE OF THE PLACEMENT WHICH YOU TUTOR



A Profile for Placement Provision

Dimension	Placement Variation
Length in total time	<p>Thick sandwich whole year Thin sandwich semester Thin sandwich term Long block 6-8 weeks Short block 2-5 weeks One week Several days One day</p>
Time distribution	<p>Solid block Broken block Multi-part block with gaps Block with regular break e.g. Fridays out Serial one day to three days per week Sporadic negotiable attendance</p>
Function	<p>Experiential Flexible problem-solving agenda Tightly framed placement objectives and learning outcomes Task/project based</p>
Progression and level	<p>Easy induction level expectations More demanding mid-level expectations Difficult high level expectations</p>
Assessment	<p>Self assessed Diagnostically assessed Summatively assessed 'pass/fail' Summatively assessed contributing to degree classification</p>
Intensity of direct link tutor supervision	<p>One visit only in a block or sandwich Monthly contact or visit Weekly contact or visit Daily contact or visit</p>
Degree of structure	<p>Highly structured from the outset Strong but flexible structure Moderately structured in terms of key requirements only Loosely structured followed by on-site negotiation</p>
Mentor/tutor balance of responsibility	<p>Tutor dominated Tutor/mentor control Mentor/tutor control Mentor dominated</p>
Student activity and enterprise	<p>Tutor and mentor dominate activities undertaken Tutor, mentor and student operate as a team High level of student activity and autonomy</p>
Perceived status within the course	<p>Low 'a necessary evil/ a diversion' Moderate 'a part of coherent vocational training' High 'an essential professional development activity'</p>
Placement proximity	<p>Close even within the university Same town, same region Distant outside region/national International other countries and cultures</p>



THE LINK TUTOR AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

Consider the three link tutor roles we identified earlier which are most clearly linked to 'change' and the tasks we suggested in each case. Then on the right, consider how you would go about achieving change in the way *your* placement operates.



Roles and Tasks	A Personal Approach to Changing/ Enhancing Placement Activity
<p>4 Operating as an innovator</p> <p>4.1 Reviewing the placement model and process on a regular basis to identify necessary refinements and re-orientations.</p> <p>4.2 Identifying and responding to needs evident in the wider community of education and training.</p> <p>4.3 Responding quickly and positively when change is required so as to maintain the match between <i>available resources</i> and the <i>placement process model</i> in order to ensure that the placement remains effective within the bounds of continuing effectiveness.</p> <p>4.4 Identifying and evaluating alternative modes of operation, procedures and documentation and adopting and customising such approaches when appropriate.</p> <p>4.5 Undertaking research activity in relation to placements and disseminating the findings to other link tutors.</p> <p>10 Acting as an evaluator</p> <p>10.1 Undertaking evaluation activities as part of the quality assurance process.</p> <p>10.2 Ensuring that significant elements of the students' placement experience are systematically evaluated.</p> <p>10.3 Designing, contributing to or implementing a significant part of the placement evaluation strategy.</p> <p>10.4 Undertaking research on selected aspects of placement activity as part of a broader academic role and reflective professional practice.</p> <p>10.5 Undertaking evaluation activity designed to lead to the refinement and improvement of the placement experience and more radical innovation.</p> <p>12 Acting as the reflective practitioner</p> <p>12.1 Displaying evidence of reflective thinking about work-based learning and providing a model of '<i>reflection in action</i>' for the student.</p> <p>12.2 Engaging in open-minded critical debate about the nature and value of work-based learning and its special contribution to professional competence.</p> <p>12.3 Demonstrating and exploring the complexity of the professional decision making and emphasising the use of critical judgement rather than the application of simple routines.</p> <p>12.4 Ensuring that students are provided with challenging opportunities <i>and</i> opportunities to challenge during the placement.</p> <p>12.5 Devising and facilitating situations which encourage enquiry and reflection—for example, through group work and exploratory, open-ended discussion and diagnostic feedback.</p> <p>12.6 Emphasising the importance of theory as an interpretive resource for understanding experience.</p> <p>12.7 Encouraging students to engage in systematic, disciplined and critical reflection about placement activity and to assess their own level of success and personal development.</p> <p>12.8 Drawing the work-based mentor into the development of reflective practice.</p> <p>12.9 Providing tentative guidelines and documentation which will facilitate the development of reflective practice.</p> <p>12.10 Allowing the student sufficient freedom and room for manoeuvre to permit real decision making and independence of action.</p> <p>12.11 Facilitating and encouraging professional dialogue between all the partners involved in placement activity.</p>	

Appendix 3

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Appendix 4

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